WYOMING ARTS COUNCIL

APPLICANT GUIDEBOOK

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / CAREER ADVANCEMENT GRANT

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO APPLYING WITH CLARITY AND CONFIDENCE

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help you complete the Professional Development / Career Advancement Grant application with clarity and confidence. Each section follows the structure of the application so you can move through it step by step.

ABOUT THE GRANT

The Wyoming Arts Council's Professional Development / Career Advancement Grant supports capacity-building efforts for both individual artists and organizations.

Funding of up to $1,000 is available to support opportunities that strengthen skills, knowledge, operations, and long-term impact for Wyoming's creative sector.

This grant is intended for individuals or organizations that chose not to apply for, or did not receive funding from, the Community Support Grant.

Wyoming Arts Council staff are available to assist with questions during the application process and encourage first-time applicants to reach out for support.

THE PROCESS

The following sections outline each part of the application and what information to include. Use this as a guide to provide clear, detailed, and complete responses.

DEFINITION

Professional development in the arts is the purposeful process of continuous learning, growth, and refinement of skills and knowledge. It includes opportunities that strengthen both craft and career.

Professional development allows artists and arts professionals to enhance their portfolio or practice and develop career readiness skills. It also strengthens communities and contributes to the sustainability of the arts and culture sector.

FUNDING EXAMPLES

Grant funds must be used for direct project costs with clear, tangible outcomes. Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Technical, online, or virtual capacity building such as website development, technical support, or digital skills training
- Equipment such as airless paint sprayers, kilns, lighting or sound equipment, musical instruments, or storage
- Furniture such as easels or music stands
- Professional services such as project-specific general liability insurance, performance space rental, web design, or consultant fees
- Professional development opportunities such as membership fees, artist residencies, public art training, booth fees, webinar fees, or board development and strategic planning training
- Marketing efforts such as artist branding, event promotion, or developing or refreshing an online presence, including print or digital materials like flyers, posters, and catalogs
- Engagement opportunities such as teaching, learning a new skill, or attending industry networking events or conferences

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Grant funds cannot be used for:

- Ordinary living expenses incurred during the grant period
- Salary, honorarium, or stipend for the grantee
- Food, beverages, alcohol, or catering services
- Items intended for resale

ELIGIBILITY

WHO CAN APPLY

- 501(c)(3) organizations, school districts, or government entities, including tribal councils, that did not receive a Wyoming Arts Council Community Support Grant during the current fiscal year
- Individual artists

PANEL REVIEW AND FUNDING

Applications are reviewed by a panel of arts professionals and evaluated using established criteria. Funding is awarded using a Fund or No Fund model based on panel scores.

- Applicants may request up to $1,000
- Organizations that did not receive a Community Support Grant may be eligible for up to two additional Arts Council grants for different programs or events, depending on eligibility requirements for each grant
- No cash match is required
- In-kind contributions should be documented and reported in the final report

TIMELINE

This grant is offered three times per year based on project start dates.

Visit the Wyoming Arts Council website for current deadlines and application timelines.

APPLICATION BREAKDOWN

Welcome to the Professional Development / Career Advancement Grant application breakdown. The following sections walk through each part of the application and outline what information to include.

This guide is designed to help you approach each section with clarity and purpose. Each response should work together to present a complete picture of your project, your goals, and your professional development.

APPLICATION SECTIONS

The application includes the following components:

- General Questions
- Proposal Narrative
- Artistic Activity and Involvement
- Professional Development
- Support Materials
- Budget

BEFORE YOU START

Before beginning your application, gather the materials you will need. Having these prepared will help you move through the application more efficiently and provide complete responses.

CHECKLIST

☐ Resume or CV

☐ Work samples

☐ Basic project details, including dates, location, and collaborators

☐ A budget outline

GENERAL QUESTIONS

This section asks for basic information about your proposed project. You will provide a project title, start and end dates, and a one sentence description.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

PROPOSAL NAME

Provide a concise and descriptive title for your project.

START AND END DATES

Enter the proposed timeline for your project.

Applications must be submitted at least six weeks prior to the project start date. This allows time for staff review, panel evaluation, and funding distribution.

There are three submission windows throughout the year. Apply based on your project's start date.

If your project does not have a fixed start date, list a start date that is at least six weeks after your planned application submission.

ONE SENTENCE PROPOSAL SUMMARY

Provide a brief and clear description of your project. This should quickly communicate what you plan to do.

ONE SENTENCE SUMMARY EXAMPLE

Attend a three-day printmaking workshop to develop new techniques and expand my current body of work.

