

NC Arts Council Literature Fellowships



arts

Fellowships are:

Awards of merit to
individual artists to
recognize excellence

Support the creative
development of N.C. artists

Support the creation
of new work

Tips on making your application compelling and competitive

1. Making your narrative
shine

2. Some common mistakes
to avoid

Making your narrative shine

NC Arts Council Literature Fellowships

1. How do you plan to use the fellowship?
2. How will receiving a fellowship impact your artistic development?
3. Why is it important that you receive a fellowship at this point in your artistic career?

Compelling and competitive

Compelling:

- Evoking interest, attention, or admiration in a powerfully irresistible way
- Inspiring conviction

Competitive:

- Having a strong desire to succeed
- Being well-suited to compete

NC Arts Council Literature Fellowships

Question 1:

How do you plan to use
the fellowship?

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How do you plan to use the fellowship?

“I would use the fellowship to write one or two new plays.”

No. Not compelling

Not enough information- use all the space provided and give details about your work

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How do you plan to use the fellowship?

“I just finished writing my first short story. The fellowship will help me to write my second one.”

No. Not competitive

Not enough information

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How do you plan to use the fellowship?

“I would like to reduce my work hours so I have more time to work on my current book/poetry collection/screenplay/play. The project centers on...”

Yes! Making time to write is an acceptable use of the fellowship

Be sure to include compelling details about your project

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How do you plan to use the fellowship?

“I would like to apply for the following writer’s workshops/residencies so I can develop my current writing project, which is about...”

Yes! This is an acceptable use of the fellowship

Be sure to include specifics about your work, as well as the particular workshops/residencies to which you will apply

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How do you plan to use the fellowship?

“I have two young children, and the fellowship would buy me X hours of child care so I can focus on finishing my current novel, which concerns...”

Yes! Child care *while writing* is an acceptable use of the fellowship

Be sure to provide compelling details about your work

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How do you plan to use the fellowship?

“I will purchase a laptop computer, create a space in my home exclusively for writing, and travel to the site of my current novel to gather historical facts.”

Yes! This is an acceptable use of the fellowship

Be sure to provide compelling details about your project and what you plan to do

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Question 2:

How will receiving a fellowship impact your artistic development?

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How will receiving a fellowship impact your artistic development?

“I’ve been writing my novel for three years, and it’s time to unveil it to the world. With this fellowship, I will blow the minds of the publishing industry.”

No. Be realistic about where you are in your development as a writer

Focus on your writing practice and your path forward. How will the fellowship help?

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How will receiving a fellowship impact your artistic development?

“I am on the third revision of my current book manuscript, which has received positive feedback from my writer’s group, as well as two small writing grants. I would like to use the fellowship to pay for professional editorial guidance in shaping this book for publication.”

Yes! Provide compelling details about your project

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How will receiving a fellowship impact your artistic development?

“This prestigious fellowship will give me credibility as a working poet, and the opportunity to attend conferences and remain active in the poetry community.”

Yes! Provide specifics about your plans and how they will help you remain engaged

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How will receiving a fellowship impact your artistic development?

“A successful production of my play will contribute to my development towards greater visibility and self-sufficiency as a working artist.”

Yes! Provide compelling details about how this will happen

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How will receiving a fellowship impact your artistic development?

“I had years to write my first book, but its success has put pressure on me to write a second one, and I have much less time. The fellowship will keep my professional momentum going.”

Yes! Provide compelling details about your project

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Question 3:

Why is it important that you receive a fellowship at this point in your artistic career?

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Why is it important that you receive a fellowship at this point in your artistic career?

“I’m about to turn 50, and this is really my last chance to get my writing career going. Otherwise, I’m going to have to find another job.”

No. Focus on your writing practice and your path forward

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Why is it important that you receive a fellowship at this point in your artistic career?

“After years of writing in one style, I would like to take an entirely different approach to my writing. The fellowship will give me the freedom to try.”

Yes! Provide compelling details about the new direction you’re taking, and why it’s important to you

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Why is it important that you receive a fellowship at this point in your artistic career?

“After publishing short poems in many journals, my goal is to focus on full-length works, polish them, and publish a full-length book of poetry.”

Yes! Provide compelling details about your work

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Why is it important that you receive a fellowship at this point in your artistic career?

“I’ve had a successful career as a sculptor, and have always wanted to turn my creative energies toward writing. Now that my kids are grown, it’s the perfect time in my life to do so.”

No. Your artistic career has not centered on writing

Why did you send us pictures of coffee mugs?

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Why is it important that you receive a fellowship at this point in your artistic career?

“I will use the fellowship to revamp my writing website, publicize my latest work in progress, and arrange readings of my work to generate and learn from public feedback.”

Yes! Provide as many details as possible about your work and how you will accomplish this

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Why is it important that you receive a fellowship at this point in your artistic career?

“After receiving positive feedback on my latest play manuscript, it’s critical that I submit it to festivals in order to boost my visibility as a playwright.”

Yes! Provide compelling details about the festivals and how they will further your artistic development

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Why is it important that you receive a fellowship at this point in your artistic career?

“After years of teaching screenplay writing, I have recently left my job to pursue my own writing full time. The fellowship would allow me to focus on the development of my current screenplay. It’s about...”

Yes! Provide compelling details about your work

Some common mistakes to avoid

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Some common mistakes

- Typos

No excuse in the age of spell check

You are a writer, and words are your tools

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Some common mistakes

- Wrong word usage not caught by spell check

For example, roll instead of role

Get another set of eyes on your documents

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Some common mistakes

- How it plays on the page

Line spacing

Margins

Font size

Read the guidelines!

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Some common mistakes

- Formatting

I'm looking at you, playwrights and screenwriters

See guidelines for software options

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Some common mistakes

- Submitting too much

Don't send an entire play or screenplay

Don't send multiple work samples and expect us to choose

Don't send reviews, articles or letters of recommendation

Only writing will be judged, not visual art

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Some common mistakes

- Submitting too little

Poets must submit 10 pages of poetry

Other genres, a total of 20-30 pages

You must submit cover sheets per guidelines

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Some common mistakes

- The wrong resume

Prioritize your writing experience

Think creatively about customizing your resume

In summary...

Follow the guidelines

Answer the questions

Use all of the space given
for answers

Focus on your practice
and your path forward

Include as many specifics
as possible

Submit your strongest
work from the past three
years

Apply your writing skills
to your application

Be compelling
and competitive

Good luck!

If you hit a technical snag in your application, or have questions not addressed in the guidelines or in this webinar, please contact program staff:

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