

STATE ARTS AGENCY ARTIST FELLOWSHIPS

Because of the essential role that artists play in every state's creative environment, state arts agencies have adopted a wide array of strategies to support individual creators. These strategies include a variety of grant programs as well as information, networking, training and technical assistance services.

Fellowship awards are one important part of this funding and service mix. In fiscal year 2009, state arts agencies in 37 states intend to fund individual artists through fellowship awards.

The structure of fellowship programs varies from state to state. In addition to determining the goals of the program, each state arts agency sets policies addressing the award quantity and size, artist eligibility, artistic disciplines, and application evaluation and review. All of these decisions need to address not only the needs of artists in a state, but also the state's unique cultural, political and economic environment.

Fellowship Goals

Fellowship awards are designed to honor the achievements of artists and to encourage the development of new creative works. In addition to advancing the careers and accomplishments of artists, fellowship awards can:

- Recognize the contributions artists make to the cultural health, quality of life, and/or creative environment of the state.
- Honor the professional achievement and creative excellence of artists.
- Promote the arts as important to citizens and worthy of financial support.
- Stimulate greater public understanding of an art form.
- Gain recognition for artists within the state and beyond its borders.
- Support further development of the arts industry through recognition, professional development and partnerships.

Fellowship Awards

Based on current guidelines, 37 state arts agencies (out of 50 states and the District of Columbia) operate fellowship programs. The most common current grant size for an artist fellowship is \$5,000, though fellowships range in size from \$1,000 to \$13,000. A number of state arts agencies offering fellowship programs award them at multiple dollar amounts, differentiating among emerging, experienced and master artists. A few states may not have specific levels but instead offer additional merit awards to applicants who exhibit promising work.

Fellowship Awards over Time

During the most recently available ten-year period of data (1998 to 2007), funding for artist fellowships ranged from \$2.6 million (in 2006) to \$4.3 million (in 2002). The total dollar amount and the total number of fellowships have each decreased by 19 percent over the last ten years. The most significant decreases occurred from 2002 to 2004, the same time period in which all dollars available to state arts agencies (SAAs) declined by 26%. Fellowships as a portion of total grantmaking also have decreased. From 1998 to 2007 the portion of grants dollars as fellowships steadily declined. The portion of grant awards as fellowships also has declined over this time period.

In fiscal year 2007, the most recent year for which grant data is available, 762 fellowships were awarded by 33 state arts agencies, totaling \$3.0 million. This represented 3.2% of all grants and 1.0% of all grant dollars. Among all states, the median number of fellowships awarded was 11, though the number of fellowships awarded by any one state arts agency ranged from one to 93. For a table detailing state-by-state fellowship grants in fiscal year 2007, see [page 5](#).

**Artist Fellowships Awarded by State Arts Agencies
Fiscal Years 1998 to 2007**

Fiscal Year	Number of Grants	Grant Dollars	% of All Grants	% of All Grant Dollars
1998	940	\$3,751,606	3.5%	1.5%
1999	975	\$3,943,678	3.4%	1.3%
2000	999	\$4,210,718	3.5%	1.4%
2001	993	\$4,096,279	3.5%	1.3%
2002	1,004	\$4,322,497	3.5%	1.2%
2003	902	\$3,416,302	3.4%	1.1%
2004	715	\$2,859,635	3.0%	1.1%
2005	702	\$2,762,724	2.8%	1.0%
2006	747	\$2,641,881	2.8%	0.9%
2007	762	\$3,048,800	3.2%	1.0%

Artist Eligibility

Among the factors that determine eligibility for fellowship awards are age, student status, place of residency and award history.

Age: Almost two-thirds of fellowship-awarding SAAs require that artists be a minimum age of 18, though a few set the minimum at 20, 21 or 25 years of age.

Student Status: Among states that award fellowships, 32 have restrictions about the student status of the applicant. Many agencies prohibit applicants who are currently enrolled in any type of degree-granting program (22 SAAs); others prohibit only artists currently seeking degrees in a field related to their application (10 SAAs).

