REGIONAL ARTS WA

create and belong

Next Level Fellowships for Young Regional Artists and Arts Workers
Guidelines and Tips

Introduction

Kaya! (Hello)

Are you interested in taking your arts practice to the next level?

Next Level Fellowships are available to support young and emerging regional artists and arts workers to build skills so they can develop and sustain an arts career in the regions.

Applicants can apply for $8,000 to support creative activity and professional development for a period of one year.

This program is open to applicants from regional and remote Western Australia aged between 18-26. Applicants can be an individual, or a small group of creative collaborators (e.g. a music band, dance group).

Is this you? Then, read ahead!

Who can apply?

Use the below checklist to see whether you are eligible to apply:

- ☐ I/we am an independent artist, arts worker, cultural worker, producer
- ☐ I/we am aged between 18-26 by the time the application closes
- ☐ I/we have been based in regional WA* for at least 12 months prior to application
- ☐ I/we have an Australian Business Number (ABN) registered in regional WA**

Clarification on “regional” and ABN status is provided on the next page.

If you have said yes to all of the above criteria, you can apply for the Next Level Fellowship.

Regional Arts WA is committed to diversity and inclusion. We encourage applications from those who are First Nations, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, LGBTQI+ and people with disability.

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Regional Arts WA receives core funding from the State Government through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and Lotterywest.

*What does regional mean? In this context, regional means anyone who lives in the following Western Australian Regional Development Commission areas: Peel, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Goldfields-Esperance, Wheatbelt, Mid West, Great Southern, South West, Kimberley. If you are unsure if your address is regional, please contact Regional Arts WA.
**What if I don't have an ABN? You can apply for an ABN online for free. Find out more about applying for or updating your ABN here: https://www.abr.gov.au/business-super-funds-charities/applying-abn If you don't have your own ABN, you will need to find a not-for-profit organisation or Local Government Authority to auspice you. Your auspice will accept legal and financial responsibility for the grant on your behalf. Auspice organisations are required to be based and registered in regional WA. If you need help finding an auspice, get in contact with us.

If you come across other terms in these Guidelines that are unfamiliar, please check our Glossary for clarification or ask our Project Officer for guidance.

What can you apply for?

You can apply for a range of different activities!

All art forms are eligible, including (but not limited to) visual arts, theatre, dance, writing, music, film, new media and cultural projects.

Some examples of activities are:

- Collaborations
- Creation of new works
- Skills development
- Research
- Experimentation
- Professional development, mentoring and training
- Presentation, promotion and marketing
- Residencies.

- **Travel**
  You can travel within WA, nationally and overseas during the project but are asked to spend most of your time in regional WA so the benefits of the grant are evident in the regions.

- **Mentorships**
  To get the most out of your experience, you are encouraged to consider including a mentoring component in your project. Regional Arts WA can help you identify suitable mentors; contact us for more information.

- **Equipment purchases (up to $1,000 per item)**
  The intention of this fund is not to support the purchase of equipment but you may apply for this if it is more financially viable to purchase rather than rent equipment.

- **Group Applicants**
  We recognise that some artists prefer to create collectively, so for the first time, the Next Level Fellowship is available not only to individuals, but also to small groups (1-3 people) that regularly create together and intend to keep working together. For example, you might be a music band, or a writer/illustrator team.

How much can you apply for?

The Next Level Regional Fellowship provides $8,000 to support your creative activity and professional development over a period of one year.

Important dates!

Closing Date for applications: **Monday, April 20 2026, 11.59pm.**

Your activities must take place between 1 July 2026 and 30 June 2027.

The Regional Arts WA Project Officer will be able to provide feedback on one draft application per applicant. Drafts must be submitted by **Monday 6 April 2026.**

Are there other program benefits?

Yes! In addition to your own creative activity and development, other benefits of the program include:

- **Additional funds** to support attendance at a conference or gathering with the other successful applicants. We aim to make this experience relevant for the whole group.
- **Online group induction** for recipients at the commencement of the program to get the rundown on Next Level.
- **Alumni Support** – Regional Arts WA will provide ongoing support to recipients of the Next Level program through promoting their activities and achievements, and by providing platforms to assist WA's emerging creative leaders from the regions to stay in touch with each other and develop networks in the sector.

How do you apply?

Applications must be made in SmartyGrants. You will need to sign up for a free account, if you don't already have one. Head to https://regionalartswa.smartygrants.com.au/nlf and click **Apply Now** to get started.

We recommend having a chat with Regional Arts WA Project Officer, Megan Lemon, to confirm your eligibility and discuss your project before you proceed with your application. Megan is a previous recipient of a Next Level Fellowship, so she knows the program well.

Helpful resources

Grant writing:

- The Grants Hub: https://www.thegrantshub.com.au/grant-resources
- Five tips for writing successful grant applications: https://regionalartswa.org.au/news/five-tips-for-writing-successful-grant-applications
- ArtsHub Artists Essentials Toolkit: https://youtu.be/WIgjmUT5_UI
- Glossary of common terms used in arts funding guidelines and applications: https://shorturl.at/dHR47

Templates:

- Sample Tax Invoice [PDF]
- Biography Template [PDF]

What support material should be included?

Support material should be submitted with your application to help the assessors gain a better understanding of you and your project.

