


Iowa City Public Art Matching Grant Program

..... FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Iowa City Public Art Matching Grant Program aims to foster creativity and increase public access to public art opportunities in the Iowa City community.

	<p>TIMELINE</p> <p>Applications Due: March 2, 2026 by 3 p.m. PAAC Review & Funding Decisions: March - April Projects Must be Completed By: December 31, 2026</p>
	<p>FUNDING</p> <p>50/50 Matching Grant</p> <p>Max Grant: \$4,000 (total project cost of at least \$8,000) Minimum Grant: \$500 (total project cost of at least \$1,000)</p>
	<p>ELIGIBILITY (see FAQs for more detail)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Visual, audio, or performance-based projects✓ Publicly accessible and viewable within Iowa City✓ Organizations, schools, artists, businesses, individuals may apply
	<p>SELECTION PROCESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Applications will be evaluated against the 2026 Public Art Matching Grant Scoring Rubric.✓ The Public Art Advisory Committee makes final funding decisions.✓ The Committee can choose to fund a project for the full amount requested (up to \$4,000), a partial amount, or not at all.✓ Applicants will be notified of funding decisions by May 1, 2026.

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FUNDING:

How much grant funding can I apply for?

These are 50/50 matching grants, meaning the grant funding shall not exceed more than 50% of the total project costs. The maximum matching grant award is \$4,000 (towards a total project cost of at least \$8,000). The minimum matching grant award is \$500 (towards a total project cost of at least \$1,000). The grant program is intended to help catalyze projects which could not move forward without Public Art Matching Grant funding.

What funding sources can be used as “match” for the grant?

A minimum 50% match is required. Other non-City grant funds, donations, organizational or personal contributions, and/or in-kind services, commodities, or supplies are all eligible sources of matching funds. Proposals which leverage a higher percentage of non-City funding sources or demonstrate diverse financial commitments may score more competitively.

When must the funds be spent?

All projects must be completed, and all expenses paid, by December 31, 2026.

ELIGIBILITY:

What are the goals of the program?

The Public Art Matching Grant program is intended to foster creativity, enhance the community's image as an arts and cultural hub, and increase access and opportunity to public art in Iowa City. Public Art Matching Grant projects should advance the priorities outlined in the [Public Art Strategic Plan](#).

Who can apply?

Almost anyone can apply: organizations, schools, individuals, non-profits, arts and culture organizations, privately owned/operated businesses, neighborhood associations and individual artists may apply. What is most important is that the project meets the goals of the program, takes place within Iowa City, and is freely accessible to the public.

I was awarded a Public Art Matching Grant in the past. Am I eligible again?

Only if the previously awarded project was completed satisfactorily. Even then, the review committee may give higher preference to those projects or applicants which have not received funding before. If you have received funds in the past, you will be asked to describe in the application if the proposed project has changed or expanded from previous offerings.

What types of projects are eligible for grant funding?

Visual, audio, or performance-based projects. Past project examples include free musical performances, murals, pop-up painting events, art festivals, neighborhood art projects, temporary and pop-up art installations. Be creative!

Are there any projects that are NOT eligible for grant funding?

The following types of projects are not eligible for this grant program:

- Events or performances that are a part of an applicant's regular programs
- Those that do not have the arts as their primary focus
- Those intending to influence public policy or to evangelize a belief
- Those that advertise, promote, or gain in any way for a for-profit business or individual; or those that incorporate the logo or are intended to promote a non-profit organization
- Those for which patrons will be charged admission
- Events with a primary focus of fundraising

Are there any project components I should consider including in my proposal?

Public Art Matching Grant projects should advance the priorities outlined in the Public Art Strategic Plan.

Where can funded projects be located or performed?

Any installations or performances awarded Public Art Matching Grant Funds must take place within Iowa City. Projects may be located on public or private property but must remain free and openly accessible to and viewable by the public.

Do I need to obtain any approvals or permissions for my project in advance?

Yes. If you are proposing your project take place on public or City-owned property, you must obtain prior approval from the appropriate department(s) *prior to submitting an application*. If you are unsure what approvals are necessary, please contact the Public Art Coordinator at rkilburg@iowa-city.org.

If your project will take place on private property, you are responsible for contacting and obtaining prior approval from the private property owner and providing proof of that authorization in the grant application form. Please note that some private property (such as retaining walls), may be located in public right-of-way. In this case, you would also need to obtain approvals from the City in advance. If you are unsure if this is the case, please contact the Public Art Coordinator at rkilburg@iowa-city.org.

Some awarded projects may be required to obtain additional approvals or permits, at the City's discretion. These requirements would be outlined in the grant agreement after selection decisions are made.

Can I charge admission or a fee for individuals to access the public art project?

No. Projects awarded Public Art Matching Grant funds must be free and openly accessible to the public. Proposals which result in personal profit or gain for the applicant will not be considered.

What types of expenses can the matching grant funds be spent on?

When you submit your application, you will be asked to submit a detailed budget which clearly outlines which expenses Public Art Matching Grant Funds will be used for. Eligible uses include:

- ✓ Materials and supplies necessary for the creation of the artwork
- ✓ Wages/stipends for artists/performers to create the work
- ✓ Contract labor for installation or site prep

Are there any expenses that the matching grant funds CANNOT be spent on?

Ineligible expenses include: private organization expenses, general administration fees other than artist wages/stipends, fees to secure a site (permits, purchasing land) and food or beverages.

PROCESS & REVIEW

Who will review my application?

The Iowa City Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) will review all applications based on a scoring rubric and make final decisions during a PAAC meeting.

What criteria will my proposal be judged on?

Please review the [2026 Public Art Matching Grant Scoring Rubric](#) for more details about the criteria that proposals will be evaluated against.

Should we submit a letter of support?

The application includes a section for you to upload a letter of support, if you wish. Letters of support should be provided if you are working with any project partners and/or the project will take place on private property requiring property owner approval and cooperation. Any other letters of support which speak meaningfully to the need or benefit of your project are also welcome.

When will applicants be notified of selection decisions?

All applicants, regardless of whether they are being awarded funding, will be notified by May 1, 2026.

What terms will successful applicants need to agree to?

Awarded applicants will sign a grant agreement with the City agreeing to a completion timeline, scope of work, final report, reimbursement process, and any additional requirements or permits deemed necessary.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

I need an accessibility accommodation or assistance completing the application.

If you need disability-related accommodations to apply, please contact the Public Art Coordinator at 319-356-5248 or rkilburg@iowa-city.org. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time to meet your access needs.

When filling out the online application, will I be able to save my work and return to it in a prior submission?

Yes, the last page of the form includes a "Save as Draft" button at the bottom of the page. As an extra precaution, we recommend drafting responses to the application questions in a separate document and transferring them to the form when you're ready to submit.

I'm having trouble accessing the form or completing it.

Please contact the Public Art Coordinator at 310-356-5248 or rkilburg@iowa-city.org. It is recommended you give yourself sufficient time before the deadline to complete the form, in case of technical difficulties. Unfortunately, late submissions will not be accepted.