

CALI CATALYST

Frequently Asked Questions

(effective March 13, 2024)

1. What is CALI Catalyst?

The California Art Leadership Investments (CALI) Catalyst grant program supports artists and arts workers who are changemakers effecting greater inclusion, access, diversity, and equity in the arts and culture sector. Through bold actions, these individuals are tangibly helping historically marginalized communities—including Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities—gain more influence and power within the arts and culture sector. We consider these bold actions to be “change-making” because they are *visibly* moving the needle for these communities to have more influence and power at an *industry-wide* level.

2. What do you mean by “arts and culture sector?”

CCI is a nonprofit arts intermediary that supports individual artists and arts workers. In our work, we understand the “arts and culture sector” to encompass a wide spectrum of creative industries, artistic disciplines and practices, cultural expressions, and areas of focus, all at varying scales. However, we’re more interested in knowing how CALI Catalyst applicants self-define the “arts and culture sector” and, importantly, what aspect(s) of it they are trying to overtly influence towards greater inclusion, access, diversity, and equity.

3. What do you mean by “status quo” in the arts and culture sector?

The “status quo” often refers to the existing or current state of affairs, practices, norms, and structures that have commonly been accepted or maintained. It encompasses the prevailing attitudes, behaviors, and systems that shape how things are done within a sector. In the arts and culture sector, this can include established hierarchies, funding models, representation, and access to resources. The status quo in the arts and culture sector may also reflect historical biases, power dynamics, and barriers that limit inclusion and diversity. CALI Catalyst supports individuals whose efforts challenge or disrupt the status quo and aim to promote greater equity, accessibility, and representation within the field.

4. What do you mean by “tangible change/impact”?

“Tangible change/impact” refers to the visible and measurable outcomes or effects resulting from the bold actions undertaken. In the context of the arts and culture sector, tangible change or impact may look like improvements in areas such as representation, access, equity, diversity, inclusion, and the empowerment of historically marginalized communities.

We can look to recent CALI Catalyst grantees to see how bold actions can tangibly impact the arts and culture sector. In San Diego, Mikiea Perkins founded SoulKiss Theater to elevate the voices of Black queer womxn in the arts and provide pathways to professional opportunities for underrepresented voices. Genevieve Aleman effectively rallied Moreno Valley residents to urge their City Council to

create a public art fund, with 1% of new developments now supporting this initiative. Lastly, Cindy Bernard is driving progress in Twentynine Palms by boosting civic engagement, broadening arts offerings, and advocating for fair pay for artists, fostering a culture of inclusion and accessibility.

5. What do you mean by “historically marginalized communities”?

For this grant program, "historically marginalized communities" refers to groups of people who have been systematically disadvantaged, excluded, or discriminated against over time based on various factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or other identity markers. These communities have historically faced structural barriers, oppression, and unequal treatment within society, including within the realms of arts and culture. Examples of historically marginalized communities may include Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, immigrants, and others who have been marginalized due to their identities or social positions.

It's important to note that applicants of all identities are eligible to apply to CALI Catalyst. We are defining historically marginalized communities to provide context, as the impact of actions that actively shift power and influence to these communities aligns closely with the review criteria.

6. Who is eligible to apply for a CALI Catalyst grant?

CALI Catalyst is open to individuals and teams of individuals (See Question 9 for additional information regarding “teams”).

To be **eligible** for consideration:

- Applicants must be artists or arts workers (e.g., arts administrators, cultural producers, culture bearers, creatives, cultural practitioners, teaching artists, or specialized technicians).
- Applicants (including all team members) must reside full-time in California.
- Applicants’ change-making action(s) must have taken place or commenced (i.e., the action is still in progress) on or after January 1, 2020. *We are prioritizing this timeframe as these individuals may be suffering an immediate financial fallout as a result of catalyzing industry-level shifts in the arts and culture sector.*
- Applicant’s change-making action must have impacted the arts and culture sector at a local, regional, state, or national level in tangible and measurable ways.

