2023 Architecture + Design Independent Projects Grants

a partnership program of NYSCA and The Architectural League

Program Guidelines

The 2023 Architecture + Design Independent Projects Partnership
is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts
with the support of the Office of the Governor
and the New York State Legislature.

Contents

Deadline for submissions:
Friday, June 16, 2023
11:59 p.m. EDT

Program Introduction 2023

The Architecture + Design Independent Projects grant program is a partnership between the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and The Architectural League of New York. In 2023, the program will award 25 grants of $10,000 for New York State-based individuals (or teams) to explore a design topic through creation or research. Relevant design fields include architecture, landscape architecture, historic preservation, community-centered design, fashion, graphic, industrial, and interior design.

Following a successful pilot year of partnership in 2022, the League and NYSCA are pleased to again partner to administer the Independent Projects program for interested applicants. The League will directly receive all applications and, together with NYSCA, will convene a panel of experts in design who will evaluate submissions and select projects for funding.

This guide provides an overview of the 2023 program, key dates and program contacts, prerequisites and eligibility requirements, and a complete walkthrough of the application submission process.

What's New in 2023

Please take note of the following key changes for the 2023 Independent Projects application cycle:

- For this cycle, the activity period for awarded projects will be September 1, 2023, to August 31, 2024, to accommodate the current application timeline.
- The descriptions of the three Evaluation Criteria have been slightly revised for greater clarity. The underlying program goals and evaluation rubric remain unchanged.
- All applicants are asked to identify a primary design discipline for their proposed project, for purposes of identifying projects only.
- The required supplemental materials now include the option to upload a short audio or video clip in place of static images. Accordingly, the structure of the upload and some content limits have changed. Please carefully review the Submission Checklist and Walkthrough sections, below, for the latest requirements for the 2023 cycle.

Program Goals

Design is everywhere. Recognizing design as an art form that can enhance our quality of life, the Independent Projects program seeks proposals that emphasize artistry and design excellence, that may contribute to a broader understanding of design, and/or that advance a design discipline. Critically, design must be at the core of any proposal, and the outcome must be accessible to the public. Projects might create a design prototype, advance new ideas in community design, research a topic in design or architectural history, or engage in critical or theoretical analysis.

For many years, both NYSCA and the League have supported diverse and creative explorations in design. Where can design go next? Through this partnership, we welcome proposals that seek to answer this question.

Key Dates

April 17, 2023:   Independent Projects guidelines are posted and application portal opens.
June 16, 2023:   Deadline for submissions. Application portal closes at **11:59 PM EDT**.
        Please note: Program staff will not be available to answer questions after 6:00 PM EDT.
July 2023:   Review panel convenes and award decisions are made.
July-August 2023:   Applicants are notified of panel decisions and grants are finalized
September 1, 2023:   Award period starts and project activity commences
August 31, 2024:   Award period ends and project activity concludes
        Project leads prepare reports on work carried out during the award period

Program Contacts

You may communicate with either the League or NYSCA to ask questions about your proposal, your eligibility, or this program generally. Please do not send the same queries to both. However, specific questions about an in-progress or submitted proposal should first be directed to the League.

Architectural League Program Contact
Daniel Cioffi
Development & Membership Manager, The Architectural League
cioffi@archleague.org
Phone calls available on request

New York State Council on the Arts Program Contact
Kristin Herron
Program Director, Architecture + Design | Museums, NYSCA
Kristin.Herron@arts.ny.gov
+1 (212) 459-8825

Funding Restrictions and Ineligible Activities

Independent Projects awards may be used to compensate the artist's or team's time spent on project activities, as well as related project expenses, consumable materials, and travel expenses within New York State only. This is a competitive grant program and not all proposals will receive funding. Each successful proposal will be awarded $10,000.

