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# CALI CATALYST

## Guidelines

*(effective March 13, 2024)*

**CALI Catalyst provides unrestricted grants of up to \$7,500 to California changemakers who are creating tangible impact within the arts and culture sector, shifting power and influence to historically underrepresented voices.**

The California Art Leadership Investments (CALI) Catalyst program launched in 2021 to provide financial support and validation to individuals whose frontline work to upend the status quo in the arts and culture sector is creating tangible change and moving the needle towards greater equity and inclusion. We can look to recent CALI Catalyst grantees and their work to see these ripple effects within the sector. In Sacramento, Genevieve Leighton-Armah is challenging capitalist notions of productivity by creating nourishing spaces for Black leaders to prioritize self-care, healing, and rest. Los Angeles-based Level Ground Collective is modeling what a non-hierarchical, cooperative 501(c)3 nonprofit structure led by artists of color can look like, creating a precedent for the sector, and actively sharing their learnings and model. Nationally, Rika Iino is collaborating with the Association of Performing Arts Professionals to create equitable contracting practices between artists and cultural institutions that prioritize partnerships and collaboration rather than deliverables.

When individuals take bold steps to challenge the status quo, they risk sacrificing their jobs, social status, and reputation, and more often than not, their hard labor goes unpaid. CALI Catalyst recognizes that this is precisely the time when the arts and culture sector needs to support these changemakers who are ensuring historically marginalized communities—such as BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities—don't fall through the cracks. By speaking out and taking action, such as exposing discriminatory hiring practices or disrupting harmful philanthropic norms, these individuals make the arts and culture field better for everyone. The CALI Catalyst grant program aims to support such leaders financially, recognizing that the fear of financial risk can silence voices and discourage meaningful change.

To help ensure that the momentum for field-wide change continues undeterred, CALI Catalyst will support artists and arts workers who are on the frontlines of effecting greater inclusion, access, diversity, and equity in the arts and culture sector.

CCI is honored to have supported 52 individuals and teams whose bold and inspiring actions are creating tangible change in the arts and culture sector we want and need. Learn more about the 2021, 2022, and 2023 recipients through their visual directories [here](#).

### **ELIGIBILITY**

CALI Catalyst applicants can be individuals or teams of individuals.\* To be **eligible** for funding 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 started (i.e., the action is still in progress) on or after January 1, 2020.
- 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.

\*Only one application will be accepted per team (i.e., individual team members cannot submit separate applications that describe 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. Review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more details.

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. Review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more details.

#### AWARD DETAILS

- Unrestricted grants of up to \$7,500 will be awarded.
- Year Two (2024) of CALI Catalyst's three-year award cycle has \$112,500 in available funding, which will support approximately 15 grantees.
- Grantees will be invited to one or more virtual gatherings in January 2025 to connect with other CALI Catalyst award recipients.

CALI Catalyst will prioritize grant support for the following:

- Applicants whose bold change-making actions (**2020 or later**) are upending the status quo and creating **tangible change** in the arts and culture sector, shifting it towards greater equity and inclusion, and helping historically marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities, gain more influence and power at industry-wide levels. By "tangible change," we are referring to actions that resulted in visible, measurable, and concrete impacts or results.
- Applicants who played a causal role in the change that took place (i.e., they decidedly influenced change at an industry/sector level).
- Applicants who reside in a non-metropolitan region.
- Applicants who have not previously received CALI Catalyst funding.

## REVIEW PROCESS & CRITERIA

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.

Applications will be evaluated based on their ability to establish the following:

### 1. Impact on the arts and culture sector

- Is the applicant's change-making action creating a tangible impact and shifting an entire arts and culture sector away from the status quo (such as the museum or theatre sectors)? *Meaning, the change-making actions resulted in visible, measurable, and concrete results beyond creating awareness about an issue.*
- Is the applicant helping historically marginalized communities gain more power and influence within the arts and culture sector in tangible and measurable ways? *This could happen through the shift of power within leadership dynamics or organizational structures, or by influencing industry and regulatory policies and practices.*
- Did the applicant play a causal role in the change-making action and its impact? *In other words, was the applicant directly involved in driving the change-making action and its effects?*

### 2. Intention to enact greater inclusion, access, diversity, and equity within the arts and culture sector

- Is the applicant's change-making action meant to help historically marginalized communities gain more influence and build power within the arts and culture sector?
- What was the catalyst for the change-making action? *In other words, why did the applicant decide to take action?*

### 3. Informed perspective

- Does the applicant have direct experience with the arts and culture sector, and do they belong to a historically marginalized community?

CCI does not take a position on the sentiments or actions expressed by CALI Catalyst applicants and grantees. This ensures that the adjudication process focuses on sector and community impacts and not on individual institutions or actors.

## APPLICATION

In addition to answering the application's narrative and demographic questions and providing support materials (**Application Previews** in both .doc and .pdf formats available [here](#)), applicants must provide the names and contact information of two references who can speak to the impact of your change-making action(s) and the review criteria above. *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. CCI will only contact the references of top candidates for funding, and we strongly suggest references who can speak on behalf of the communities the applicant has positively impacted.\** In addition, CCI may call on individuals in the field of a competitive applicant's work. For more information, review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

*\*Please note that reference calls do not guarantee funding approval.*

## HOW TO APPLY

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

### 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.

**Access the CALI Catalyst online application at:**  
<https://centerforculturalinnovation.submittable.com/>

Applications will be accepted online ONLY through CCI's Submittable platform, and applicants MUST create an account in Submittable before they can access the grant application. Learn more about using Submittable [here](#).

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.

### DELIVERABLES

Grantees must complete a brief final report describing the impact and use of funding (i.e., line item expenses—no receipts required). Reports will be due within 12 months of signing the grant agreement. Additional details are available in the **Frequently Asked Questions** [here](#).

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.

### QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

CCI staff are here to help and listen. Please email us at [grants@cciarts.org](mailto: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.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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