

STRATEGY SAMPLER

State Arts Agency Artist Fellowships

Artists play an essential role in every state's creative environment. State arts agencies have adopted a wide array of strategies to support individual artists, including grant programs as well as services providing information, networking, training and technical assistance. Fellowship awards are one important part of this funding and service mix.

This strategy sampler summarizes funding trends, policy goals and key programmatic issues of state arts agency individual artist fellowships, including eligibility parameters and application evaluation criteria and protocols. The information herein is based on publicly available fellowship program guidelines in fiscal year 2014 as well as 10 years of data tracking fellowship awards.

The majority of state arts agencies (SAAs) have fellowship programs, and fellowships are the largest source of SAAs' individual artist grant making. In FY2012, the most recent year for which grant data is available, 43% of all grant funding for individual artists went to fellowships, more than grants for projects, performances/exhibitions, apprenticeships, instruction or professional development. In FY2014, meanwhile, 30 SAAs have a fellowship program through which they directly award unrestricted funding to artists. In addition, two SAAs indirectly award fellowships, giving block grants to third-party organizations that use the funding to award fellowships to individual artists.

While program details may vary from state to state, there are many similarities among SAA fellowships, which are all built on the foundation of recognizing, honoring and supporting individual artists and their work. At the same time, in designing, implementing and evaluating its program, each SAA takes into account not only the needs of artists but also its state's unique cultural, political and economic environment. This strategy sampler presents the commonalities and distinctions among fellowship programs in effort to inform understanding and comparison of programs across the nation.

FELLOWSHIP GOALS

The broad goals of fellowship awards are to honor the achievements of artists, to enable the development of new creative works and to advance creative careers. Other, more specific fellowship goals include:

- Encouraging artists' contributions to the state's economy, communities, cultural vitality and/or quality of life
- Highlighting the professional accomplishments and creative excellence of artists
- Promoting the arts as important to citizens and worthy of financial support
- Stimulating greater public awareness of and engagement with various art forms
- Raising artists' public profiles within the state as well as beyond its borders

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Though these goals may be shared by project grants and other SAA awards for individual artists, fellowships are distinct in that they typically do not require matching funds and they do not usually restrict how recipients use them in service of their artistic practice.

Some state arts agencies, however, do not draw clear lines between fellowships and project grants, but rather have a program that is a hybrid of the two categories. Often in these instances, the program began as a fellowship and transitioned to a project grant, yet retains some of the attributes of its initial form. Similarly, many SAAs support folk and traditional arts through apprenticeship programs, which are akin to but distinct from fellowships. This report does not account for apprenticeship programs or hybrids of fellowships and project grants.

FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

Direct Fellowships (30 SAAs)

The award size and the number of awards bestowed per year are the two main variables of direct fellowship programs. According to available program guidelines, direct fellowship awards currently range in size from \$1,000 to \$12,000, while the most common award amount available is \$5,000. Some program guidelines specify exact award amounts, while others set the maximum and minimum limits and let the application review process determine the exact size of individual awards.

In FY2012, fellowship awards ranged from \$500 to \$13,000, while both the median and average award were \$5,000. Collectively, SAAs with fellowship programs granted 446 fellowships totaling nearly \$2.9 million.

Though fellowship funding can fluctuate from year to year, the percentage of fellowship dollars compared to total SAA grant funding has historically been relatively stable. Between fiscal years 2003 and 2012, for example, fellowship funding was 1.1% to 1.3% of total SAA grant funding. In the same 10-year period, total SAA funding for artist fellowships ranged from \$2.8 million (in 2005) to \$3.9 million (in 2003).

The number of direct fellowships to be awarded each year is predetermined in some states, though most program guidelines either don't specify or base it on available funding and/or the quality of applications. In FY2012,