Residency: Many state arts agencies can award funds only to artists and arts organizations who are legal residents of the state. Residency restrictions for fellowship applicants take into consideration the time period before, at the time of, or after the

**SAA Fellowship Award Eligibility
Artist Minimum Age**

Minimum Artist Age	Number of SAAs
18	24
20	1
21	1
25	1
No restrictions	10

**SAA Fellowship Award Eligibility
Residency Requirements**

Residency Requirement	Number of SAAs	% of Fellowship Programs
Prior to application		
At least 24 months	10	27%
At least 12 months	18	49%
At least 6 months	2	5%
No prior requirement	7	19%
At time of application or award		
At time of application or award	32	86%
During grant period		
Entire grant period (12 months)	14	38%
Extended (24 months)	1	3%
No grant period requirement	22	59%

application/award. Among states that award fellowships, 32 require that the artist be a legal or current resident of the state at the time of the fellowship application and award. A high number of fellowship-awarding agencies (30 SAAs) require residency prior to the application period, in the time frames of six, 12 or 24 months. Also, 14 agencies with fellowship programs require that the awardees remain legal residents of the state for the entire duration of the grant period.

Award History: Most state arts agencies place some limitation on how frequently an individual may receive fellowship funding. Although policies vary greatly from state to state, one-time eligibility and once every three years are the most popular choices. Sixteen agencies also place limitations on the number of awards an artist may receive in his or her lifetime.

Other Eligibility Factors: Many agencies require that applicants be up-to-date with any reports owed the agency. Other eligibility restrictions include:

- Applicant must be a “professional” and not an amateur or avocational artist. (17 SAAs)
- Applicant must be a creator or originator of art and not an interpreter, i.e. a choreographer is eligible, but a dancer is not. (7 SAAs)
- Applicant must be a U.S. citizen or hold permanent resident alien status. (9 SAAs)
- Applicant must not have received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in the past ten years. (1 SAA)

Artistic Disciplines

State arts agencies vary in which disciplines they support, how they classify those disciplines, and how frequently support for each discipline becomes available.

Discipline Diversity: Discipline availability is explicitly stated in all but one agency. The most widely available fellowships are offered in the visual, literary and performing arts. Other common disciplines include media arts, inter- or multi-disciplinary arts and emerging and new forms. Additionally, one agency awards a fellowship in arts administration. In 12 agencies, folk and traditional artists are included within the fellowship program, though it is important to note that many more agencies offer this type of opportunity through a separate apprenticeship program or grant category.

Fellowships support a tremendous diversity of artistic disciplines and mediums. Within broad categories such as literary or performing arts, state arts agencies address numerous classical and contemporary forms. For instance, current guidelines include:

**SAA Fellowship Award Eligibility
Frequency of Award**

Frequency of Award Eligibility	Number of SAAs	% of Fellowship Programs
Eligible every year	3	8%
Once every 2 years	3	8%
Once every 3 years	7	19%
Once every 4 years	6	16%
Once every 5 years	5	14%
Once every 6 years	2	5%
Once every 9 years	1	3%
Once every 11 years	3	8%
One-time eligibility	7	19%

**State Arts Agency Fellowship Awards
Disciplines Awarded**

Category	Number of SAAs
Visual Arts	35
Performing Arts	34
Literary Arts	33
Media Arts	26
Folk/Traditional Arts	12
Inter-/Multi-Disciplinary Arts	9
Emerging and New Forms	4
Arts Administration	1
Discipline-Based Programs	35

- **Literary Arts** – children’s, creative nonfiction, criticism, fiction, literature, nonfiction, playwriting, screenwriting, poetry, prose, short stories, translations, writing, young adult.
- **Performing Arts** – acting, choreography, composition, conducting, costume design, dance, directing, instrumental, music performance, musical theatre, performance art, set design, storytelling, theatre, vocal.
- **Visual Arts** – architecture, ceramics, clay, computer arts, crafts, design, digital and cyber art, drawing, experimental, fiber, glass, graphics, installations, mixed media, painting, paper, photography, plastic, printmaking, sculpture, two-dimensional art, three-dimensional art.
- **Media Arts** – audio, film, video.
- **Folk/Traditional Arts** – ethnic arts, folklife, oral traditions, performing traditions, traditional crafts, traditional dance, traditional music.
- **Inter-/Multi-Disciplinary Arts** – inter- or multi-disciplinary: computer art, performance art.
- **Emerging and New Forms** – new or emerging: forms, genres, media, performance.

As an alternative to discipline-based program structures, one agency offer grants for “creation” and one agency opts not to describe disciplines in the program guidelines.

Discipline Rotation: In many cases agencies choose to rotate the disciplines supported in any given fiscal year. Disciplines are rotated biennially in 16 agencies and every third year in three agencies. An additional 14 agencies allow applications from all disciplines every year.

