

Beyond the Studio Guidelines

Applications open
until 4pm, Tuesday
28 October 2025



Image credit: Among the
Trees, Creative Trails 2024.
Photo by Shane Rozario

INNER WEST

Beyond the Studio

Applicant Guidelines 2026

Background

This pilot program encourages and supports Inner West studio-based artists, collectives, makers spaces and Artist-Run-Initiatives (ARIs) to create public engagement initiatives that showcase their work, engage the local community and/or bring new audiences to the Inner West.

The **Beyond the Studio – Audience Engagement program** empowers artists to identify business and audience development opportunities that best fit their needs.

Purpose

The **Beyond the Studio – Audience Engagement program** will deliver funding and practical support for artists to run engagement projects from their workspace or showcase their work to the broader community.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Hands-on workshops or demonstrations (in-person)
- Open studio days with public programming
- Artist-run tours of local studios and creative precincts
- Audience-development opportunities for you to present your work for sale (e.g. at maker's markets, craft fairs or pop-ups). This may be a new event or enabling your participation in established industry events.

Aims

The program aims to:

- To increase access to arts and culture for local audiences through artist-led experiences of creative practice (this does not include exhibition funding)
- Foster collaboration between artists and small arts organisations and increase profile of creative studios and precincts

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- Support audience development opportunities for local creatives through new networks, sales opportunities and/or experiences
- Showcase excellence and diversity of the Inner West Creative sector.

Funding and Support

Funding is available for activity that will take place from 1 January 2026 – 31 December 2026.

There are three project funding tiers available:

- Tier 1 (solo): up to \$1,000 (only open to individuals)
- Tier 2 (mid-tier): up to \$5,000 project support (a total pool of \$25,000)
- Tier 3 (major): up to \$10,000 project support (a total pool of \$20,000 for large-scale collaborative opportunities that involve multiple creatives)

For successful recipients, and where relevant, Inner West Council will:

- promote your project via Council channels (e.g. Creative Communities monthly e-news, website listing and social post)
- host an expert-led combined marketing workshop where you will have opportunity to meet and collaborate with other program participants
- run a Culture Counts survey to capture the experience of both artists and audiences participating and provide feedback for future programming
- For mid-tier and major projects only:
 - capture professional imagery of the event
 - provide 2 x meetings (up to 3hrs) with IWC Producer for general advice and support to assist with the planning and success of your event (e.g. Council approvals/permits (advice only), ticketing, access etc.)

What your application needs to show

Applications will be assessed against the following selection criteria:

1. How well your project meets the program aims (50%)
2. Collaboration with other Inner West creatives (25%)
3. Feasibility of the project, considering (25%):

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- The individual or groups' skills and experience to deliver the project
- Detail of your marketing strategy and budget
- A practical and realistic project budget (breakdown of what you intend to spend the money on, with quotes for any items over \$500).

Consideration will be given to the diversity and geographic distribution of projects to ensure broad and equitable representation.

Eligibility Criteria / Who can apply?

- Applications are welcomed from all forms of creative practice – visual artists, ceramicists, designers, musicians, recording studios, textiles etc.
- Applicants must reside or have their studio or creative space in the Inner West LGA
- Open to individual artists, groups of artists and arts organisations
- Projects must occur in the Inner West LGA (except where you are participating in a relevant industry event)
- Australian citizens, permanent residents or resident with valid working rights in Australia aged 18+
- Be covered by Public Liability Insurance for at least \$20mil for a one-off event
- If relevant, provide a valid Working with Children clearance
- Only one application per person/group is permitted
- Exhibition-only proposals will not be accepted. Applications must be focussed on public engagement such as talks, workshops or community involvement.

Budget

Your budget must show how you arrived at the total amount of funding requested. Budgets need to include all project income (money coming in from Council or other places) and expenditure (money going out). Please add any in-kind contributions (things you or your collaborators will do for free).

Council supports fair wages for creatives. Consider using peak body guidelines

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to set fees: NAVA Code of Practice, MEAA (film / entertainment) and ASA (writers and illustrators). If you do not have Public Liability Insurance, you can include the cost of purchasing this in your budget.

Any expected ticketing income must be included on the application budget area under “income” and generated income needs to be explained (what the income will be spent on). Marketing costs should be outlined in your budget, as well as any initiatives to improve the accessibility of your project.

Support and Accessibility

Please get in touch to discuss your proposal prior to applying. Council is committed to showcasing diverse voices from our community and welcome those who may need access regarding disability, language barriers and navigating grant application processes.

Contact

Olivia Patchett olivia.patchett@innerwest.nsw.gov.au or 02 9335 2123

Belinda Walter belinda.walter@innerwest.nsw.gov.au or 02 9392 5784

Timeline

EOI round opens via SmartyGrants: https://innerwest.smartygrants.com.au/studios2026	9am, Wednesday 1 October 2025
EOI round closes	4pm, Tuesday 28 October 2025
Assessment Panel meet to review applications against eligibility and selection criteria	November 2025
Applicants notified of outcome	December 2025
Agreements signed and invoices paid	December 2025
Projects delivered	January - December 2026

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Projects acquitted	Within 1 month of project end date
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