

# 2025 ILLUMINATE THE ARTS GRANT



## Frequently Asked Questions

### General Questions

**1. Q: I can't log in to my application / I can't upload a document / I'm getting an error message, what should I do?**

**A:** Try logging out of Submittable, closing out your web browser, and then logging back in. Submittable works best on the following web browsers: Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Apple Safari.

**2. Q: I just realized I made a mistake on my application. What should I do?**

**A:** You can select the "request to edit" button on your application on the top right-hand side of your application. If you can't find that prompt, email [creativephl@gmail.com](mailto:creativephl@gmail.com) with the subject line, "Request to edit application."

**3. Q: Why do I need to create a Submittable account to apply for this grant? Does it require a fee?**

**A:** The grant application platform Submittable does not require applicants to pay a fee to apply. We are using the platform because it manages distributing the grant awards easily and quickly. If you would like to apply using a paper application, please mail it to City Hall, Room 116, Philadelphia, PA 19107. However, if you are funded, you will be required to submit your bank information through Submittable, which is a secured site. Creative Philadelphia has used Submittable for all previous Illuminate the Arts Grant cycles and is using the platform again because of its security and ease of use for applicants.

**4. Q: How do I find a direct link to the application?**

**A:** While applications are open, you can find the application at [Submittable](#). On that landing page, you will see the four categories of the Illuminate the Arts Grants. Select the category you are eligible for. You can also view other open applications for Creative Philadelphia programs.

**5. Q: Is the grant mainly aimed for members of minority communities in Philadelphia?**

**A:** All Philadelphia artists, arts organizations, and creative businesses that are eligible are strongly encouraged to apply. Funds for the Illuminate the Arts Grants originated from City Council as an investment to address racial

disparities in the City of Philadelphia. This grant is targeting all individual artists, small arts organizations, and small creative enterprises that generally do not have access from traditional sources of funding.

**6. Q: Is this grant yearly?**

**A:** This is the fourth year of funding for the Illuminate the Arts Grant and was made possible by the support of Philadelphia City Council.

**7. Q: Can I collaborate with multiple staff to complete this application?**

**A:** Submittable's submitter collaboration tool enables groups of applicants to work together on collective applications. Check out the [Submitter Resource Center](#) or contact [Submittable Customer Support](#).

**8. Q: Will I receive a notification to edit application if there is an error or mistake on application?**

**A:** The earlier your application is submitted, the better chance any errors will be caught by the grant review process.

**9. Q: What is the timeline to receive funding, if my application is accepted?**

**A:** The goal of the Committee is to distribute the grants in January 2026, following the review process. Our aim is that applicants will be notified of the funding decision by the end of the year.

**10. Q: Can you apply in more than one category, for example both "Individual Artist" and "Small Nonprofit Arts Organization"?**

**A:** Applicants can submit only one application to the Illuminate the Arts Grant.

**11. Q: What types of creative sectors will receive preference for being awarded a grant?**

**A:** None. Creative sectors are collected as part of the application to ensure equitable distribution of funds throughout the entire arts sector.

**12. Q: Will my application information be shared publicly?**

**A:** No. Only the combined overview data of the applicant pool and awardee pool is shared publicly. If you receive an award, please let us know if you would like your name excluded from our public awardee list.

**13. If I have applied for the Illuminate the Arts Grant in the past, can I apply again this year?**

**A:** Yes!

## Individual Artist Questions

- 1. Q: I work for an arts organization / creative enterprise, and I'm also an independent artist outside of my day job. Can I apply for my employer and myself, or do I need to choose?**

**A:** You can apply on behalf of the entity you work for and as an independent artist. The only conflict of interest would be if you are the owner/operator of an arts organization / creative enterprise that is applying for an Illuminate the Arts Grant, and you want to also apply as an individual artist with the same creative practice as your creative entity. In that scenario, you would need to choose which category to apply in.

**2. Q: I'm married, do I include my partner's income too?**

**A:** Please report your income in a way that matches the proof of income documents you will upload in the application. If you file your taxes jointly and upload a 1040 tax form in the application, then your income would be the total household income reported on that form.

<b>Dependents</b>	<b>Maximum Eligible Income</b>
0	\$66,850
1	\$76,400
2	\$85,950
3	\$95,500
4	\$103,150
5	\$110,800
6	\$118,450
7 or more	\$126,100

**3. Q: Are people with Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITIN) eligible for this grant or do you need a social security number?**

**A:** Yes, people with ITINs are eligible. If you receive funding, you will be required to upload a signed W9, so whichever you include on that form is acceptable.

**4. Q: What is an acceptable proof of income for individual artists?**

**A:** Tax documents like a 1040 income tax form, a W-2 from your employer, or a 1099 form(s) from your contractor(s) are excellent proofs of income. However, Creative Philadelphia recognizes that not all artists receive proof of income with such formalized documents. Things like Venmo / Cash App records, Shopify reports, etc. are also acceptable. As one of your attached documents, you can include a brief narrative (1-3 sentences) explaining how the documents you've included in your application reflect your self-reported income, but that is not required.

**5. Q: Should I include unemployment payments as part of my income?**

**A:** Yes, you should include that as part of your total income for whatever year(s) you received unemployment payments, but you should not include unemployment payments as part of your "Creative Practice Income."

**6. Q: Should I apply as an individual artist or a creative enterprise if I am a sole proprietor with no other employees?**

**A:** You should apply as an individual artist if you are a sole proprietor with no employees.

**7. Q: How are funding determinations being made?**

**A:** Grants are awarded in an equitable way based on factors including financial need and community impact. The questions in the application help the Committee determine applicants with greatest need and ensure equitable distribution of funds.