The following are **ineligible** for funding consideration:

- Organizations (e.g., nonprofits, for-profits, fiscally sponsored organizations) requesting funding to support their operations;*
- Individuals or teams of individuals who describe a change-making action that started or took place before January 1, 2020;
- Individuals or teams of individuals who are requesting funding to support an organization;
- Individuals or teams of individuals who have a conflict of interest (family or financial relationship) with the board, staff, or directors of the Center for Cultural Innovation;
- Requests for funding to support a project that is in the beginning or developing stages; and
- Incomplete applications or applications with inaccessible (e.g., password-protected, broken links) attachments.

*Individuals and teams associated with an organization can apply. However, their change-making must have been influenced and driven by the individuals within the organization and align with the review criteria. Additionally, if awarded funding, individuals or teams should direct funds to the individuals

rather than to the operations of the organization. (See Question 11 for additional information regarding affiliation with an organization).

7. If I've received funding through another CCI grant program, am I eligible to apply for CALI Catalyst support?

Yes, you are eligible! Funding through another CCI grant program has no bearing on your eligibility to apply for or receive funds through CALI Catalyst.

8. What does CALI Catalyst funding support?

CALI Catalyst awards unrestricted grants of up to \$7,500 to individual artists and arts workers whose bold actions (enacted on or after January 1, 2020) have shifted the arts and culture sector in explicit ways that work better for historically marginalized communities—BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and those with disabilities. Grant awards are unrestricted and, therefore, not tied to the support of a project or a proposed outcome. Instead, the award's unrestricted nature is meant to support individual grantees in whatever way is most needed. However, CALI Catalyst funding, or any portion thereof, may not be used for lobbying, political campaigns, voting efforts, or in a manner inconsistent with CCI's charitable purpose under IRS Section 501(c)(3). Further details are provided in the CALI Catalyst grant agreement.

9. I work closely with a team of collaborators. Can we submit a joint application?

If applying as a "team," only one application will be accepted per team (in other words, individual team members cannot submit separate applications for the same action). Teams will therefore need to select a single team member to apply, and if funding is approved, this individual will be responsible for fulfilling the grant requirements, such as final reporting and providing a completed W-9. If the grant recipient wants to share their award with a team of collaborators, they may do so; however, CCI will not assume responsibility for any further due diligence regarding the team's membership.

That being said, although only one application may be submitted per team, CCI has enabled the submitter collaboration tool, which enables groups of applicants to work together on collective applications. For information about how to utilize this tool, visit Submittable's knowledge base [here](#).

10. I know an individual/team who would be a great candidate for funding. How can I help this potential applicant?

The best way to help potential applicants is to share this opportunity with them and, if needed, support their preparation of an application. This may mean helping the applicant to compose narrative responses, select ephemera, or identify references. You might also support the applicant by reviewing their application for clarity and completeness or reaching out to CCI staff on their behalf with questions.

11. I work at an organization. Can I apply?

CALI Catalyst is a grant program for *individuals*, and funding is meant to support the *person(s)* who is enacting change in the arts and culture sector. If you are seeking funding to support the operations of an organization—such as a 501(c)3 nonprofit, fiscally sponsored project, cooperative business, or for-profit entity, to name a few—then this program is not for you.

That being said, individuals or teams employed or who are members of an organization are able to apply. However, their change-making must have been influenced and driven by the individuals within the organization and align with the review criteria. Note that simply engaging with DEI efforts does not align with the program's goals. Additionally, if awarded funding, individuals or teams should direct funds to the individuals rather than to the operations of the organization.

12. I have an *idea* for a change-making action. Can I apply?

CALI Catalyst will only consider applications from applicants whose action took place or started (i.e., the action is still in progress) on or after January 1, 2020. We are prioritizing this timeframe as these individuals may be suffering an immediate financial fallout as a result of catalyzing industry-level shifts in the arts and culture sector.