SAA Fellowship Grants, FY2012

State	# of Grants	Total \$	Median \$
Alabama	11	\$55,000	\$5,000
Arkansas	9	\$36,000	\$4,000
Connecticut	31	\$192,500	\$2,500
Delaware	16	\$78,100	\$5,550
Idaho	5	\$20,000	\$4,000
Kentucky	17	\$82,000	\$7,500
Maine	6	\$55,000	\$13,000
Maryland	99	\$251,000	\$3,000
Massachusetts	68	\$279,000	\$7,500
Mississippi	29	\$120,800	\$4,000
Nebraska	9	\$20,000	\$1,000
Nevada	13	\$22,500	\$500
New Hampshire	2	\$8,000	\$4,000
New Jersey*	10	\$218,946	\$3,000
New York*	2	\$782,571	\$391,286
North Carolina	21	\$181,325	\$10,000
North Dakota	2	\$5,000	\$2,500
Ohio	37	\$185,000	\$5,000
Rhode Island	26	\$78,000	\$3,000
South Carolina	4	\$20,000	\$5,000
South Dakota	6	\$30,000	\$5,000
Tennessee	13	\$65,000	\$5,000
Utah	2	\$20,000	\$10,000
Virginia	4	\$20,000	\$5,000
Washington*	4	\$50,000	\$5,000
Total	446	\$2,875,742	\$5,000**

* New Jersey, New York and Washington include awards to individuals as well as to organizations that administer individual fellowship awards.

** The national median of fellowship awards excludes grants to organizations.

the number of fellowships granted by any one SAA ranged from 2 to 99, with a median of 12 and an average of 20.

Complementing fellowships in a few states are merit awards and honorable mentions, which recognize grantees or applicants with certain attributes, such as exemplary artwork. Five SAAs offer these supplemental awards, which range from \$500 to \$2,500.

Partnerships with Foundations and Third-Party Administration

Two state arts agencies support fellowships by awarding grants to foundations that in turn bestow fellowships to individual artists. The New York State Council on the Arts funds fellowships via the New York Foundation for the Arts, which administers individual awards to New York artists. Similarly, ArtsWA supports individual fellowships via grants to Artist Trust, a nonprofit organization serving artists in Washington state.

Some state arts agencies employ third-party administration of fellowships. In this arrangement, the SAA maintains program guidelines but partners with an organization to provide administrative support. For example, the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation facilitates the fellowship application-review process for the SAAs in Delaware, Maryland and New Jersey using the procedures and eligibility requirements established by the SAAs.

ARTIST ELIGIBILITY

A number of factors determine eligibility for fellowships. Most of them focus on the artists who are fellowship applicants. These artist factors are age, award history and frequency, student status, artistic experience, and residency status.

Age: More than half of the SAAs offering fellowships require that artists be at least 18 years old when applying. Other age minimums are 19, 21 and 25 years old.

Award History and Frequency: Most state arts agencies limit how often artists may receive fellowships and/or the total number of awards per their lifetime. Thirteen SAAs have guidelines restricting the number of fellowships per lifetime. Of the agencies without lifetime limits or that allow more than one award per lifetime, 19 specify how long a fellowship recipient must wait to be eligible to apply for another fellowship. These waiting periods range from 2 to 10 years, with 5 years being the most common. Eleven SAAs clarify that artists may submit just one fellowship application per grant cycle.

Student Status: Among SAAs that award fellowships, 23 have application restrictions related to high school, college/university and graduate school enrollment. Of these agencies, 20 prohibit applicants who are currently enrolled in any type of degree-granting program, while 4 prohibit those actively seeking an arts degree or a degree in a field related to their fellowship application.

Minimum Age	
Applicant Age	# of SAAs
18	18
19	1
21	2
25	1
N/A	8

Awards per Artist's Lifetime		
Per Lifetime	# of SAAs	% of Programs
1 fellowship	5	17%
2 fellowships	3	10%
3 fellowships	4	13%
4 fellowships	1	3%
N/A	16	53%

Eligibility for Multiple Awards		
Eligible after	# of SAAs	% of Programs
2-year wait	4	13%
3-year wait	2	7%
4-year wait	3	10%
5-year wait	5	17%
6-year wait	2	7%
10-year wait	3	10%
N/A	10	33%

Artistic Experience and Original Artwork: Creative control and the level of artistic experience are eligibility factors in the fellowship guidelines of some state arts agencies. Seven SAAs limit eligibility to creators of original works of art, distinguishing them from presenters or interpreters of existing works. In addition, 15 SAAs accept applications from "professional" or "established" artists, and four allow "emerging" artists to apply. While states do not always clearly define the requirements for artistic experience, artists are generally eligible for fellowships if they demonstrate a career-oriented, vocational commitment to their work, regardless of the income it generates.

Residency Status: In compliance with state statute, SAAs commonly limit their grant funding to legal residents of their state. These state residency requirements are effective at the time a fellowship application is filed. In some cases, the restriction is also retroactive and/or prospective. Among SAAs whose guidelines address residency restrictions, 26 require that the artist be a legal or current resident of the state at the time of the fellowship application. Of these, 21 require residency prior to the application for either a six-month, one-year, two-year or three-year period. Twelve SAAs have guidelines specifying that fellowship awardees must remain legal residents during the grant period.

