



# INVESTING IN ARTISTS

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# ARTISTIC INNOVATION

## Guidelines

(effective July 3, 2024)

The **Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation** program (fka Investing in Artists) supports diverse, Bay Area working artists who are developing **new work** in the **performing or media arts** that pushes the envelope of their creative process, explores new artistic collaborations, and/or supports artistic growth and experimentation that extends the boundaries of their art-making.

The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) established the Investing in Artists grant program in 2007 to enhance the working lives of and strengthen the creative support system for California artists working in all disciplines. Since that time, and with the support of The James Irvine Foundation and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, CCI has awarded over \$2 million to more than 300 diverse artists across California.

Through the continued support of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, CCI is pleased to offer a new cycle of funding (2024 – 2026) for the Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation program for Bay Area performing and media artists. Through a competitive application process conducted over three rounds of funding from 2024 to 2026, approximately eight grants of up to \$9,000 each will be made annually to Bay Area performing and media artists, with Bay Area County eligibility rotating every year.

### ELIGIBILITY

Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation grants are designed to support diverse Bay Area artists in the **performing and media arts**, which include the disciplines of dance, music, musical theatre, opera, theatre, video, film, and animation, to name a few. Applicants representing a wide range of cultural expressions and artistic practices in the performing and media arts are encouraged to apply.

To be considered for funding, applicants:

- **For the 2024 Round:** Must reside full-time in Alameda, Contra Costa, or San Francisco County when applying and for the duration of the grant period (November 2024 – November 2025).
  - *In 2025, artists residing in San Mateo, Santa Clara, or Santa Cruz County will be eligible to apply; and in 2026, artists residing in Marin, Napa, Solano, or Sonoma County will be eligible.*
- Must be an **individual working artist**<sup>1</sup>.
- Must propose a **new project**.
  - *Projects that have already taken place or that will take place before the start of the grant period are ineligible. See the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.*
- Must have **performed or presented artistic work in a public context**—including online/digital platforms—within the last three years (i.e., since 2021).
- Must be **18 years or older** at the time of the application deadline.

<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of this program, eligible “working artists” are defined as adults who have received training in an artistic discipline or tradition, spend ten or more hours a week on their artistic practice, self-define as professional artists, and attempt to derive income from work in which they use their expert artistic practices and skills. While serious artistic activity performed as a hobby or as part of volunteer community service may, in some cases, be considered technically eligible, successful applicants will have demonstrated a history of artistic accomplishment and a sustained commitment to deepening and expanding their artistic work.

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

- Artist collectives, coops, or collaboratives;
- Nonprofit or fiscally sponsored organizations;
- Group performances or other group-based projects;
- Individuals playing a supportive or “producer” role in developing an individual artist’s work (such as curators, producers, designers, technicians, fabricators, and advisors);
- Full-time or matriculated students;
- Applicants who submit more than one application;
- Incomplete applications and those with inaccessible work samples or other required files; and
- Individuals who have a conflict of interest (family or financial relationship) with the board, staff, or directors of the Center for Cultural Innovation.

## REVIEW PROCESS & CRITERIA

CCI will invite panelists who are established field practitioners to review applications and make recommendations on final grant recipients. Additional reviewers may be invited to advise on technical proposals or follow up with applicants to assess artistic practice, context, or work settings.

Panelists will evaluate applications against the following artistic innovation criteria:

- **Readiness:** Clarity, rationale, and readiness of proposed project, including identification of specific work plans, timeline, and collaborators (if applicable) required to carry out the project;
- **Critical Juncture:** Evidence that funding is coming at a “critical juncture” in the artist’s career (i.e., that the proposed project provides a significant opportunity to “push the artistic boundaries” at the right moment for the artist) and the potential long-term impact of the grant. In other words, there is a compelling rationale as to why the artist should be supported at *this particular moment*; and
- **Artistic Achievement:** Demonstrated record of artistic achievement and quality of work.

