



## FAQs

### How do I apply?

Applications for the 2026 program will open on April 1, 2026. You can apply through the [SurveyMonkey Apply portal](https://frpwritersneighborhood.smapply.io/acc/r/?g=87071) (https://frpwritersneighborhood.smapply.io/acc/r/?g=87071) or by clicking the Apply Now button on the [Writers' Neighborhood website](#). You will need to register for an applicant account before you can begin the application process. Add [noreply@mail.smapply.net](mailto:noreply@mail.smapply.net) to your email contacts to avoid missing messages about your application. If you do not receive the email verification link, steps to troubleshoot can be found here: <https://help.surveymonkey.com/en/apply/faqs/apply-email-troubleshooting/>

### When are applications accepted?

Applications will be accepted from 12:00 am EST on April 1, 2026, until May 2, 2026, at 12:00 am PST.

### Can I use ChatGPT or any other form of generative artificial intelligence while writing my essays or sample script?

No. Generative AI may not be used at any point of the creative process when brainstorming, concepting, outlining, or writing your script sample or essays.

### I previously applied to the Writers' Neighborhood Program – can I apply again this year?

Yes, but you must submit a new sample script. A revised version of the previous submission is allowed.

### What are the script sample and résumé requirements?

Submit an original writing sample (the Creative Submission) for one, 11-minute (11-15 pages) or one, 22-minute (maximum 30 pages) episode of an existing show\* that is animation or live-action. Include a logline. Original samples, if intended for children two to eight (2-7) years old, are also acceptable. However, we strongly recommend spec scripts based on existing shows. The Creative Submission shall not include any characters, brands, or elements owned and controlled by [Fred Rogers Productions](#).

- Must be in pdf file format.
- The original writing sample must be 11-15 pages for an 11-minute episode or a maximum of 30 pages for a 22-minute episode of a children's show for preschool (ages 2-5) or bridge (ages 4-7) that is animated or live-action.
  - No *Bluey* or *Peppa Pig* specs are allowed since they are shorter in length.
- **Commissioned/production scripts are not allowed to be submitted for the script sample because it is hard to tell what was added by the story editor or head writer.**
- Include a logline.
- Do not upload a cover page with your script.
- \*Spec scripts must be based on an existing television series for children, which broadcasts or streams

on PBS KIDS, Disney Junior, Disney, Nick, Jr., Nick, Apple TV+, Netflix, or Amazon Kids+ (Note: the shows do not have to currently be in production).

- Each page of the document should be submitted in 8 1/2" x 11" page size (portrait orientation), with margins set at a minimum of 1" (top, bottom, left, and right); and all text should be 12-point Times New Roman or Courier font.
- The following information should be included in the header/footer of your spec script on all pages:
  - Name of the show (center of the header).
  - Title of the episode (center of the footer).
  - File name should include only the name of your show and episode. Do not include your name or your submission will not be considered.
  - Do not put your name anywhere on the script, file, or file name.

The resumé submitted should outline chronological paid employment history, education, and any writing-related credits for a U.S. kids' series and honors/awards in two pages or less.

### **What makes a good sample script?**

A strong sample highlights your strengths as a storyteller and gives insight into how you envision worlds, how you embody characters, and what kinds of stories you like to tell. Your action descriptions are succinct and clear. Your dialogue pops off the page, and the characters sound unique from one another. If you're writing a script based on an existing property, your characters speak as they do on the show. Your script is the correct length – 11-15 pages for an 11-minute show and a maximum of 30 pages for a 22-minute show. Every scene moves your plot forward. Your sample should highlight your "special sauce" and what makes you shine as a writer – whether it's comedy, action, showing strong relationships between characters, etc. Lastly, a strong sample hooks a reader early on and doesn't take too long to set up to avoid losing your reader.

### **Should I submit an original or a spec script?**

Spec scripts based on an existing show are highly recommended; however, original scripts are also accepted. An original pilot allows a reader to better decipher a writer's individual voice and personality, whereas a spec script can show how well a writer can understand a show's structure and their adaptability into a world. The challenge with an original script is that your reader will need to quickly be introduced to your characters and world. Send in the strongest script you have that best shows off your skills as a writer – whether it's humor, heart, world-building, character adaptability, etc.

### **Does my writing sample have to be an animation or live-action script? What about podcasts, manuscripts, short stories, and theater plays?**

Only scripts for animation or live action will be considered. While podcasts, etc., are important, the bulk of kid's media work can currently be found in animation and live-action storytelling. To build and sustain a career as a freelance writer in children's media, a writer needs to demonstrate an aptitude for visual storytelling and dialog. Podcasts, manuscripts, short stories, and plays will not be accepted as writing samples.

### **Can I include a song in my writing sample?**

Yes. If it's a show with standard call-to-action songs like Dora's C'mon! ¡Vámonos!, the song she sings when taking off, it's fine to include in the script. If it's an original song, then ask yourself if the song is pertinent to the reader's understanding of the plot and the tone of your show. If so, we suggest including it. Including means "typed

lyrics." Don't sing it, and attach an MP3.

**What types of files do you accept?**

All documents should be saved and uploaded as PDF files.

**Can I submit multiple applications, featuring different scripts?**

No, only one application will be accepted per person.

**Can a writing pair apply?**

No, we can only accept individual writers to the program. If you are in a writing pair, you must submit a script that you wrote by yourself.

**Should applicants have professional writing experience?**

This is a program for new and emerging writers looking to build their careers. So, we're looking for people with a little experience and a lot of passion for telling stories for kids. Applicants cannot have written more than four episodes for a United States-based network or cable series. It's also okay not to have any professional writing experience — your writing sample(s) will speak for your potential.

**I am a U.S. citizen, but live outside of the U.S.—can I apply?**

No, we can only accept applications from those living within the U.S.

**I am not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident—can I apply?**

No, we can only accept applications from those with U.S. citizenship or permanent residency.

**I am living in the U.S. on a VISA—can I apply?**

No, we can only accept applications from those with U.S. citizenship or permanent residency.

**Do participants have to pay for the fellowship?**

The fellowship is free of charge to apply and participate. Participants shall be awarded a total honorarium of \$3,000: \$1,500 paid after the successful completion of the in-person kickoff, \$750 paid after the successful completion of the virtual sessions, and \$750 paid after the successful completion of the program. All payments will be made within two (2) weeks of completion of the milestone. In addition to the honorarium, FRP will provide travel and accommodations for both the in-person kickoff and closing sessions in Pittsburgh, PA.

**Will there be interviews? If so, when will the interviews be held?**

Yes, select applicants will be invited to take part in a Zoom interview with the selection committee in June and July 2026.

## What days/times will the sessions take place?

In-Person Kickoff: Friday, September 18, 2026, and Saturday, September 19, 2026

Virtual Workshops:

September 23, 2026

September 30, 2026

October 7, 2026

October 14, 2026

October 21, 2026

October 28, 2026

November 4, 2026 (alternative week)

In-Person Closing: Friday, November 13, 2026, and Saturday, November 14, 2026

Note: the exact dates are subject to change. Also, the two-day kickoff and closing sessions will be held in person in Pittsburgh, PA, and up to seven, 90- to 120-minute virtual workshops will take place weekly in the evening. Travel to and from Pittsburgh, PA will most likely occur Thursday through Saturday for the in-person sessions.

## What are the Terms and Conditions?

Click [here](#) to read the full Terms and Conditions.

## What if I have additional questions?

Contact us at [writersneighborhood@fredrogers.org](mailto:writersneighborhood@fredrogers.org).

**Bringing new voices and perspectives to children's media one neighbor at a time.**

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