



2026 NJ Individual Artist Fellowship Answers to Awardees' Frequently Asked Questions

What is my award? How do I find out more?

Congratulations on your award! Whether you have been awarded as a Fellow or a Finalist, you will receive an award agreement from our partners at Mid Atlantic Arts (MAA) with your award amount and an explanation of what to expect as a grant recipient. You will receive an email on Wednesday, February 27, 2026, as notice that the agreement is ready for you to review and sign through your [SmartSimple](#) account – the same platform you used to apply for this fellowship. More information regarding Fellows and award amounts will also be listed on the [Council website](#) within a few hours following the conclusion of the public meeting.

***Tip:** To avoid missing important award emails, add noreply@smartsimple.com to your address book in your email account – this will prevent award emails from going to your spam or junk folder.

How do I accept my award?

To accept your award and receive payment, you'll need to do the following:

- After you receive the email that your agreement is ready, log into your [SmartSimple](#) account and follow the emailed instructions to locate your agreement.
- Read through the artist award agreement carefully. It will explain important information about your award. After reading, follow the instructions to sign the agreement (digitally or physically).
- Upload two (2) proofs of residence. Your name and current address must be clearly visible on both. **At least one of them must include a time stamp from no earlier than January 1, 2026.** (For example: a bank statement with the statement date visible). Please choose two (2) from this list of acceptable documents for your proof of NJ residency:
 - NJ State Driver's License or NJ non-driver ID card
 - Bank Account Statement
 - Credit Card Statement
 - Lease Agreement
 - Mortgage Statement
 - Utility Bill (examples: Gas/Electric, Water/Sewer, Internet Provider, Landline/Cell Phone, Trash Collection)

- Insurance Statement/Bill (examples: Auto, Healthcare, Renters, Homeowners)
- Pay Stub/Wage Statement
- Vehicle Registration
- Tax Records/Bills
- NJ Voter Registration
- Letter issued by a NJ public authority (examples: Courthouse, Municipality, Elected Officials)
- Choose your desired method of payment: electronic ACH transfer (highly recommended – fastest and most secure) or mailed paper check. Provide the required information for your payment type.
- After completing all of these steps, submit the agreement. Mid Atlantic Arts will review your materials and contact you if anything further is needed.

How and when will I receive my payment?

- You can expect to receive your award **within 60 days of Mid Atlantic Arts' receipt of your documents and payment information.**
 - Signed Artist Agreement
 - Proof of NJ residency
 - Relevant payment information (your agreement will provide instructions for this)
- Payment can be issued electronically via ACH transfer (highly recommended – fastest and most secure) or via mailed paper check.
 - ACH transfer: Secure and quick – after Mid Atlantic Arts issues your payment, it will arrive in your bank account within 1-3 business days, and sometimes within minutes.
 - Mailed check: Less secure and much slower – after Mid Atlantic Arts issues your payment, the check will arrive in a plain white envelope within 2 weeks, depending on mail carrier timing.
 - Tip: We highly recommend ACH transfer. Mailed checks are often lost in transit or significantly delayed in delivery. To receive your payment promptly, select ACH transfer and follow the instructions to securely provide your bank account information.
- When reviewing your award agreement, you will select your desired payment method. Follow the instructions in the agreement to provide the necessary information for payment.
- Once you have signed your award agreement, provided adequate proof of NJ residency, and provided the required information for your payment method, your payment will be issued within 60 days.

What is the award period?

- January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026. Your award can be utilized for expenses incurred during this period. Since the grant funds are not released until after you sign your agreement

and your NJ residency has been confirmed following the February announcement, keep in mind that you can use the grant as reimbursement for expenses incurred between January 1, 2026, and the time you receive your award.

What can the award funds NOT be used for?

- Your award is meant to support your artistic endeavors during 2026. It can also be used as a support for typical living expenses, including but not limited to childcare, rent/mortgage, utilities, and health and wellness costs.
- While your award may be used in many ways, there are three important restrictions to keep in mind:
 - Your award may not be used for travel outside of the country
 - The purchase of permanent equipment over the cost of \$350
 - The payment of tuition in a degree-bearing course of study

Are there any requirements for the grant period?

There are no creative or work-related requirements during the grant period, however, we do ask that you credit the Council's Fellowship program. For events in which you publicly exhibit, showcase, or perform your work we ask that you use one of the following statements that aligns with your award:

- (Artist Name) received a 2026 Individual Artist Fellowship award from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.
- (Artist Name) received a 2026 Individual Artist Finalist award from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Fellows only: What is a "final report" and why do I need to complete it?

The required final report is your opportunity to show the impact of your award on your artistic endeavors and your life as an artist in New Jersey. The report asks you to reflect on your artistic year and to provide a general listing of expenses paid for with your award. This helps the New Jersey State Council on the Arts understand how this program supports New Jersey's artists. Only Fellows (not Finalists) are required to submit a report.

Your report is due by Thursday, December 31, 2026, and will require 15 minutes or less of your time. To reduce stress and increase ease, we recommend that you:

- Review the report form in advance to gain familiarity with its questions
- Keep track of your expenses in one place for easy reference

How do I submit a final report?

You can access your report form through your [SmartSimple](#) account when you receive your award notification email. You are welcome to review it in advance of the due date, and we encourage you to do so. Please refrain from submitting your report prior to December 1, 2026.

Failure to submit the final report will affect eligibility for future awards from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and from Mid Atlantic Arts.

Am I required to pay taxes for my award?

Your award is considered income and will be reported to the IRS. Tax obligations may vary, and we recommend consulting with your tax advisor or a reputable source of assistance with any tax-related questions you may have. Neither the NJ State Arts Council nor Mid Atlantic Arts can advise you on your individual tax obligations.

When will I receive a 1099 form for my 2026 taxes?

Mid Atlantic Arts works with a third-party vendor to issue your 1099 form. You will receive an email from the vendor no later than January 30, 2027.

Who do I contact with more questions?

You can contact the Grant Operations team at Mid Atlantic Arts with any questions about your grant. Reach them at grants@midatlanticarts.org. Please include your award number (2025-XXXX) and full name with your inquiry.