13. My change-making action is in progress. Can I apply?

The status (i.e., completed or in progress) of the change-making action does not impact our decision as long as it began on or after January 1, 2020. However, applicants who can point to their action’s impact in *tangible and measurable ways* will be more aligned with the grant review criteria than applicants whose actions are described as having the *potential* for impact.

14. My work isn’t targeted at shifting practices or power within the arts and culture sector, but it does aim at having an impact on social issues. Can I apply?

We recognize that many artists and arts workers work at the intersection of arts, culture, and activism to address and bring visibility to important areas like racial justice, climate justice, gender equity, economic security, labor protections, and more. We see you, and we acknowledge the value of your work. However, CALI Catalyst focuses on effecting tangible changes in the *arts and culture sector* so that entrenched inequities within the sector itself are upended. For this reason, applications that describe change-making work in relation to sectors other than arts and culture will be considered outside of the program’s current scope and will not be competitive.

15. What are some examples of change-making actions within the arts and culture sector that align with the review criteria?

Examples of change-making actions within the arts and culture sector that align with the review criteria can be illustrated by CALI Catalyst’s 2021, 2022, and 2023 grantees. To learn more about the individuals and teams supported, search CCI’s Past Recipient directory by clicking [here](#) or view the 2021, 2022, and 2023 visual directories of grantees [here](#).

16. How do I apply for funding?

Applications will only be accepted through CCI’s Submittable platform. Applicants MUST create an account in Submittable before they will be able to access the grant application. The application can be accessed at: <https://centerforculturalinnovation.submittable.com/>. Information about using Submittable is available [here](#).

17. I’m having technical problems with my application; what should I do?

If you need technical assistance (e.g. password or upload issues), submit a request for support at: <https://www.submittable.com/help/submitter/>. Submittable’s business hours are 9 am – 5 pm MT. They aim to respond within 24 business hours.

18. When are applications due? When will I learn about my application status?

CALI Catalyst will offer two open application rounds in 2024. These include:

Round #1

Applications will be accepted from March 13 to May 6, 2024, at 11:59 a.m. PT. Notifications will be sent via Submittable on July 1 by 5 p.m. PT.

Round #2

Applications will be accepted from June 12 to August 5, 2024, at 11:59 a.m. PT. Notifications will be sent via Submittable on September 30 by 5 p.m. PT.

19. The notification date has passed, and I haven't heard from CCI. Does this mean I didn't receive a grant?

All applicants will be notified regarding their application status via Submittable. If you haven't heard from CCI by the promised notification date and time, check your spam folder. You can also view your application status by logging into your Submittable account.

To ensure the timely delivery of all communications, please safelist notifications@email.submittable.com. See [here](#) for instructions by email service provider.

20. Who reviews the applications?

Applications will be reviewed internally by a diverse team of CCI staff who have varied experiences with sector discrimination and exclusionary practices. Additionally, CCI will contact the references of top funding candidates and call on individuals in the field of a competitive applicant's work to verify the impact of their change-making action(s) on the communities meant to benefit from this work. In so doing, the people directly meant to benefit from an individual or team's work can influence the adjudication process.

21. How are applications evaluated? What makes for a strong application?

Applications are evaluated against the criteria listed in the CALI Catalyst guidelines. Please review these closely.

In general, the most competitive applications are the ones that are clearly written, brief, and to the point and demonstrate a strong alignment with each criterion. In the case of CALI Catalyst, competitive applications will describe an action or actions that directly resulted in tangible changes or impacts within the arts and culture sector and will clearly describe the status quo the change-making action(s) have challenged and the historically marginalized communities that were positively impacted.

Please note: while we welcome applications from change-makers who are working in varying ways and contexts, we discourage applications that describe having issues with any particular person, as these conditions may have an impact within an organization but are too isolated to be felt industry-wide.