There are three types of support material you can submit:

1. Artist, Producer or Arts Worker Information

   You will need to include either a biography (bio) or a Curriculum Vitae (CV) for yourself and any artists, mentors or key collaborators involved your project.

   Each bio or CV should be presented:

   - ☐ As a single document
   - ☐ A4 size
   - ☐ Maximum two pages
   - ☐ PDF format

2. Examples of your work

   Include relevant and recent examples of your work. You will be able to upload a maximum of:

   - ☐ Three written documents (five pages each, combined into one PDF file)
   - ☐ Five photographs or images such as artworks or examples of past projects
   - ☐ Three direct links of audio, images or video*
   - ☐ Two audio files* (mp3 format preferred)
   - ☐ Two video files* (no more than 25MB in size).

   *If you are providing either audio or video the assessors will view/listen to a combined maximum total of three minutes. If your materials are longer than three minutes, you can list specific times for the assessors to watch/listen to.

3. Letters of support

   An important part of any application is the inclusion of letters of support from those you have worked or collaborated with. Support letters can also be thought of as endorsements from those who have seen what you can do. A support letter should explain to the assessors how the project or activity will benefit you and the development of your skills. If applicable, it will also explain how the project or activity will benefit the community.

   You can include up to five letters of support from individuals, groups or organisations. Each letter should not exceed one A4 page and all support letters should be combined into one PDF file.

What can't you apply for?

- Projects or activities that do not involve or benefit emerging regional artists or arts workers.
- Projects that mostly benefit a metropolitan location or areas outside of regional WA.
- Projects or activities that do not have a clear arts component.
- Projects that have already taken place.
- Activities already funded by Regional Arts WA or the Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries through other funding programs.
- Fundraising, competitions, prizes and trophies.
- Activities that will be academically assessed or any school curriculum-based activity.
- Equipment purchases over $1,000 - including instruments, equipment, software, computers and/or uniforms.
- Construction, purchasing of studios, workspaces, galleries or any other capital works.

Who can't apply?

You cannot apply for the Next Level Fellowship if:

- You are based in a metropolitan area – this includes anyone in the greater Perth area.
- You have overdue acquittals for grants from funding programs, including those from Regional Arts WA, Community Arts Network, Department of Local, Government, Sports and Cultural Industries or the Australian Government.
- You have previously been a successful recipient of a Next Level Fellowship.

How will applications be assessed?

Your application will be assessed by a Panel external to Regional Arts WA, made up of young peers and industry professionals who have experience across a range of art forms, the regions and the arts industry as a whole.

To assess your application, the Panel will consider the following:

Artistic Potential

Panelists will assess the potential and calibre of those involved. They may consider the following:

- Artistic merit of proposed project
- Quality of work previously produced by the applicant and collaborator/mentor
- Demonstrated ability, skills and creative thinking
- Level of innovation, ambition, or experimentation
- Dedication to building a creative career in regional WA.

Viability

Panelists will assess your proposed activity and consider the following:

- Relevance and timeliness of proposed activity
- Realistic and achievable planning and resource use
- Support from a recognised individual or organisation within the arts and cultural sector
- Where proposals involve working with diverse audiences or communities, the Panel will look for demonstrated cultural understanding and appropriateness (cultural competencies).

Impact

Panelists will assess the impact that the proposed activity will have on your arts practice and career. They may consider the following:

- Capacity to strengthen skills and abilities of artist/arts worker
- Potential to extend arts practice, including working at greater scale or significance
- Potential to discover and develop new markets and raise your profile
- Potential to create a sustainable arts career in a regional setting.

Working with Children

If you're carrying out child-related work as part of your project, all artists and arts workers involved must have a current Working with Children Check as required by WA law.

For more information visit https://www.workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au

Working with First Nations Cultural Content and communities

Regional Arts WA requires applicants to show how they will acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural knowledge and intellectual property.

Further details on the protocols and proper acknowledgements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their culture are available from the Creative Australia's First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts.

You may also contact Regional Arts WA for advice specific to your project.

Successful Applicants

Payment

If you are successful, you will be notified by Regional Arts WA and asked to sign a funding agreement. After the agreement has been signed, and any other conditions met, then you will need to send an invoice to Regional Arts WA.

Useful Resource: Sample Tax Invoice [PDF]

Acquittal

You must provide an acquittal within 8 weeks of the project end date. Acquittal forms are available via SmartyGrants, and you will need to log in to complete.

If you do not provide an acquittal within the given timeframe, you may be considered ineligible for future funding rounds until your acquittal has been submitted and accepted.

Privacy

Regional Arts WA values applicants' privacy.

For details on how we collect, store and use information, applicants can review our Privacy Policy at https://regionalartswa.org.au/legal/privacy-policy or contact us at info@regionalarstwa.org.au or 9200 6200 for a copy.

Acknowledgement of Funding

Next Level Fellowships are part of the Regional Arts and Culture Investment Program, delivered by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, with funding from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

The purpose of the program is to drive the creation of jobs, drive economic development and tourism and improve social cohesion by supporting the creative and cultural industries in regional Western Australia. Through strategic investments, the program aims to build capacity in the regions and contribute to liveability and vibrancy of regional communities.

Department of **Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries**

Department of **Primary Industries and Regional Development**