

IGNITE FUND

The Ignite Fund Round 5 Application Questions

This is a PDF list of application questions for the Ignite Fund. To apply, please [click here](#).
For a full list of important dates, eligibility requirements, criteria, and FAQs, please visit ignitefund.org.

Section I: Eligibility

Before proceeding with the application, we need to determine if you are eligible. If you have any questions, contact us at info@ignitefund.org.

Individual artists and artist-led collectives (2-6 people) are eligible to apply for The Ignite Fund grants. Throughout the application process, individual applicants and the main contact for an artist-led collective will be referred to as the “Lead Applicant.”

If applying as an artist-led collective, your group can be either long-standing or formed specifically for this opportunity. Each collective must identify one individual as the Lead Applicant to serve as the primary contact.

All Lead Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Current residents of the Chicago metropolitan area (Cook, DuPage, Kane, McHenry, Lake, and Will counties).
- 18 years or older.
- Must legally be able to receive taxable income in the United States. Citizens, permanent residents, or anyone who can provide a W9 and a Social Security Number (SSN) or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) are eligible.
- Not currently enrolled in a full-time degree-granting program.

Section II: Contact Information

Please provide your individual contact information. If you are applying as a collective, **enter the information of the Lead Applicant (AKA point person) of the project.**

- **Lead Applicant Preferred Name***
- **Lead Applicant Legal First Name***
- **Lead Applicant Legal Last Name***
- **Lead Applicant Pronouns***[Examples include he, she, they, or prefer not to say]
- **Lead Applicant Email***
- **Lead Applicant Phone Number***

- **Lead Applicant Address*** [Please provide your current address that you will use on your W9. Your W9 address and your provided address must match.]
 - **Country**
 - **Street Address 1**
 - **Street Address 2 (optional)**
 - **City**
 - **State, Province, or Region**
 - **Zip or Postal Code**
- **Are you applying as a part of a collective?***
 - **IF YES:** Please tell us more about the Collective An arts collective is a group of artists or creatives who collaborate under a shared name, vision, or purpose to create, present, or promote artistic work. All members share equal ownership of the project and are credited equally alongside the lead applicant.
 - **What is the name of your collective? (Optional)**
 - **Please list the names of your collective members.***
 - **How long have you been collaborating?***
 - **About the Collective***

Section III: About the Lead Applicant

Please tell us more about the lead applicant, the Lead Applicant is the individual artist applying for The Ignite Fund grant.

- **Lead Applicant Biography (300 words)*** [Please share a biography for the lead applicant.]
- **Lead Applicant Artist Resume/CV (Upload)***
- **Provide a link to your website (optional)**

Section IV: Project Overview

The Project Overview section is your opportunity to introduce your work in both a clear and concise way. Begin with a short description of 3–5 sentences that capture the nature of your project. Then, provide a longer description that explains what the project is, where and when it will take place, how it will happen, and why it matters now. You can include expected outcomes, audience experience, and how the project represents a new direction in your artistic practice. To learn more about the selection criteria and process, visit our [Apply page](#).

- **Title of Project***
- **Project Summary* (100 word)** [In 3–5 sentences, describe your project and what you hope to achieve during this grant cycle. **Think of this as an elevator pitch!** We recommend completing everything in the application first and then coming back to this question. (November 1, 2026 - November 1, 2027)]
- **Project Description* (500 words)** [Provide a **detailed description of your project**. Include specifics about what it is, where and when it will happen, and how it will unfold. Tell us why it matters now, what you hope to achieve, and how it represents a new direction in your practice.]

Selection Criteria 1: Artistic Vision & Creative Practice

Strong applications demonstrate that visual expression is not simply an enhancement, but the primary language through which ideas are developed, communicated, and understood.

Consider explaining how this project would fundamentally change or may not exist without its visual arts component. You may reference relevant visual arts movements, formats, artists, collectives, projects, or histories, and describe how they influence or inform your work. **The Ignite Fund embraces a broad definition of visual arts.** For more information, please visit our [FAQ page](#).

