

# [Literary) Arts {Fund\

## INNOVATION PROJECT GRANT APPLICATIONS 2026 GUIDE

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL

The Literary Arts Fund will award a total of \$1 million in grants in 2026 to literary arts nonprofits for new, one-time, and forward-thinking projects that aim to address critical structural challenges that, if improved or solved, would ultimately strengthen literary arts nonprofits' abilities to serve creative writers. Proposed projects, which may be collaborative, should align with this description and goal and have impact beyond the project timeline. This opportunity is anticipated to be highly competitive.

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### KEY DATES

- **June 8, 2026:** Start of open call for [innovation project grant applications](#).
  - **June 18, 2026:** Virtual info session on innovation project grants. [Interested applicants are strongly encouraged to register and attend](#).
  - **August 17, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. EDT:** Deadline for innovation project grant applications.
  - **By December 31, 2026:** Innovation project grant applicants and recipients are notified via their Submittable account and email.
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### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An applicant must be an independent nonprofit (or fiscally-sponsored) literary arts organization or publisher based in the U.S. (in terms of location and activities) whose primary mission directly supports adult creative writers in making artistic work and sharing it with readers in at least one of the following ways:

- Present them at public events such as festivals, readings, open mics, spoken word performances, lectures, or conversations;
- Publish their work in print or digital publications such as books, chapbooks, literary journals, magazines, websites, or zines;

- Provide them with writing residencies, retreats, mentorships, or workshops;
- Build their readership and following through digital or print feature articles, interviews, book reviews, online archives, or podcasts; or,
- Recognize their artistic achievement through awards, fellowships, or prizes.

Additionally, to be eligible to apply, a literary arts nonprofit must:

- Be post-pilot as demonstrated by having been established for three years or more based on the date of nonprofit incorporation at the time of application. If the applicant is fiscally sponsored, this would be demonstrated by the contract date between the fiscal sponsor and applicant;
- Have leadership stability as demonstrated by a current executive director who has led the nonprofit through at least one full year of operations, i.e., has served in their role for twelve consecutive months or more at the time of application; and
- Have financial stability as demonstrated by an annual operating budget of at least \$50,000, not including in-kind/non-cash contributions. For fiscally sponsored organizations and publishers: the organization or publisher, not the fiscal sponsor, must meet this requirement.

The Literary Arts Fund’s grantmaking strategy does not include the following:

- Dramatic arts nonprofits whose primary mission is focused on screenwriters and playwrights.
- Storytelling nonprofits with a primary mission of supporting this oral art form.
- Arts therapy nonprofits that focus on writing for its therapeutic purposes.
- Nonprofits, publishers, initiatives, and projects that are a department or division of, or are fiscally sponsored by, a college or university.
- Nonprofits whose primary mission is to present, publish, or support young writers.
- Arts education nonprofits that focus on increasing K-12 students’ access to the arts and learning through the arts, in or out of school.
- Literacy nonprofits that focus on developing or strengthening youth or adult reading and writing skills and abilities.
- Academic, research, school, and public libraries.
- Trade and service organizations whose mission is focused primarily on serving other nonprofits.

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## **APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

- Nonprofit literary arts (or fiscally-sponsored) organizations or publishers that meet the fund’s full eligibility requirements may apply independently or as the lead of a collaborative project.

- Only one nonprofit may apply for collaborative projects. This lead applicant will have an opportunity to list collaborators in the application. If these collaborators are allocated sub-awards (project funds) in the project budget, they must meet all of the Fund’s eligibility requirements. The lead applicant is responsible for verifying and confirming that each collaborator receiving a sub-award from the project budget meets all of the Literary Arts Fund’s eligibility requirements.
- Literary arts nonprofits awarded a general operating grant in 2026 are ineligible to apply independently for an innovation project grant until twelve months after the general operating grant was awarded. They may, however, be a participant in a collaborative application for an innovation project grant in the same year they received a general operating grant and would be eligible to receive sub-awards as noted in the project budget.
- Grant requests may range from \$25,000 to \$100,000 as determined by the project budget. Matching funds are not required, nor is other funding for the project, pending or committed.
- Should an innovation project grant be awarded, funds will be disbursed in a single payment to the nonprofit that applied independently or as the lead applicant. Lead applicants would then be fully responsible for disbursing sub-awards.
- Innovation project grant funds are to be used during the project period per the timeline and project budget submitted with the application.
- Projects must commence some time after January 1, 2027, and conclude before or by December 31, 2027.