COMMON MISTAKE

Being Too Vague

Applications without clear details or defined plans are difficult to evaluate.

WHAT THIS SECTION IS ASKING

Basic information about your proposal, including details needed to confirm eligibility and timing.

QUICK CHECKLIST

- Is your proposal title clear and specific?
- Do your dates fall within the eligible timeframe?
- Does your summary clearly describe your project?

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

The Proposal Narrative provides detail and context for your project. This section expands on your Proposal Summary and explains how grant funds will be used.

A strong narrative clearly outlines the who, what, where, when, and why of your project. It should give reviewers a complete understanding of your plan, your goals, and how the activity supports your professional development.

WHAT THIS SECTION IS ASKING

Describe, in detail, the project or activities you plan to undertake using grant funds. This includes how the funds will be used, who is involved, and what you aim to accomplish.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This is the foundation of your application. Reviewers rely on this section to understand both the details of your project and the purpose behind it.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

A clear description of the activity or project

- Who is involved, including any collaborators, instructors, or partners, and their roles
- When and where the project will take place, including timeline details if applicable
- How grant funds will be used
- For equipment or material purchases, include the specific item or link and explain why it was selected and how it supports your development
- The intended outcomes of the project and how it contributes to your growth and, when applicable, your community

Recommended length: 200 words or more

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE EXAMPLE

I will attend a three-day printmaking workshop in Denver, CO focused on encaustic monotype techniques. The workshop includes hands-on instruction and material exploration. This opportunity will allow me to expand my current practice and develop a new body of work.

KEY TIP

Be Clear and Specific

Use simple, direct language and include details such as who, what, where, when, and how. Specific applications are easier to review and score.

QUICK CHECKLIST

- Did you clearly describe your project?
- Did you include who, what, when, and where?
- Did you explain how the funds will be used?
- Would someone unfamiliar with your work understand your plan?

ARTISTIC ACTIVITY AND INVOLVEMENT

This section provides context about your background and experience in the arts. It helps panelists understand where you are in your career and how your proposed project fits into your overall development.

Describe your artistic practice, experience, and involvement in as much detail as needed to clearly represent your work and trajectory.

WHAT THIS SECTION IS ASKING

Provide an overview of your background in the arts, including your experience, current activity, and level of involvement.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Your artistic practice or role
- Your current career stage, such as emerging, mid-career, or established
- Where your work is shown, performed, or shared, such as galleries, exhibits, performances, online platforms, or events
- Relevant experience, including professional or volunteer work
- Any affiliations with arts organizations, if applicable
- Collaborations with artists or community partners

Recommended length: 200 words or more

GUIDANCE

Focus on experience that connects to your proposed project. This section should help reviewers understand your work, your trajectory, and the context for your application.

QUICK CHECKLIST

- Did you clearly describe your role in the arts?
- Did you include relevant experience and involvement?
- Does your background connect to your proposed project?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Building on your Artistic Activity and Involvement, this section focuses on how your proposed project supports your growth and career advancement.

Describe where you are currently in your career and how this opportunity will help you move forward. Your response should clearly connect the use of funds to your development as an artist or arts professional.

WHAT THIS SECTION IS ASKING

Explain how your proposed project supports your growth and contributes to your career advancement.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Your current position in your career and where you aim to go

- The specific skills, knowledge, or opportunities you will gain
- Tangible outcomes, such as new work, skills, or professional opportunities
- Intangible outcomes, such as networking, mentorship, or expanded perspective
- How this opportunity supports your practice or long-term goals
- Why this opportunity is important at this stage in your career

Recommended length: 200 words or more

EXAMPLE

This workshop will allow me to learn new encaustic techniques and expand my material knowledge. These skills will directly inform my next body of work and increase my ability to exhibit in new venues.

KEY TIP

Show the Impact

Explain what you will gain and how it supports your growth. Strong applications clearly connect the project to professional development.

QUICK CHECKLIST

- Did you describe what you will gain from this opportunity?
- Did you explain how it supports your career or practice?
- Did you explain why this opportunity matters at this stage?

SUPPORT MATERIALS

This section allows you to provide documents and materials that support your application. These materials give panelists additional context about your experience, your work, and your proposed project.

The following items should be included as part of your submission.

REQUIRED AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS

RESUME OR CV (REQUIRED FOR INDIVIDUALS)

Provide a resume or CV that reflects your experience as an artist or arts professional.

It is appropriate to include both personal and professional experience. The goal is to give panelists a clear understanding of your background and where you are in your career.