New York State law and NYSCA policy restrict the types of activities and expenditures that NYSCA funds may support. For Independent Projects awards, the following types of expenditures are not allowed:

- Debt reductions
- Competitions and contests
- Projects or activities that occur outside of New York State
- Entertainment costs for receptions, openings, and fundraising benefits/events
- Expenditures for the establishment of a new organization
- Administrative fees or overhead charged by an affiliated institution or university
- Operating expenses of privately-owned facilities (such as homes and studios)
- Out-of-state travel expenses
- Projects led by public school districts, or their components or affiliates
- Projects that are part of a university curriculum or that are required for a degree-granting program
- Projects that are essentially recreational, rehabilitative, or therapeutic
- Projects of New York State agencies or departments

Applicant and Project Eligibility

To be eligible for Independent Projects support, the **applying individual or team** must meet the following criteria:

1. The applicant(s) must be current residents of New York State and must remain so throughout the award period. They must be prepared to show proof of residency upon request if selected for an award. For more information on this requirement see the following section, **Proof of New York State residency**.
2. The applicant(s) must be a professional in their related design field. Architectural and design historians, journalists, and critics qualify. Visual artists whose work references the built environment are not eligible for support through this program.
3. The project must emphasize design and the ways that the creative process can make an impact on the topic or problem the applicant seeks to explore, and the resulting outcome or product must be accessible to audiences in New York State.

4. Design fields include architecture, landscape architecture, historic preservation, community-centered design, graphic design, fashion design, industrial design and interior design.
5. Proposals must represent the truly independent and self-generated work of the applicant(s). Activities that are initiated by, or credited to, an outside organization or academic institution are not eligible for support. This category does not support past work or current commissioned work for a client.
6. Applicants may be associated with only one project request per year. If individuals appear on more than one request, both requests will be deemed ineligible for support.
7. Faculty in architecture or design schools are welcome to apply. However, their proposed projects **cannot** be part of a course curriculum.
8. Student projects are ineligible for support. Currently matriculated students must demonstrate that their project is not related to the completion of a degree.
9. Current NYSCA and Architectural League staff members are not eligible for this program.
10. Individuals who received funding through the Independent Projects program in 2022, alone or as part of a team, **are not** eligible to apply in 2023.
11. Individuals who applied in 2022 and were not selected for funding **are** welcome to reapply, either with a new proposal or a revision to an earlier concept (provided the concept was not previously deemed ineligible for support).
12. *Please Note*: This Program does not support restoration or preservation of buildings, landscapes, or objects.
13. *Please Note:* Applicants seeking support for theater production-related set design, costume design, and lighting design should refer to NYSCA's Support for Artists category.

Proof of New York State Residency

Each applicant, and each team member, must have their primary residence within New York State at the time of submission **and** throughout the award period, if their proposal is selected for funding. Failure to adhere to this requirement will result in forfeiture of award funds.

Proof of New York State residency requires two of the documents *per individual* from the list below. Both documents must contain that individual's name and **exactly matching** home address. Documents showing the same building address but different unit numbers are not acceptable as matches. Documentation must be issued/dated no earlier than 2020, but more recent documents are encouraged.

You should block out personal information from these documents, particularly sensitive information such as financial details or Social Security Number; name and address are all that is needed.

You will be asked to present this documentation if your proposal is selected for funding, but you should prepare your documents prior to submission to ensure that you meet the requirements. The League and NYSCA reserve the right to request additional documentation, if necessary, to verify New York State residency.

The following documents are acceptable as proof of residency:

- Home utility bill
- Credit card statement (Name and address page only; financial and account information should be blocked)
- Bank statement (Name and address page only; financial and account information should be blocked)
- New York State or Federal Tax Form (First page only; social security and financial information should be blocked)
- Current lease or mortgage agreement for a home residence showing the individual's name and a New York State address.
- New York State Driver's license or New York State ID card (License number should be blocked)
- Voter Registration card

Submission Checklist

You will submit your proposal from within your own account on The Architectural League's award management platform, Award Force. Instructions for creating an Award Force account and starting an entry are given in the **Walkthrough** section of this guide below.

This checklist shows the components of the submission form in Award Force. Each of these pieces is described in more detail in the appropriate area of the walkthrough.