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## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Nonprofit literary arts (or fiscally-sponsored) organizations or publishers that are eligible to apply must complete and submit an application form via Submittable from **June 8, 2026, to August 17, 2026, at 8:59 p.m. PDT / 9:59 p.m. MDT / 10:59 p.m. CDT / 11:59 p.m. EDT.**

The Literary Arts Fund recognizes the commitment needed to complete a grant application. All interested applicants must first complete an **eligibility quiz** on Submittable, which is a series of “yes” or “no” questions based on the eligibility requirements and guidelines listed above.

For collaborative innovation project grant applications, the lead applicant is responsible for verifying and confirming that each collaborator receiving a sub-award from the project budget meets all of the Literary Arts Fund’s eligibility requirements.

Literary arts nonprofits wishing to modify their application must [withdraw their initial submission on Submittable](#) and reapply before the deadline.

The use of generative AI to produce any part of the application narrative is not permitted.

The Literary Arts Fund is not responsible for applications not received by the deadline due to user error. Applicants may visit the [Submitter Resource Center](#) or [contact Submittable](#) for questions about using the platform and technical support.

Grant applicants and recipients will be notified about the results by December 31, 2026.

The Literary Arts Fund's decisions regarding eligibility are final.

For questions, visit the Literary Arts Fund's [grants page](#) or [FAQ page](#), or email [grants@literaryartsfund.org](mailto:grants@literaryartsfund.org).

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## MATERIALS NEEDED TO APPLY

If your literary arts nonprofit, or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication, is **applying independently** for an innovation project grant, it will be helpful for you to have gathered the following documents:

- Board list with professional affiliations [if fiscally sponsored, upload the fiscal sponsor's board list with professional affiliations]
- IRS determination letter [if fiscally sponsored, upload the fiscal sponsor's IRS determination letter]
- Fiscal Sponsorship Partnership Contract or Agreement Letter [if applicable]
- Annual Operating Budget for the Current Fiscal Year
  - Here is an annual operating budget template that may be helpful to review or use:  
<https://literaryartsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Literary-Arts-Fund-Annual-Operating-Budget-Templates-for-Organizations-and-Publishers.xlsx>.
  - If your organization/press/publication is fiscally sponsored, upload your current annual operating budget, not your fiscal sponsor's.
- Project budget
  - Total grant requests may range from \$25,000 to \$100,000 and must include the income and one-time costs directly related to the project and not other ongoing general operating costs.
  - Please add details explaining income and expense line items.
  - On the income side, include other funders, if any (not required). Matching funds are not required. Other pending or committed funding is also not required.

- On the expense side, indirect administrative costs of 20% of the project budget may be included.
- Here is a **project budget template** that may be helpful to review or use: <https://literaryartsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Literary-Arts-Fund-Project-Budget-Template-for-Independent-Applications.xlsx>.
- Most recent audit or an unaudited financial statements (income statement and balance sheet) [if fiscally sponsored, fiscal sponsor's most recent audit or unaudited financial statement; audits or unaudited financial statements dated earlier than 2023 will not be accepted]
- Most recent Form 990 or 990-EZ [if fiscally sponsored, fiscal sponsor's Form 990 or 990-EZ; IRS Form 990s earlier than 2023 will not be accepted]

If your literary arts nonprofit, or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication, is **applying as the lead applicant** of a collaborative innovation project grant, it will be helpful for you to have gathered the following documents:

- Lead applicant's board list with professional affiliations [if fiscally sponsored, fiscal sponsor's board list]
- IRS determination letter of lead applicant
- Fiscal Sponsorship Partnership Contract or Agreement Letter of lead applicant [if applicable]
- Lead applicant's Annual Operating Budget for the Current Fiscal Year
  - Here is an annual operating budget template that may be helpful to review or use: <https://literaryartsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Literary-Arts-Fund-Annual-Operating-Budget-Templates-for-Organizations-and-Publishers.xlsx>.
  - If your organization/press/publication is fiscally sponsored, upload your current annual operating budget, not your fiscal sponsor's.
- Project budget
  - Total grant requests may range from \$25,000 to \$100,000 and must include the income and one-time costs directly related to the project and not other ongoing general operating costs.
  - Please add details explaining income and expense line items.
  - On the income side, include other funders, if any (not required). Matching funds are not required. Other pending or committed funding is also not required.
  - On the expense side, indirect administrative costs of 20% of the project budget may be included. **List the collaborator(s) and any sub-award(s) to be received**, and include details about what the sub-award would support.
  - Here is a **project budget template** that may be helpful to review or use: <https://literaryartsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Literary-Arts-Fund-Project-Budget-Template-for-Collaborative-Applications.xlsx>.
- Lead applicant's most recent audit or an unaudited financial statements (income statement and balance sheet) [if fiscally sponsored, fiscal sponsor's most recent

audit or unaudited financial statement; audits or unaudited financial statements dated earlier than 2023 will not be accepted]