Examples of what to include may consist of:

- Awards or recognition
- Teaching artist experience
- Years working in your medium
- Classes, certifications, or formal education related to your craft
- Completed projects, including dates
- Exhibition, performance, gallery, fair, or festival experience

Sample formats:

- ***Sample Music Resume***
- ***Sample Visual Art/Craft Resume***

KEY TIP

Align Everything

Your proposal, budget, and support materials should all reflect the same project. Consistency helps panelists clearly understand your plan.

WORK SAMPLES

Provide samples that demonstrate your work and artistic practice.

- Multiple images may be combined into a single PDF
- Include relevant details such as medium, size, and process when possible
- Musicians, filmmakers, and performing artists may include links to audio or video work
- Creative writers may upload a writing sample

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

You may include additional materials that support your proposal and provide further context.

Examples include:

- Workshop or conference information
- Event details or schedules
- Marketing materials
- Letters of support from collaborators or partner organizations
- Quotes for equipment or items included in your budget

Providing clear and relevant materials helps panelists better understand your request.

WHAT THIS SECTION IS ASKING

Upload materials that support and strengthen your application by providing context for your experience, work, and proposed project.

GUIDANCE

Select materials that are clear, relevant, and directly connected to your proposal.

QUICK CHECKLIST

- Did you include all required materials?
- Are your work samples clear and representative of your work?
- Do your materials support and align with your proposal?

BUDGET

The budget outlines how grant funds will be used and provides a clear picture of your project expenses.

Your budget should align directly with your proposal narrative. Each expense should be specific, clearly explained, and directly connected to your project.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Describe how funds will be spent in detail.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- A clear list of project expenses
- Specific items, services, or materials being purchased
- Names of service providers, if applicable
- Links or descriptions for major purchases
- An explanation of how each expense supports your project

If your total project cost exceeds the grant request, explain how remaining costs will be covered.

COMMON MISTAKE

Misaligned Budget

Including expenses that are unclear, unsupported, or not reflected in the proposal can raise concerns during review.

BUDGET COMPONENTS

TOTAL EXPENSE

The full cost of your project, including all expenses.

AMOUNT REQUESTED

The amount you are requesting from the grant. This must be $1,000 or less.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

If your project exceeds $1,000, identify how the remaining costs will be covered. This may include personal funds, collaborators, or other funding sources.

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

In-kind contributions are non-monetary support such as goods, services, or expertise.

Examples include:

- Donated materials or equipment
- Volunteer time or professional services
- Use of space or resources

WHAT THIS SECTION IS ASKING

Provide a clear and detailed breakdown of your project costs and how grant funds will be used.

QUICK CHECKLIST

- Does your budget clearly match your proposal?
- Are all expenses specific and easy to understand?
- If your project exceeds $1,000, have you explained how the remaining costs will be covered?
- Are all expenses allowable under grant guidelines?

EXAMPLE 1: EQUIPMENT PURCHASE

PROJECT: PURCHASE A SEWING MACHINE

The full grant request will be used to purchase a HUSQVARNA® VIKING® OPAL™ 650 Sewing Machine. Additional costs, including shipping, will be covered out of pocket.

Category	Amount
Total Expense	$1,299.00
Grant Request	$1,000.00
**Applicant Contribution	$299.00
In-Kind	$0.00

***There is no in-kind as the funds provided to cover the full amount were not donated but covered by the applicant.*

EXAMPLE 2: WORKSHOP + MATERIALS

PROJECT: ATTEND WEBINAR SERIES AND PURCHASE MATERIALS

I will attend a four-part Encaustic Monotype Drawing and Mark-making webinar series in October and November 2025. The course focuses on developing encaustic monotype techniques through guided instruction and material exploration. Grant funds will support tuition and the purchase of course-recommended materials, including printmaking paper and encaustic wax paints. This project will allow me to build technical skills and apply new processes to future work.

Category	Amount
Total Expense	$1,000.00
Grant Request	$1,000.00
Applicant Contribution	$0.00
In-Kind	$150.00

BUDGET BREAKDOWN

Tuition

- Webinar series: $625.00

Materials

- Paper and printmaking supplies: $150.00 (includes taxes, shipping and handling)
    - For example: Masa Paper - 21” x 31”, Sized, Single Sheet
        Qty: 5, each $2.04, total: $10.20
- Encaustic wax paints: $225.00
    - Link to product website: R&F Handmade Paints
    - A selection of encaustic wax colors, ranging from $12.35 to $21 per paint block
    - Purchase a range of R&F encaustic wax paints, primarily 40ml sizes for cost efficiency, with select 104ml colors for frequently used hues
    - Select an assortment of ready-to-use colors, including a mix of light and dark values, warm and cool tones, and neutral or muted options based on course recommendations

In-Kind Contribution

- Donated canvases: $150.00

COMMON MISTAKES

The following are common issues identified during panel review. Addressing these areas can strengthen your application and improve clarity for reviewers.