**8. Q: If I have more than one creative practice as an individual artist, which one do I select for my application?**

**A:** Please select the creative practice that most closely identifies your practice as an artist or select Other to self-identify.

**9. Q: What counts as a claimed dependents for this application?**

**A:** Anyone you claim as a dependent on your taxes.

**10. Q: I received an award last year as an individual artist. Can I apply this year as small creative enterprise?**

**A:** Yes.

**11. Q: You mention this grant being competitive, what are you looking for to make that final decision?**

**A:** The grant is competitive in that there will be more eligible applicants than the \$1.5M Illuminate the Arts Grant will be able to support. Grants are awarded in an equitable way based on factors including financial need and community impact.

**12. Q: What if my total income and creative practice income is the same as an individual artist?**

**A:** That is acceptable for the application.

**14. Q: What should I list as my annual income for calendar years 2023 and 2024?**

**A:** Please input your taxable income which is listed on line 15 of your 1040 2023 and 2024 tax returns.

## **Arts Organization Questions**

**1. Q: Are new organizations eligible to apply?**

**A:** New organizations are eligible if they can meet the eligibility criteria below.

Applicants must:

- Reside **and** operate in Philadelphia County
- Have a mission that is focused on the creative sector

- Be in compliance with all local, state, and federal taxes, or be on an approved payment plan or can prove they are in the process of getting on a payment plan. The Philadelphia Department of Revenue offers [flexible payment plans](#).
- Provide FEIN or fiscal sponsor information
- Provide total operating budget for calendar year 2024 **and** annual revenue for calendar year 2023 and 2024.
- Provide number of and demographic information on full-time and part-time employees for calendar years 2023 and 2024.

**2. Q: You're asking for calendar year budgets and revenue, but my organization uses a July/June fiscal year. What should I do?**

**A:** If possible, upload monthly or quarterly budgets / revenue reports that cover the 2023 and 2024 calendar year. A profit and loss report would work well. As one of your attached documents, you can also include a brief narrative (1 – 3 sentences) if it would help a reviewer understand how you translated fiscal year reports to calendar year reports.

**3. Q: Am I eligible if my organization is based in Philadelphia but my fiscal sponsor is based outside of Philadelphia County?**

**A:** Yes, your organization is eligible. Only the organization applying must be based in Philadelphia County.

**4. Q: Should I include independent contractors as part-time employees? Should I include volunteers or board members as part-time employees?**

**A:** Anyone issued a 1099 or other similar form of documentation for payment should be considered a part-time employee. Do not count volunteers or unpaid board members as part-time employees.

**5. Q: Can I apply if my organization also received a grant from the Philadelphia Cultural Fund?**

**A:** Yes, organizations can apply so long as they didn't receive direct funding from the City's FY24 operating budget (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025).

**6. Q: What do you want to know about the organization in the narrative section?**

**A:** The narrative section is a chance to share your organization or enterprise's mission and an overview of your operations.

**7. Q: What is considered a small nonprofit arts organization vs a mid-size nonprofit arts organization. Is the number of employees a factor?**

**A:** Small nonprofit arts organizations have 2024 operating budgets of \$100,000 or less while Mid-size nonprofit arts organizations have 2024 operating budgets between \$100,000-\$500,000. Number of employees is a not a factor for eligibility.

**8. Q: What if we don't have demographics for those served?**

**A:** Please select based on your best guess or select unknown.

**9. Q: What type of organizations or enterprises can apply?**

**A:** Eligible organizations or enterprises must have a mission that is focused on the creative sector.

## Creative Enterprise Questions

**1. Q: How do you define a small creative enterprise?**

**A:** Total 2024 operating budget under \$500,000, and must provide your enterprise's Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or your Social Security Number (SSN) as well as your enterprise's Business and Income Receipts Tax ([BIRT](#)) Number from the City of Philadelphia.

**2. Q: I have an EIN, but not a BIRT — is my creative enterprise eligible?**

**A:** A BIRT is required to apply as a small creative enterprise.

**3. Q: I am applying as a Creative Enterprise, but I don't know if I have a BIRT Number, or how to get a BIRT Number if I don't have one. What should I do?**

**A:** Email Kristin Schultz ([Kristin.Schultz@phila.gov](mailto:Kristin.Schultz@phila.gov)), Revenue Collection Officer for the City of Philadelphia, with the subject line "Creative Philadelphia Grant". If you provide your SSN and/or EIN, she can look up your enterprise to see if it has been assigned a BIRT number. If you do not have a BIRT number you can receive one from the Department of Revenue and continue applying as a Creative Enterprise, or you can apply as an individual artist. Email [creativephl@gmail.com](mailto:creativephl@gmail.com) if you have more questions.

**4. I have my BIRT tax return, but I do not know my BIRT number. How do I locate it?**

**A:** At the top right of the Business Income & Receipts Tax Return there will be Philadelphia Tax Identification Number (10-digit number). That is your BIRT/PHTIN number. The Department of Revenue encourages taxpayers to create an account on the [Philadelphia Tax Center](#), where you can access your account information.

**5. Q: Should I apply as an individual artist or a creative enterprise if I am a sole proprietor with no other employees?**

**A:** You should apply as an individual artist if you are a sole proprietor with no employees. Anyone you paid who received a 1099 should be considered a part time employee.

**6. Q: My Creative Enterprise is fiscally sponsored by a non-profit based in Philadelphia. What category should I apply in?**

**A:** Please apply as a Creative Enterprise.

**7. Q: What kind of proof of revenue documentation needs to be provided for small creative enterprises?**

**A:** Summary documents like tax documents or internal Profit and Loss reports are ideal, but however you prove what your enterprise's revenue for 2023 and 2024 should be sufficient.