Residency Requirements

Residency Requirement	# of SAAs	% of Programs
At time of application		
At time of application	26	87%
N/A	4	13%
Prior to application		
At least 3 years prior	2	7%
At least 2 years prior	7	23%
At least 1 year prior	11	37%
At least 6 months prior	1	3%
N/A	9	30%
During grant period		
For duration of grant period	12	40%
N/A	17	57%

Other Artist Eligibility Factors:

- Applicants must either be a U.S. citizen or have permanent resident alien status. (10 SAAs)
- Applicants cannot be an SAA staff or council member or be part of a staff or council member's immediate family. (7 SAAs)
- Applicants must be in good standing with the SAA and be current with any reporting requirements from previously received grants. (8 SAAs)
- Artist teams or collaboratives are eligible. (8 SAAs)
- Artist teams or collaboratives are not eligible. (5 SAAs)
- Applicants must be part of the SAA's artist registry. (2 SAAs)

DISCIPLINE ELIGIBILITY

Because individual artist fellowships support creative practices, artistic discipline is another major category of eligibility requirement. In awarding fellowships, state arts agencies consider not only which disciplines they fund but also how they group mediums and practices within those categories and how frequently they support them.

Discipline rotation: Discipline eligibility, unlike artist eligibility, is cyclical for some SAAs with fellowship programs. For example, visual arts and performing arts fellowships may be offered one year, and media arts and literary arts the next year. Nearly half of the SAAs with fellowship programs rotate the mix of disciplines they support each fiscal year, while eight do not cycle discipline eligibility. Discipline rotations are not always specified in guidelines. For the SAAs that rotate disciplines, six do so on a two-year cycle, seven on a three-year cycle and three on a four-year cycle.

Discipline diversity: Fellowships support a tremendous diversity of artistic disciplines. The most common fellowship discipline categories—visual, literary and performing arts—are broad, but address many specific practices and forms, both contemporary and classical. Other common fellowship disciplines

are more focused, such as media arts, inter- or multidisciplinary arts, and folk/traditional arts. Two SAAs award a fellowship for arts administration, and three others welcome applications from artists working in any discipline.

Eligible disciplines in currently available guidelines include:

- **Literary arts** – children's literature, creative nonfiction, criticism, fiction, nonfiction, playwriting, poetry, screenwriting, short stories
- **Performing arts** – acting, choreography, conducting, costume design, dance, directing, instrumental, music composition, music performance, musical theatre, performance art, set design, storytelling, theatre, vocal
- **Visual arts** – clay, drawing, experimental, fiber, glass, illustration, installation, mixed media, painting, photography, plastic, printmaking, sculpture, three-dimensional art, two-dimensional art, works on paper
- **Media arts** – animation, audio, computer arts, digital, film, radio, video
- **Craft arts** – basketry, clay, enamel, fiber, glass, jewelry, leather, metal, mixed media, paper, plastic, textiles, wood
- **Folk/Traditional arts** – folklife, oral traditions, performing traditions, traditional crafts, traditional dance, traditional music
- **Inter-/Multidisciplinary arts**
- **Design arts** – architecture, fashion design, graphic design, industrial design, interior design, landscape architecture, urban design
- **Experimental, new genre**
- **Arts administration**

Eligible Discipline	# of SAAs
Literary arts	27
Performing arts	27
Visual arts	27
Media arts	20
Craft arts	18
Folk/Traditional arts	9
Inter-/Multidisciplinary arts	6
Design arts	4
Experimental, new genre	6
Arts administration	2

APPLICATION EVALUATION: CRITERIA AND PROCESSES

Fellowship applications are reviewed by panelists using criteria provided by the state arts agency. Of the 30 state arts agencies with fellowship guidelines, 29 list evaluation criteria in them. Evaluation criteria typically address:

- Artistic excellence, quality or merit (29 SAAs)
- Professional or career achievements/history/activity (12 SAAs)
- Potential for the fellowship to enhance the artist's career or achievement (9 SAAs)
- Consistency of artwork and artistic vision (4 SAAs)
- Creativity in concept, form and use of medium (8 SAAs)
- Professional commitment or maturity as demonstrated by artwork or resume (3 SAAs)
- Benefit to state's artistic communities and/or general public (4 SAAs)
- Contribution to artistic discipline (7 SAAs)
- Technical proficiency (3 SAAs)

Folk and traditional arts fellowships also may take into account authenticity, traditional significance of the art form and relationship of the artist to the community.

