

Submit an NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship Nomination



The NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship is the highest honor that our nation bestows upon jazz musicians. Each year since 1982, the program has elevated to its ranks a select number of living legends who have made exceptional contributions to the advancement of jazz.

The NEA will honor musicians who represent a range of styles and instruments. In addition, one fellowship – the A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship for Jazz Advocacy – will be given to an individual who has made major contributions to the appreciation, knowledge, and advancement of the American jazz art form. In 2006, this award was designated in honor of A.B. Spellman, a jazz writer, accomplished poet, innovative arts administrator, and former NEA Deputy Chairman, who has dedicated much of his life to bringing the joy and artistry of jazz to all Americans.

The NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships are awarded to living individuals on the basis of nominations from the public including members of the jazz community. The NEA encourages nominations of a diverse and broad range of individuals who have been significant to the field of jazz through vocal and instrumental performance, creative leadership, and education. Successful nominees will demonstrate significant contributions to the art form through their body of work in the field of jazz.

NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships Guidelines

Important Information for Nominators:

- Nominees must be living U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the United States.
- Nominations of deceased individuals will not be considered.
- Individuals who have previously received any other NEA lifetime honor award (e.g., National Heritage Fellowships) are not eligible for an NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship.
- Individuals who have previously received the National Medal of Arts are eligible for an NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship.
- Awards will be up to \$25,000 and may be received once in a lifetime.
- Nominators may submit one or more nomination(s) each year.
- Only complete nomination files (including nomination letter and resume or biography) can be considered.
- “Petition drives” for any one nominee are not acceptable. Only one submission is needed to get an individual nominated.
- Self-nominations are not accepted.
- Nominations remain active for five years from the date of submission unless a nominee is selected for a Jazz Masters award or passes away during that time.
- No award payment will be made to the estate or heirs of a deceased recipient.

How to Submit a Nomination

- [Nominations must be submitted online](#). Materials that are emailed, mailed, or faxed will not be accepted.
- Nominations must be submitted in English.
- Upload the two required documents (a nomination letter and a resume or biography, both in PDF file format) as described below. The file size limit for each document is 1 MB.
- Nominations missing either the nomination letter or the resume or biography will not be considered.

NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships Guidelines

- Nominations missing the nominator's name and contact information will be rejected.
- These two items – submitted as uploads – are required:
 1. **A one-page nomination letter:**
 - Describe the reasons why your nominee should receive an NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship. Briefly state or list the nominee's contributions to the field of jazz and explain why they deserve this national recognition. Bullet point/list format is acceptable for the listing of achievements. The nominator must include their full name and contact information (email address and preferred phone number) in the letter.
 2. **A resume or a biography outlining the nominee's career (not to exceed two pages; without hyperlinks to artists or other websites).**

Nomination Deadline

Online nominations may be made at any time throughout the year. However, if you wish to have the nomination considered for the 2025 NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship round, it must be received by 11:59 p.m. (ET) on Monday, **October 31, 2023**. Fellowship recipients will be announced in 2023.

Nomination Review

Selection criteria:

1. In the Performers Category: The artistic excellence and significance of a nominee's contributions to the development and performance of jazz.
2. In the Jazz Advocate Category: The artistic merit of a nominee's contributions to the appreciation, knowledge, and advancement of jazz.

Nominations are reviewed by an advisory panel of jazz experts and at least one knowledgeable layperson. Panel recommendations are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts, which then makes recommendations to the Chair of the NEA.

NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships Guidelines

The NEA Chair reviews the Council's recommendations and makes the final decision on all Fellowship recipients

Agency Contact:

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NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships

National Endowment for the Arts

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at an average of 1 hour per response including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. We welcome any suggestions that you might have on improving the guidelines and making them as easy to use as possible. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: webmgr@arts.gov, attention: Reporting Burden. Note: Applicants are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number.

Privacy Act

The following notice is furnished in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a:

This information is solicited under the authority of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, 20 U.S.C. 951 et seq. and is used to select persons to participate in the National Endowment for the Arts' application review process. Disclosure of this information may be made to members of Congress and to the general public, upon request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S. C. 552). Personal biographical data including home address, home telephone number, and social security number will not be released and is exempt from disclosure under FOIA exemption (b)(6).

OMB No. 3135-0112 Expires TBD