Panelists will also aim to ensure that recommended grantees reflect the Bay Area’s diverse cultural communities and performing and media arts landscape. To that end, the panel will seek to balance the final grantee pool across factors, which include: geography, disciplines, communities served, and cultural form and/or tradition represented.

**NOTE:** In light of the continuing recovery from COVID-19, we recognize that nothing is “business as usual” and that artists have had to respond in nimble ways, such as transitioning projects to online platforms or outdoor venues and re-tooling audience engagement strategies. These changes are not enough to be competitive; instead, if applicable, such changes must still demonstrate catalyzing artistic (not just presentation or business) practices, and that funding would be coming at a critical juncture in the artist’s career.

## APPLICATION

To inform panelists' assessment of the review criteria, the following application sections are required:

1. **Contact Information & Project Details**
2. **Narrative**
  - a. Project Description (350 words max)
  - b. Collaborators (350 words max)
  - c. Why now? (350 words max)
  - d. Applicant Context (150 words max)
3. **Résumé**
4. **Project Budget**
  - a. Budget Notes (150 words max)
5. **Work Samples**
  - a. Only one support material is required; applicants can submit up to three. We strongly recommend at least one video work sample. Panelists will review up to 5 minutes total.
  - b. Manuscripts will only be accepted from theatre artists applying as playwrights. Up to ten pages may be uploaded.
6. **Award Administration Information**
7. **Demographic Survey (Optional)**
8. **Application Certification**

An Application Preview (.doc and .pdf versions are available) is available [here](#). Applicants are encouraged to review it before preparing their narrative responses and the requested materials. The application preview includes important details such as word limits, work sample instructions, and accepted file types.

## TIMELINE

<b>Application Opens</b>	July 3 at 9:00 a.m. PT
<b>Information Session</b>	July 17 from 12:00-1:00 p.m. PT <a href="#">Register Here</a> <i>Note: If you're unable to attend, a recording and a copy of the presentation deck will be posted on CCI's website.</i>
<b>Drop-in Q&amp;A's</b>	July 26 from 12:00-1:00 p.m. PT <a href="#">Register Here</a> August 7 from 10:00-11:00 a.m. PT <a href="#">Register Here</a> August 13 from 5:00-6:00 p.m. PT <a href="#">Register Here</a> <i>Note: These are not formal presentations, and they will not be recorded. Applicants are welcome to join the drop-in anytime within the scheduled hour.</i> <i>The Drop-in Q&amp;A is an opportunity to have your questions addressed by CCI staff in real time. To ensure everyone's time is used efficiently, we ask that you review the grant guidelines, application preview, and Frequently Asked Questions in advance.</i>
<b>Application Deadline</b>	August 26 at 11:59 a.m. (morning) PT
<b>Application Notifications</b>	October 30 by EOD
<b>Grant Support Period</b>	November 2024 - November 2025

## HOW TO APPLY

Applications will be accepted online from **July 3, 2024, at 9 a.m. PT through August 26, 2024, at 11:59 a.m. (morning) PT**. All applicants will be notified about their funding status on October 30, 2024, by EOD. Complete applications must be submitted by the deadline—no exceptions will be made. In addition, applications with missing or inaccessible content (e.g., corrupted or password-protected files) will not be reviewed.

**Access the Creative Economy Fund online application at:**  
<https://centerforculturalinnovation.submittable.com/>

Applications will be accepted online ONLY through CCI's Submittable platform. 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.

## GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS

Grantees must complete a brief final report describing the impact and use of funding (i.e., line item expenses) and provide documentation of the activities supported, such as high-quality images, URLs to relevant press, or video recordings. Reports will be due in October 2025 through Submittable. Further details will be provided in CCI's grant agreement.

## QUESTIONS & SUPPORT

CCI staff are here to help and listen. Please email us at [grants@cciarts.org](mailto:grants@cciarts.org) (include IA - Artistic Innovation 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 is 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.

For additional application support, please see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and [Submittable Quick Tips](#).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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