



Sponsorship & Partnerships Manager (Freelance)

Association of Illustrators

Contract: Freelance, fixed term, approx. 3 to 4 months

Time Commitment: Approx. 1.5 to 2 days per week, up to 24 days total

Fee: £250 per day, £6,000 total

Location: Remote, with occasional meetings in Central London

About the AOI

The Association of Illustrators (AOI) is the UK's professional body for illustration, supporting illustrators, animators, educators and creative organisations in the UK and internationally.

We provide professional guidance, deliver industry events, run the World Illustration Awards, and advocate for a thriving and sustainable illustration industry.

We are currently developing new partnerships and more sustainable income streams to support a growing programme of activity, including mentorship, bursaries and accessibility-focused initiatives.

About the Role

We are seeking a freelance, fixed term Sponsorship & Partnerships Manager to support the development of corporate sponsorship opportunities across AOI programmes.

This is a hands-on role that mixes strategy with outreach. You'll be identifying partners, starting conversations and helping shape the offer as you go. The successful candidate will work from existing sponsorship materials, refining and adapting them for different audiences, while leading engagement with prospective partners.

The role will prioritise the World Illustration Awards, alongside selected AOI programmes such as mentorship and bursary initiatives, with a focus on building a strong pipeline and turning conversations into real partnerships.

Key Responsibilities

- Refine and tailor existing sponsorship materials for different audiences, sectors and programmes
- Identify and research prospective corporate partners aligned with AOI's work and community
- Lead targeted outreach to priority prospects, including both warm and cold approaches
- Initiate and develop conversations with potential sponsors and partners
- Advise on sponsorship positioning, packages and messaging to strengthen partner appeal
- Build and manage a clear pipeline of prospects and opportunities
- Contribute insight and recommendations to support ongoing partnership development

Scope and Priorities

Given the timeframe, the role will focus on active outreach and relationship building, alongside delivering a clear and commercially viable sponsorship structure across priority AOI programmes.

Primary Focus: World Illustration Awards (WIA)

The World Illustration Awards will be the central priority, with a clear aim to:

- Secure dedicated sponsors for all 10 award categories
- Category sponsorship packages will typically range from £3,000 to £10,000, with an emphasis on securing multi-year agreements to ensure continuity and long-term value for both parties
- Introduce and secure bursary sponsorships to support underrepresented entrants, improving accessibility and equity within the awards
- Develop higher-value partnership opportunities, including a headline exhibition sponsor and additional strategic partners aligned with the profile and reach of WIA

Secondary Focus: AOI Mentorship Programme

- Alongside WIA, our mentorship programme is a key priority, with a clear funding target of £10,000 per year, ideally secured through multi-year (minimum 3-year) partnerships
- The focus will be on identifying partners aligned with talent development, education and access, and positioning the mentorship programme as a meaningful, impact-led opportunity.

Expected Outputs

By the end of the contract, we expect:

- A clear and compelling sponsorship offer across key AOI programmes, with defined packages, pricing tiers and clear value propositions
- A well-researched prospect list of relevant organisations, prioritised by fit, sector and likelihood to convert

- Active outreach to a core group of high-priority prospects, with consistent and well-targeted engagement
- A live and clearly documented pipeline of opportunities, showing how conversations are progressing (from outreach through to proposals and negotiation)
- At least two confirmed sponsorship agreements
- Two further highly progressed opportunities at proposal or advanced conversation stage, with clear next steps
- A broader group of warm leads with defined follow-up actions and timelines
- A clear financial overview of potential income, including:
 - Estimated total sponsorship value across all categories
 - Breakdown of multi-year agreements and annual values
- Clear recommendations on what to do next and how to keep momentum going after the contract ends

Person Specification

- Experience in corporate sponsorship, partnerships or fundraising, ideally within the arts, culture or non-profit sector
- Track record of developing and progressing partnership opportunities
- Strong communication skills, particularly for external engagement and written outreach
- Ability to combine strategic thinking with hands-on delivery
- Proactive and organised, with the ability to manage activity independently
- Confidence representing an organisation externally
- Understanding of the creative industries is desirable

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The AOI is committed to building a team that reflects a broad range of perspectives, backgrounds and experiences. We particularly welcome applications from individuals who are underrepresented within the illustration industry and the wider creative sector.

We believe that diversity strengthens our organisation and enhances our ability to serve our members.

How to Apply

Please send:

- A CV
- A short proposal outlining how you would approach this brief, including examples of organisations you might approach and how you would go about engaging them
- One or two examples of relevant partnerships or sponsorship work, including your role and outcomes

Email: jobs@theaoi.com

Deadline: 8 May 2026