22. What should I prepare for the Support Materials section? And, are there file format or length specifications?

Applicants must upload a brief résumé, bio, or CV that references their current role(s) in the arts and culture sector and is no longer than two (2) pages (.pdf, .doc, and .docx formats accepted).

Applicants must also upload documentation that reflects the change-making action was public-facing and provides further context for the action's direct impact and results. The most helpful materials will prove that the action and its impacts were visible in the community, region, or field and documented in a publicly accessible way, such as press, social media posts that have amassed some attention, official records (i.e., meeting minutes), etc. Examples of support materials that provide context may include relevant URLs, press, screenshots, or photo/video documentation.

A minimum of one, and no more than three, support materials can be uploaded. Acceptable file formats are .pdf, .doc, .docx, .jpg, .png, .mp4, .mov, .avi, and .wmv. Individual samples have no page or time limits.

The materials provided will not be used to assess artistic “merit” or “excellence” as neither are relevant to the CALI Catalyst program.

Please check your uploaded support materials to ensure functionality. Applications with inaccessible uploads, such as corrupted or password-protected attachments, will not be reviewed.

23. Whom should I use as a reference, and what information do you need?

We suggest choosing references who can attest to the applicant’s demonstration of the review criteria, have knowledge of the change-making action and its impact, and also speak on behalf of the communities the applicant has positively impacted. In addition, references cannot be a family member, spouse/partner, or long-time friend, nor should they be engaged in an active financial relationship with the applicant. We consider a reference with whom the applicant has a family or active financial connection to be a conflict of interest.

Regarding information needed, applicants will need to provide contact information (phone number and email) for both references and indicate the nature of their relationship, as well as language preference. References must be able to commit to a 15-minute phone conversation with CCI staff at a mutually agreed upon time. Currently, staff can only accommodate phone conversations in English and Spanish. References who are not fluent in English or Spanish are welcome to have a translator on the call.

CCI staff will *only* contact the references of top candidates for funding. CCI may also call on individuals in the field of a competitive applicant’s work so that the people directly meant to benefit will influence the adjudication process.

Please note that reference calls do not guarantee funding approval.

24. If my funding request is declined in round 1, can I reapply in round 2?

Unless a new body of work is being addressed or enough progress has been made that resulted in tangible impact, applicants who are declined in round 1 may not reapply to round 2.

25. Do you offer feedback?

We are unable to provide feedback on individual CALI Catalyst applications. However, staff are available to schedule a 15-minute phone call with declined or prospective applicants to review grant guidelines and review criteria. Please contact us at grants@cciarts.org (include CALI Catalyst in the subject line) to coordinate.

26. If I am awarded a grant, how will I receive the funds?

If awarded a grant, the payment will be processed via direct deposit through Tipalti—CCI’s secure, third-party accounting software platform. Teams will need to designate a recipient to receive the funds. CCI’s preference is to issue a single payment for the full amount of the grant award. Processing times will depend on the return of your electronically signed grant agreement, along with any requested documents, such as the Form W-9. Grantees do *not* need a fiscal sponsor or other 501(c)3 nonprofit intermediary to receive funding. However, they do have the option to use their fiscal sponsor or incorporated 501(c)(3) nonprofit to contract with CCI and receive the awarded funds.

We understand that individuals may have a unique financial situation and that direct deposit may not be an option. CCI also understands that fund disbursement may impact disability-related community support or other social benefits; therefore, we will structure options that work for each person's unique financial situation. Please contact CCI at 415.288.0530 or grants@cciarts.org (include CALI Catalyst in the subject line) to determine a plan that works best for you.

27. If I am awarded a grant, is it considered taxable income?

Please be aware that grant awards may be taxable as ordinary income. As CCI cannot offer legal or tax advice, grantees are advised to consult with an accountant, tax expert, and/or a benefits specialist.

We understand that fund disbursement may impact disability-related community support or other social benefits and are willing to structure options that work for each person's unique financial situation. Please contact CCI at 415.288.0530 or grants@cciarts.org (include CALI Catalyst in the subject line) to determine a plan that works best for you.