- Lead applicant's most recent Form 990 or 990-EZ [if fiscally sponsored, fiscal sponsor's Form 990 or 990-EZ; IRS Form 990s earlier than 2023 will not be accepted]

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## **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

Below please find the application questions that literary arts nonprofits eligible to apply for a 2026 innovation project grant will be asked, which will appear with slightly different formatting in Submittable.

### **Section 1: General Information**

- ❖ Name of Literary Arts Nonprofit or Fiscally-Sponsored Organization or Publisher:
- ❖ Mission Statement:
- ❖ Website:
- ❖ Address Line 1:
- ❖ Address Line 2:
- ❖ City:
- ❖ State/Territory:
- ❖ ZIP Code:
- ❖ Phone Number:
- ❖ First and Last Name of Executive Director: [If your literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication does not have an executive director, enter the name of the person with an equivalent title. If it has co-Executive Directors, list both.]
- ❖ Executive Director Short Bio (limit: 500 words): [If your literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication has co-Executive Directors, include both of their short bios.]

- ❖ Executive Director Email: [If your literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication has co-Executive Directors, include both of their emails.]
- ❖ Length of Service (In Years) as Executive Director: [If your nonprofit has co-Executive Directors, include the length of service for the director that has served in their role for the least amount of time.]
- ❖ List of Board of Directors and their Professional Affiliations: [If your organization/press/publication is fiscally sponsored, upload your fiscal sponsor's Board list]
- ❖ How many published creative writers currently serve on your board of directors?
- ❖ Annual Operating Budget for the Current Fiscal Year: [Here is a budget template if you need one:  
<https://literaryartsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Literary-Arts-Fund-Annual-Operating-Budget-Templates-for-Organizations-and-Publishers.xlsx>.]
- ❖ Most Recent Form 990: [The Literary Arts Fund is not able to accept IRS Form 990s earlier than 2023. If your organization/press/publication is fiscally sponsored, upload your fiscal sponsor's most recent IRS Form 990.]
- ❖ Most Recent Audit or Unaudited Financial Statements (Income Statement and Balance Sheet): [The Literary Arts Fund is not able to accept audits or unaudited financial statements of fiscal years earlier than 2023. If your organization/press/publication is fiscally sponsored, upload your fiscal sponsor's most recent audit or unaudited financial statements.]

## **Section 2: 501(c)(3) Status**

- ❖ Does your organization/press/publication have its own 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS?
  - Yes, my organization/press/publication has its own 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS.
    - EIN:
    - IRS Determination Letter:
    - Date of Incorporation:
  - No, but my organization/press/publication has a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.
    - Fiscal Sponsor:

- Fiscal Sponsor EIN:
- Fiscal Sponsor IRS Determination Letter:
- Fiscal Sponsorship Partnership Contract or Agreement Letter:
- Date of Contracted Partnership with Fiscal Sponsor: [This date must match the date on the uploaded fiscal sponsorship contract or agreement letter]
- Fiscal Sponsor Mailing Address:
- Fiscal Sponsor Website:
- First and Last Name of Fiscal Sponsor Contact:
- Fiscal Sponsor Contact Title:
- Fiscal Sponsor Contact Email:

**Section 3: Innovation Project Proposal Narrative**

- ❖ Is your literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication applying independently for an innovation project grant or as the lead applicant of a collaborative?
  - My literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication is applying for an innovation project grant that it will carry out independently.
  - My literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication is the lead applicant for a collaborative innovation project grant.
    - List each collaborating literary arts nonprofit and/or fiscally-sponsored organization or publisher that would receive a sub-award as noted in the project budget: [If not applicable, enter “n/a.”]
    - List each collaborator that will actively participate in undertaking the innovation project but would not receive a sub-award: [If not applicable, enter “n/a.”]