- o Certifications of eligibility and New York State residency (proof of residency documents will be requested when projects are selected for funding)
- o Contact information, team, and project overview
- o Project narrative: 10,000 characters maximum, responding to the 6 areas of the project narrative prompt
- o Required supporting uploads:
    - o 1-page résumé or CV for each team member (1 combined PDF, maximum 10 MB)
    - o Visual, textual, or audio materials. Choose **one** of the below options that best serves your proposed project:
        - o 1 PDF file of images and captions, maximum 12 pages
            - ▪ Applicants proposing a publication may devote up to 3 pages to sample or draft text, and up to 1 page to a publication outline, with remaining pages devoted to images. The total upload should not exceed 12 pages.
        - o **or** 1 video clip, maximum 3 minutes long
        - o **or** 1 audio clip, maximum 3 minutes long
- o Additional supporting details for projects that require commitment or permission from another party, such as publications, installations, and exhibitions

Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal will be evaluated according to how fully it responds to the three program criteria: Impact and Creativity, Project Execution, and Audience and Accessibility. These criteria should inform every part of your materials. Successful submissions will make the case for a project that advances a new idea or creative approach to a problem in design; can realistically be accomplished during the grant period; utilizes the specific expertise of the individual or team; and presents a clear plan to reach and benefit the public of New York State.

Impact and Creativity
"Impact and Creativity" prioritizes support for innovative ideas that push a given design field forward and demonstrate the outcome of the creative process. In addressing this criterion, make sure your project is described clearly, providing details and avoiding jargon. It should be framed within your design field and demonstrate awareness of existing work or research that is relevant to your project area. If you are in a research or prototyping phase, make sure to describe the questions/approaches you will explore in 2023.

Project Execution
"Project Execution" asks you to demonstrate how you have designed your project to best use your own expertise. The strongest requests make clear that the applicants are specifically qualified to pursue this work, possess the relevant background experience, and have a viable plan to meet the stated goals within the award period. If the work proposed requires more than $10,000, requests should clearly show how these outside funds will be raised.

Audience and Accessibility
As NYSCA is a public funder, it is crucial that the work produced with these awards is accessible to public audiences in New York State. The "Audience and Accessibility" criterion requires that your project has a life outside of your office or studio. Clearly identify your target audience and describe a realistic plan and means to disseminate your proposed work. If the public dimension will occur outside of the award year (September 2023–August 2024), please explain.

Application Walkthrough

The Architectural League will accept all submissions through our Award Force platform. Applicants should begin by registering for an account at archleague.awardsplatform.com. Creating an account will give you or your team access to the Independent Projects application form. The platform will permit you to save your progress and return later, upload your supporting materials, view your submission history, and more.

For team submissions, only one team member should complete and submit the proposal. The application form provides a section to list additional team members and their contact information.

Only one submission per individual or team is permitted. Multiple or duplicate submissions will *both* be automatically disqualified from consideration.

STEP 1: Register an account at archleague.awardsplatform.com

Begin by creating an account on The Architectural League's Award Force platform here. You will create your own username and password. To register, you must accept the Award Force cookie policy and terms of service, and give the League permission to send you emails through Award Force for important notifications about your application.

Returning users who have already created an Award Force account with the League do not need to create a new account.

Once you have created an account, check your inbox for a verification link. You will need to verify your email before you can start an application.

STEP 2: Start a new Architecture + Design Independent Projects entry

When your account is successfully created and verified, you can log into the platform landing page. Click the **Start new entry** button to begin a new application.

Competition
From the dropdown list, select Architecture + Design Independent Projects.
Be sure to select the right program. If you create an entry for a different competition by mistake, you'll see the wrong application form and your submission will not be reviewed.

Applicant Name
This field is auto-populated with your name.

> *Tip: When you have completed this section, and for each section following, click the "Save + next" button to continue to the next page. You can select "Save + close" to save your work and log out or return later.*

> *Tip: Text areas in this application form will automatically limit your responses to a given number of characters (not words). Character limits are indicated next to each question. Special formatting is not supported in these fields and will be removed from responses that are copied and pasted from other text editors.*

STEP 3: Verify and confirm your eligibility

On this page, you must certify your eligibility for this program by checking the boxes, indicating agreement.

Certification of eligibility
Here, you certify that you have read the eligibility requirements on pages 4-5 of these guidelines, and that you, your team members, and your project meet all the criteria for eligibility.

Certification of New York State residency
Here, you certify that you and your team members are current residents of New York State, and that you intend to remain so for the duration of the award period (September 2023–August 2024). You also acknowledge that you and your team will be required to show proof of residency if selected for funding. Grant recipients who relocate out of New York State during the grant period are required to notify the League immediately.

Proceed to the next section.

STEP 4: Evaluation Criteria

This page describes the three key criteria that the Independent Projects panelists will use to evaluate and select proposals for funding: "Impact and Creativity," "Project Execution," and "Audience and Accessibility." Please read them carefully, as these criteria should inform every part of your application. You can also refer to the full descriptions of the criteria on page 6 of the Guidelines, above.