FREQUENT ISSUES

- Incomplete applications or missing information
- Not fully responding to all prompt questions within each section
- Lack of specific details such as dates, collaborators, or project scope
- Unclear or limited explanation of how funds will be used
- Not aligning responses with grant guidelines and evaluation criteria
- Project start dates that do not meet eligibility requirements

PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following insights are shared directly from Professional Development Grant panelists and reflect what reviewers look for in strong applications.

> *"When applicants were vague about their work, it was more difficult for me to take them seriously. Applications with clear, detailed information were easier to evaluate and score highly. I appreciated seeing strong visual representation of work and clear evidence of experience."*
>
> *— 2026 Professional Development Panelist*

> *"For future applicants, I recommend fully utilizing the Additional Documents section by including relevant supporting materials and a simple budget outline. Including links within the application can also help reviewers better understand proposed activities or purchases. Applications are strongest when they clearly identify collaborators and balance detailed logistics with a clear explanation of why the project matters."*
>
> *— 2026 Professional Development Panelist*

HELPFUL REMINDERS

- Write clearly using simple, direct language
- Be specific and include as much relevant detail as possible
- Address the who, what, where, when, and why of your project
- Clearly describe how this opportunity supports your growth as an artist

- Ensure all questions are fully answered
- Follow grant guidelines and eligibility requirements
- Review funding limitations carefully
- Strong applications clearly connect the use of funds to professional development

RESOURCES

The following resources are available to support you throughout the application process. If you have questions, Wyoming Arts Council staff are available to assist.

GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

- Professional Development / Career Advancement Grant Criteria
- Grant Guidelines

ADDITIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES

- Wyoming Arts Alliance Webinar: From Insight to Impact: Evaluation Strategies for Arts and Culture Entities
- Wyoming Arts Council Resource Hub

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ABOUT THE WYOMING ARTS COUNCIL

The Wyoming Arts Council was established in 1967 to provide a full spectrum of programs and services to Wyoming's artists and arts organizations. Since 1999, the Arts Council has operated as part of the Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources.

MISSION

The Wyoming Arts Council provides leadership and invests resources to champion, sustain, and cultivate community through the arts.

VISION

The Wyoming Arts Council envisions a Wyoming where the arts are a driving force in the social, economic, educational, and everyday life of its citizens.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / CAREER ADVANCEMENT GRANT PANELIST SCORING RUBRIC

10 - EXEMPLAR Each question has been answered with depth and clarity; all criteria have been met with exceptional detail and insight; Perfect or near-perfect; exemplary standard; could serve as a benchmark.

9- STRONG All criteria have been met; well-elaborated answers have been provided; improvements needed do not detract from the overall response. Responses are concise and the project is well outlined. All aspects of the application are thorough and have been conveyed clearly.

8 - COMPREHENSIVE All criteria met; project proposal is well outlined and most details are provided, minor enhancements needed in clarity or depth. Application considers all factors, is well articulated and is understandable. Application is complete and responses are consistent.

7 - SOLID Responses adequately address all criteria and meet expectations, but questions remain about details. Application answers questions but leaves additional inquiry about the full scope of the proposed project. Responses are acceptable but not exemplary.

6 - SATISFACTORY Minimally meets criteria but lacks clarity or thoroughness. Responses are rudimentary and lack depth. The application struggles to have depth and lacks consistency throughout responses; however, the applicant makes a decent effort to respond to each question.

5 - AVERAGE Basic information is provided but is lacking pertinent details. Responses lack attention to detail and leave many questions unanswered. The application as a whole lacks context and information about the proposed project.

4 - SUBPAR Attempts to address the question but is deficient in coherence or depth. Application is unsatisfactory, significantly lacks information, details, and accuracy. The proposal is below acceptable and is less than adequate.

3 - BASIC Some attempt to address the question but falls significantly short of expectations. Lacks any clarity and is significantly lacking in information.

2 - UNSATISFACTORY Only a very basic attempt to address the questions with minimal coherence or relevance; Consistently fails to answer the questions; careless with details and accuracy.

1 - MINIMAL Insufficient information is provided. Application is unacceptable. No attempt has been made for completeness and lacks coherency and consistency.