- Mission Statement(s): [In this field, include each collaborator's name before its mission statement. Include only collaborators that would receive a sub-award as noted in the project budget.]
- Contact Information: [In this field, include only collaborators that would receive a sub-award, as noted in the project budget, and follow the below format for each.
  - Name of literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication:
  - First Name and Last Name of Contact:
  - Title of Contact:
  - Email of Contact:
  - Phone Number of Contact:]
- Website(s): [In this field, include each of the collaborators' names before their website URLs. Include only collaborators that would receive a sub-award as noted in the project budget.]

- ❖ Project Title:
- ❖ In 1 to 3 sentences, provide a summary of the proposed project:
- ❖ Project start date: [The project start date should be any time after January 1, 2027.]
- ❖ Project end date: [The project end date should be any time before or on December 31, 2027.]
- ❖ Amount Requested: [Applicants may request any amount ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000.]:
- ❖ Please describe the proposed project (limit: 2,500 words): [Include the following:
  - a. How will the project address a critical structural challenge that, if improved or solved, would ultimately strengthen your literary arts nonprofit's or fiscally-sponsored organization's/press'/publication's ability to serve creative writers?
  - b. How did your literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication determine this was a critical challenge?

- c. How will this project help fulfill your literary arts nonprofit's or fiscally-sponsored organization's/press'/publication's mission? If this is a collaborative project, how will it help fulfill your literary arts nonprofit's or fiscally-sponsored organization's/press'/publication's mission, as well as your collaborator's/collaborators' mission(s)?
  - d. Why is your literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication best suited to address this critical challenge? Include any relevant experience or qualifications of key staff or others who will help carry out the project. If this is a collaborative project, why is your literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication best suited to serve as the lead applicant and to lead the implementation of the project?]
- ❖ If this is a collaborative project, what are the roles and responsibilities of each collaborator? [Describe the roles and responsibilities of each collaborator, including those that would receive a sub-award and those that would not.]
  - ❖ Please list the project's specific goals and anticipated outcomes (limit: 1,500 words): [Describe how your literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication will know that the project made a difference.]
  - ❖ Project Timeline (limit: 1,500 words): [Include dates and specific activities.]
  - ❖ Please provide a summary of how grant funds would be used (limit: 250 words):
  - ❖ If awarded a grant less than the amount requested, how would your literary arts nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored organization/press/publication change or scale the project to adapt to the smaller amount, if possible? [If not possible, enter "n/a."]
  - ❖ Please upload the project budget: [Note the following:
    - a. A project budget should include the income and one-time costs directly related to the project and not other ongoing general operating costs.
    - b. Total grant requests may range from \$25,000 to \$100,000.
    - c. Add details explaining income and expense line items.

- d. On the income side, include other funders, if any (not required). Matching funds are not required.
- e. On the expense side, indirect costs of 20% of the project budget may be included. If a collaborative project, list the collaborator(s) and the sub-award(s) to be received, and include details about what the sub-award would support.
- f. Here is a project budget template for literary arts nonprofits, or fiscally-sponsored organizations or publishers, applying independently that may be helpful to review or use:  
<https://literaryartsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Literary-Arts-Fund-Project-Budget-Template-for-Independent-Applications.xlsx>.
- g. Here is a project budget template for literary arts nonprofits, or fiscally-sponsored organizations or publishers, applying as the lead of a collaborative application that may be helpful to review or use:  
<https://literaryartsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Literary-Arts-Fund-Project-Budget-Template-for-Collaborative-Applications.xlsx>.]

#### **Section 4: Certification**

- The applicant confirms that its executive director and board chair have approved the submission of this grant request.
- The applicant confirms that no part of the application narrative was produced using generative AI.
- If this is a collaborative project, the applicant confirms it will serve as the lead applicant of the project and ensure its implementation, including working with and providing sub-awards to the collaborators as described in the application and project budget.
- If this is a collaborative project, the applicant understands that it is responsible for verifying and confirms that each collaborator receiving a sub-award, as noted in the project budget, meets all of the Literary Arts Fund's eligibility requirements.
- The applicant agrees to the Terms of Use. [The information collected on this grant application form is collected for the purpose of evaluating your application for possible funding and for program reporting and statistical analysis purposes.

This information may be shared with peer reviewers and panelists solely for these purposes. For all external reports or presentations, data will be aggregated and anonymized, ensuring that no individual nor any individual applicant can be identified. By submitting this form, you acknowledge and agree to the terms of this data collection notice.]

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**Thank you for your interest in the Literary Arts Fund.**

**For questions, email [grants@literaryartsfund.org](mailto:grants@literaryartsfund.org)**

**[literaryartsfund.org](http://literaryartsfund.org)**