Proceed to the next section.

STEP 5: Applicant Information

This section asks you to provide general information about yourself, your team members, and your project. The responses you provide here are necessary to identify your project, but are not evaluated or scored.

First and Last Name of Applicant
Enter your first and last name. If you are applying as a team, provide information for the project lead or primary contact.

Applicant Email
Enter the email address for the primary contact.
We will communicate primarily through email about the status of your submission, so be sure to use an email address you check frequently.

Applicant Phone Number
Enter the phone number for the primary contact.
We may call you regarding your submission if we cannot reach you by email or we have time-sensitive questions.

Additional Team Members
Provide names and contact information for your team members, if applicable. Team members listed here are considered core project members. You should plan to provide a résumé for each individual and they will each be required to demonstrate proof of New York State residency.

Project Title
Enter a descriptive title for your proposed project. The field will automatically limit text to 255 typed characters.

Project Description
Provide a short summary of your proposed topic and activities. This information will be used to identify your submission; you will have the opportunity to describe your project in more detail in the following sections. The field will automatically limit text to 500 typed characters (including spaces and returns).

Primary Project Discipline
Select the design discipline that best describes your proposed project from the dropdown list. Select "Fully Interdisciplinary" only if your project is equally situated in two or more disciplines.

The choices (listed alphabetically) are:

- Architecture
- Community-Centered Design
- Fabrication and Materials Research

- Fashion
- Furniture and Object Design
- Graphic and Communication Design
- History and Preservation
- Industrial Design
- Interior Design
- Landscape Architecture
- Urban Design
- Fully Interdisciplinary (for proposals that fall equally in two or more disciplines above)

Interdisciplinary Project Areas
Note: This question has been introduced to allow greater specificity for interdisciplinary proposals. It will appear only if you have selected "Fully Interdisciplinary" as your primary project discipline above.

Identify up to 3 disciplines in which your proposed project is primarily situated. Do not select more than 3 disciplines, and only select those that are of primary relevance to your project.

Select from the following choices (listed alphabetically): Architecture; Community-Centered Design; Fabrication and Materials Research; Fashion; Furniture and Object Design; Graphic and Communication Design; History and Preservation; Industrial Design; Interior Design; Landscape Architecture; Urban Design

Proceed to the next section.

STEP 6: Project narrative

In this section, you will respond to the questions below in a single narrative of no more than 10,000 characters. You may organize your response however you choose, and you may devote as much or as little space to each question as you feel necessary. However, your response must adequately address each question to provide a full sense of your proposal. We encourage responses that present a single coherent narrative, rather than numbered or bulleted short answers.

    a. **Project Overview:** Describe the project, emphasizing the role of design.
    b. **Project Context:** Provide specific context to show how this project builds on existing work in your design field, addresses a need, or tackles a topic or problem in the field in a new way. Discuss how the project will advance and contribute to its field.
    c. **Project Lead or Team:** Highlight the qualifications of the individual or team, demonstrating the necessary experience and qualifications to carry out this project.
    d. **Project Activities:** What work do you plan to do during the grant period (September 1, 2023–August 31, 2024)? If more than one person is involved, describe how the work will be delegated or coordinated.
    e. **Project Budget:** Please explain how you will spend the $10,000 award to execute this project. If your project necessitates more funding, where will that come from?
    f. **Project Audience and Accessibility:** Define the project's intended audience and how this project will be made accessible to that audience during the award period. If the project's impact will also extend beyond August 31, 2024, please describe.

Project Narrative
Enter your response in the field below. The field will automatically limit text to 10,000 typed characters (including spaces and returns).

Proceed to the next section.

STEP 7: Supporting materials

In this section, you will upload supporting materials for your proposal. Each upload module will enforce certain file types and maximum file sizes. Carefully note the restrictions and limits before preparing your materials for upload.

Résumés of project team members
Upload résumés/CVs or biographical statements for each team member named in your application. If you are proposing a publication with multiple contributors, you may also include brief contributor bios in this upload.