Application Evaluation

Fellowship applications are reviewed by panels using criteria established in the program guidelines. Of the 37 state arts agencies with fellowship guidelines, 35 have openly stated evaluative criteria in the guidelines. Evaluation criteria typically address:

- Artistic excellence, quality or merit (32 SAAs)
- Professional or career achievements/history/activity (16 SAAs)
- Potential for the fellowship to enhance the artist’s career or achievement (7 SAAs)
- Other important concepts include consistency (6 SAAs), creativity (12 SAAs), commitment (7 SAAs), originality (6 SAAs), aesthetic investigation (5 SAAs), and community impact (4 SAAs).
- Folk and traditional fellowships may also take into account authenticity, traditional significance of the art form, relationship of the artist to the community and the degree to which the artist is participating in the community as a teacher or cultural leader.

Applications are collected and reviewed by panels or independent jurors. State arts agencies make a number of decisions about the review of fellowship applications, including: panel review versus one or two jurors; in-state or out-of-state panelists/jurors; whether the application review is open to the public; and whether a state arts agency council member sits on the panel. Many of the review processes include two or three phases, and often at least one of these phases includes a “blind” review of the application, i.e. reviewing work samples without the name or other identifying characteristics of the artist.

Supplemental Services

To supplement fellowship award dollars, state arts agencies often offer additional opportunities to fellowship recipients. These may include:

- supporting a public presentation or exhibition of the recipient’s work,
- including the artist on an approved registry,
- publishing a catalog or other documentation, or
- publicizing the award through press releases, newsletters and the agency Web site.

Fellowship Awards by State

SAA Fellowship Programs Fiscal Year 2009

State or Jurisdiction
Alabama
Arkansas
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Minnesota
Mississippi
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

State Arts Agency Fellowship Awards Fiscal Year 2007

State or Jurisdiction	Number of Grants	Grant Dollars	Median Grant Size
Alabama	14	\$70,000	\$5,000
Arizona	11	\$55,000	\$5,000
Arkansas	7	\$28,000	\$4,000
Connecticut	35	\$135,000	\$2,500
Delaware	16	\$75,850	\$5,100
Florida	77	\$74,750	\$1,000
Guam	1	\$3,000	\$3,000
Idaho	7	\$24,500	\$3,500
Illinois	86	\$372,200	\$7,000
Kansas	11	\$28,000	\$500
Kentucky	38	\$122,500	\$1,000
Louisiana	11	\$53,000	\$5,000
Maine	4	\$52,000	\$13,000
Maryland	93	\$247,000	\$3,000
Massachusetts	33	\$247,500	\$7,500
Mississippi	15	\$60,000	\$4,000
Nebraska	14	\$20,000	\$1,000
Nevada	18	\$49,500	\$2,750
New Hampshire	6	\$30,000	\$5,000
North Carolina	27	\$195,000	\$8,000
North Dakota	2	\$5,000	\$2,500
Ohio	62	\$305,000	\$5,000
Oregon	9	\$27,000	\$3,000
Pennsylvania	71	\$390,000	\$5,000
Rhode Island	33	\$98,000	\$2,500
South Carolina	5	\$10,000	\$2,000
South Dakota	10	\$36,000	\$3,000
Tennessee	14	\$70,000	\$5,000
Virginia	9	\$45,000	\$5,000
Washington	2	\$10,000	\$5,000
West Virginia	8	\$28,000	\$3,500
Wisconsin	9	\$72,000	\$8,000
Wyoming	4	\$10,000	\$3,000
Total	762	\$3,048,800	\$5,000

Data reflects the most recent available final descriptive report from each state arts agency, which is primarily from fiscal year 2007.

For More Information

In addition to this profile, NASAA can provide:

- Information on professional development grant funds available to individual artists from state arts agencies.
- Comparative grant-making statistics on a state by state basis, and
- Referrals to model programs and colleague agencies offering grants or services to artists.

For more information, contact Angela Han, Director of Research (202-347-6352 x115 or angela.han@nasaa-arts.org).

Methodology

The grant-making statistics included in this report are extracted from state arts agency Final Descriptive Reports (FDRs) as reported annually to the National Endowment for the Arts using the National Standard for Arts Information Exchange taxonomy. All other data is based on a review of publicly available program guidelines as posted on state arts agency Web sites. These guidelines are primarily from fiscal year 2009, but are occasionally from 2008.



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