- **How is your proposed project rooted in the visual arts?*** (100 words)

Selection Criteria 2: Collaboration

Strong applications engage multiple artists, thinkers, or community members throughout the development and presentation process. **Collaborators are individuals who contribute to specific aspects of a project but are not fully committed in the way a collective member would be.** Examples include individuals who provide resources, expertise, or ideas without participating directly in the production of the work.

Collaboration may also extend beyond individuals to include sites, archives, systems, histories, disciplines, and broader contexts. Please describe how you will create or deepen relationships with these individuals or entities to support the project's success. If you have not yet contacted potential collaborators, outline your plans for initiating these connections.

If you are applying as part of a collective, do not use this section to describe collective members; instead, focus on collaborators outside of the collective.

- **Please describe what role collaboration plays in your project.*** (200 words)
- **Please list all proposed collaborators and their relationship to the project.*** (200 words)

Selection Criteria 3: Community Engagement

Strong applications **clearly describe with specificity the local audience or community for whom the project is intended** and why/how the project may be relevant to that intended audience. Strong applications also consider the lasting impacts of the project on its intended communities.

- **Who is the intended audience or community for this project, and why? (200 words)***
[Please be as specific as possible. Examples of this might include a specific Chicago neighborhood or street, a broader community that you hope to reach through an organization or a new audience you are trying to reach.]
- **What impact do you hope your project will have on the intended audience or community? (200 words)**

Selection Criteria 4: Accessibility

Strong applications include at least one presentation open to the general public that prioritizes accessibility in creative ways that is both inclusive and engaging for all audience members. **Strong proposals have thoughtfully considered accessibility**, including Deaf and/or disabled audience

members, as well as any barriers that may prevent audiences from having access to their work. We encourage you to review our [Accessibility page](#), which includes examples, resources, and providers.

- **How do you plan to make your project accessible for all members of your intended audience or community? (200 words)*** If you need help thinking through accessibility, review our [Accessibility page](#), which includes examples, resources, and service providers.

Selection Criteria 5: Feasibility

Strong applications demonstrate that they have the readiness and experience needed to complete the proposed project within the **one-year grant period**. The budget and timeline are appropriate to the scope of work proposed.

- **What is the general timeline of your project? (Limit 150 words)*** Please outline at least three major milestones from November 1, 2025 – November 1, 2026
- **Project Budget (attachment)*** Applicants are **required** to use The Ignite Fund Budget Template. **Download the template by [CLICKING HERE](#)**. Please make sure to create your own copy of the template before making any edits. **Need extra help on how to fill out the template?** Check out our Budget How To video [HERE](#).

Support Materials

Please provide examples of work by the lead applicant, collective and/or proposed collaborators that will inform the planned project.

Support materials should help the panelists understand the project and your ability to execute it with success. These samples are not required to be finished portfolio pieces they may include sketches, mock-ups, models, testimonials, and location/site details. The more variety you can provide the clearer your proposal will be to the panelists. Try to choose representative images/media that are aligned in form, content, or scale to the proposed project.

In the next section, provide samples of work you have made in the **past FIVE years**.

What to submit:

- **All still images:** upload up to 10 images, **OR**
- **All video material:** upload video clips with a **combined length of up to 5 minutes, OR**
- **Combination:** upload up to 5 still images **and** up to 2.5 minutes of video material
- Optional: include a website link to your work

For video or audio samples:

- If you are sharing longer material that cannot be edited, provide **cue points** for the sections you want the judges to review.
- If cue points are not provided, judges will view the **first 2 minutes**.

Important: No other file types or media will be accepted beyond what is described above.

For all samples:

- If you are sharing longer material that cannot be edited, provide **cue points** for the sections you want the judges to review.
- If cue points are not provided, judges will view the **first 2 minutes**.

Support Material Description*

In the field below, upload a document containing a short description for each of your work samples. The order of the descriptions should match the order in which the work samples are uploaded. Each description should not be longer than a few sentences (like a short paragraph max).

Examples of descriptive information:

- Title, media, dimensions, date, location etc.
- Indicate whether it's a full image, detail view, or installation view.
- 1-3 sentences of contextual information you want the judges to know when viewing this material.