28. If I am awarded a grant, will I need to submit a report? Are there any other requirements?

If you are awarded a grant, you must complete a brief final report describing the impact and use of funding (i.e., line item expenses). Reports will be due within 12 months of signing the grant agreement. CCI will provide further instructions on how to access the final report form through Submittable in the grant agreement. In addition, grantees must submit a final report that is approved by CCI before they are eligible to reapply for CALI Catalyst funding.

In addition, CCI will also host one or more virtual community-building gatherings for the 2024 CALI Catalyst grantees in January 2025. This will be an opportunity for grantees to connect and learn about each other's work and be part of a values-aligned network. More details will be provided in the CALI Catalyst grant agreement.

29. How often may I receive funding through CALI Catalyst?

Individuals may receive one CALI Catalyst grant per calendar year. If you are a current grantee, you must submit your final report to CCI for approval before you can be considered for funding again. Additionally, please be aware that CCI prioritizes first-time CALI Catalyst applicants.

30. How many grants will you make?

Year Two (2024) of CALI Catalyst's three-year award cycle has \$112,500 in available funding, which will support approximately 15 grantees.

31. Will you publicize the names of grantees?

The names of CALI Catalyst grantees will be included in CCI's Annual Report, an online publication that is produced each fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) and available for download on our website. CALI Catalyst grantees may also be highlighted through CCI's communication channels including our e-newsletter, social media accounts, website, and press releases, as well as our website's searchable grantee database.

To learn more about previous CALI Catalyst recipients, search CCI's Past Recipient directory by clicking [here](#) or view the 2021, 2022, and 2023 visual directories of grantees [here](#).

32. If I am awarded a CALI Catalyst grant, does that mean that CCI and its funding partners agree with or endorse my change-making action?

CCI and its funding partners do not take a position on the sentiments or actions expressed by CALI Catalyst applicants and grantees. This ensures that the adjudication and award processes remain focused on sector and community impacts and not on individual institutions or actors.

33. What happened to CALI Accelerator grants?

CALI Accelerator is part of a lineage of the evolving-with-the-times CALI program, which has been marked by different phases of grantmaking priorities since its launch in 2011. In its first years, CALI (fka, the NextGen program) was a professional development pipeline for young talent; then, when it was renamed CALI (California Arts Leadership Investments), it emphasized externally facing opportunities that prepared emerging arts professionals for managerial-level roles (i.e., workplace-specific skills and knowledge attainment). CALI Accelerator, offered from October 2018 to January 2021, prioritized activities aimed at helping grantees develop their leadership vision and voice while acquiring professional knowledge and skills as a means of preparing grantees to be influential in their organization, discipline, or larger arts and culture field.

In response to the changing dynamics of the field, CALI Catalyst has emerged to support change-makers who are explicit about changing the arts and culture sector in ways that are needed by those whose voices have not been adequately heard. And, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge and give credit to the change-makers who helped to inspire CALI Catalyst, such as Taylor Brandon, who held the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art more accountable for its censorship of Black voices; Ely Sonny Orquiza, creator of “The Living Document of BIPOC Experiences in Bay Area Theater Companies,” which collected anonymous testimonials of racism within the region’s theater industry; and former Marciano Art Foundation workers in Los Angeles, whose efforts to unionize led to greater awareness of the need to protect museum workers.

34. I still have a question.

CCI staff are here to help and listen. Please email us at grants@cciarts.org (include CALI Catalyst in the subject line) or call 415.288.0530 for assistance. You may also schedule a time to speak [here](#). For Deaf applicants and those with hearing loss, contact CCI using the [California Relay Service](#)—our staff are trained in making and receiving these calls.

If you need technical assistance (e.g., password or upload issues), request support at: <https://www.submittable.com/help/submitter/>. Submittable’s business hours are 9 am – 5 pm MT. They aim to respond within 24 business hours.