Attachment upload module
Upload your file using the attachment module. The module will allow you to either drag and drop a file to upload or open a file explorer window to select the file on your computer. Your file must adhere to the following specifications:

- A single PDF file
- Maximum 10 MB file size
- No more than one page devoted to each team member
- PDF optimization for faster loading and performance is strongly encouraged

Supplemental Visual, Textual, or Audio Upload
Upload visual/textual or audio materials to support your proposal. You must upload one file only, which may be either a PDF of images and text, a short video clip, or a short audio clip. You should carefully consider which format best serves your proposed project, and select the one that corresponds with the kind of work you are proposing.

Select your supplemental upload type
Select PDF, Video File, or Audio File from the dropdown list. A different upload module will appear based on your choice, with file standards and limits that reflect the upload type.

PDF
Select this option to upload static images and text in a single PDF. Your file should not exceed 12 pages of sample images with captions. For proposed publications, you may substitute up to 3 pages with example text, and up to 1 page with a publication outline. Remaining pages may contain sample images and captions, but the total length should not exceed 12 pages.

Your file must adhere to the following specifications:

- Supported file type: PDF
- Maximum 30 MB file size
- No more than 12 pages total, containing images with captions or, for publications, up to 3 pages of sample text, an outline of up to 1 page, and remaining pages containing images and captions
- PDF optimization for faster loading and performance is strongly encouraged

Attachment upload module (PDF)
This module allows you to either drag and drop a file to upload or open a file explorer window to select the file on your computer.

Video File
Select this option to upload a single video file. Your video should not exceed 3 minutes in length; any portion of a video uploaded beyond this limit will not be considered.

Your file must adhere to the following specifications:

- Supported file types: AVI, M4V, MOV, MP4, MPEG, MPEG4, MPG, or WMV
- Maximum 200 MB file size
- No more than 3 minutes total duration
- Compression and moderate viewing resolution is encouraged where possible

Attachment upload module (Video)
This module allows you to either drag and drop a file to upload or open a file explorer window to select the file on your computer.

Audio File
Select this option to upload a single audio file. This option is intended for proposals where sound is the primary medium; examples may include projects that specifically address vision-impaired audiences, or sound-only installations (applicants proposing multimedia projects with both sound and spatial elements should instead consider uploading a video clip). Your clip should not exceed 3 minutes in length any portion of audio uploaded beyond this limit will not be considered.

Your file must adhere to the following specifications:

- Supported file types: AAC, AIF, AIFF, M4A, MP3, or WAV
- Maximum 30 MB file size
- No more than 3 minutes total duration

Attachment upload module (Audio)
This module allows you to either drag and drop a file to upload or open a file explorer window to select the file on your computer.

Proceed to the next section

STEP 8: Additional supporting materials for certain project types

Certain projects that require an outside commitment or permission to proceed, such as publications, exhibitions, and installations, are much more likely to receive funding if there is demonstrated interest from a publisher, a site owner, or another necessary authority. However, we recognize that this is not always feasible, and that outside circumstances may not always align with the Independent Projects program timeline. The below questions provide additional space for you to document an existing agreement, or to describe the current state of outside arrangements for your project that may be in progress. This information will be used by the review panel to assess the likelihood that your proposal can take place as described.

Does your proposed project include a publication, exhibition, or installation?
Select Yes or No. If you select Yes, new optional fields will display allowing you to provide further details:

Documentation of permission or commitment
This module allows you to upload documentation of outside arrangements for your project, such as a commitment letter or email from a publisher or exhibition space. The module will only accept a single file in PDF format, up to 2 MB.

Status update for publications, exhibitions, and installations
If you cannot provide formal documentation of support from an outside authority, this question allows you to describe the current level of outside interest or commitment to your proposed project. If you have not yet approached or heard from any outside authority about your proposal, please indicate that here. The field will automatically limit text to 500 typed characters (including spaces and returns).

STEP 9: Review and submit

Your proposal is ready to submit once all required fields have been completed, optional fields are filled where relevant, supporting materials are uploaded, and you are satisfied with your responses.

At this stage, you can save your work and return to submit later, preview your entry, or submit your entry.

Save + close
Your work is saved but your proposal is not yet submitted for consideration.

Preview
Your responses are previewed on a single web page so that you can review them and return to places where you wish to make changes.

Submit entry
Your proposal is submitted.

Frequently Asked Questions

Visit the 2023 Independent Projects Frequently Asked Questions page on archleague.org regularly for the most up-to-date information and answers to common questions.