A number of factors in the evaluation process relate to the composition of fellowship adjudication panels and the procedures of panel review, such as panel size, qualifications for the panelists (also known as

jurors) and whether the review process is "blind," meaning that the identities of applicants are withheld from the panelists. Currently available guidelines show SAAs employing the following to review fellowship applications:

- panel review (26 SAAs)
- one-juror review (2 SAA)
- three-juror panel review (1 SAA)
- in-state jurors for panel review (2 SAAs)
- out-of-state jurors for panel review (10 SAAs)
- nationally recognized jurors for panel review (3 SAAs)
- panel review is open to the public (1 SAA)
- panel review has multiple phases (1 SAA)
- blind panel review (13 SAAs)

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 recipients' work
- Including recipients in the SAA artist registry
- Publicizing fellowship awards through press releases, newsletters and the agency's website and social media
- Producing a documentary video about each fellowship recipient
- Providing performance, exhibition or publication opportunities for fellowship recipients
- Offering professional development and cultural entrepreneurship workshops
- Facilitating peer networking among fellowship recipients

METHODOLOGY

This strategy sampler presents a snapshot of individual artist fellowship programs based on state arts agency program guidelines publicly available in FY2014 and on grant-making statistics from FY2012 Final Descriptive Reports (FDRs). This report does not attempt to present a comprehensive picture of all individual artist fellowship programs. For example, while FY2012 FDR data is the most recent complete data set from which to draw information, one year of data does not reflect year-to-year program fluctuations, such as funding availability and application adjudication criteria. In addition, the detail and scope of grant guidelines vary by state, and in some cases guidelines may not cover all aspects of a program. State arts agency program administrators were contacted in certain cases to clarify topical areas, but a majority of the information in this report was mined from extant program guidelines.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To supplement this profile, NASAA can provide:

- information on SAAs' professional-development grants for individual artists;
- state-by-state comparative grant-making statistics; and
- referrals to model programs and colleague agencies offering grants or services to artists.

For more information, contact NASAA Research Director [Ryan Stubbs](#).

APPENDIX: EXISTING STATE ARTS AGENCY ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS

State	Fellowship Program
Alabama	Literary Arts Fellowship
	Design Fellowship
	Arts Administration Fellowship
	Performing Arts Fellowship
	Visual Arts Fellowship
Alaska	Connie Boochever Artist Fellowship
Arizona	Artist Research and Development Grant
Arkansas	Individual Artist Fellowship
Connecticut	Artist Fellowship
	Arts Administration Fellowship
Delaware	Individual Artist Fellowship
District of Columbia	Artist Fellowship
Florida	Individual Artist Fellowship
	Folk and Traditional Arts Fellowship
Idaho	Fellowship Award
Iowa	Artist Fellowship
Kentucky	Al Smith Individual Artist Fellowship
Maine	Individual Artist Fellowship
Maryland	Individual Artist Award
Massachusetts	Artist Fellowship
Mississippi	Artist Fellowship

State	Fellowship Program
Nebraska	Individual Artist Fellowship
Nevada	Artist Fellowship
New Hampshire	Individual Artists Fellowship
New Jersey	Individual Artist Fellowship
North Carolina	Artist Fellowship
North Dakota	Individual Artist Fellowship
Ohio	Individual Excellence Award
	Heritage Fellowship
Oregon	Individual Artist Fellowship
	Media Arts Fellowship
Rhode Island	Fellowship Grant
	Folk Art Fellowship
South Carolina	Individual Artist Fellowship
South Dakota	Artist Fellowship
Tennessee	Individual Artist Fellowship
Utah	Visual Arts Fellowship
Virginia	Artist Fellowship
Wyoming	Creative Writing Fellowship
	Performing Arts Fellowship
	Visual Arts Fellowship

This strategy sampler was updated in September 2014 by Paul Pietsch.

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is the membership organization that serves the nation's state arts agencies. NASAA helps state arts agencies fulfill their many citizen service roles by providing knowledge services, representation and leadership programs that strengthen the state arts agency community. NASAA also serves as a clearinghouse for data and research about public funding and the arts. For more information on the work of state arts agencies, call 202-347-6352 or visit www.nasaa-arts.org.