



INVESTING IN ARTISTS

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

Frequently Asked Questions

(Updated July 23, 2025)

ELIGIBILITY

1. Who can apply for this grant?

In addition to aligning with CCI's definitions of "craft" and "working craft artist," applicants must be 18 years or older at the time of the application deadline, reside full-time in an eligible region, and have presented artistic work in a public context—including online/digital platforms—within the last three years (i.e., since 2022). See the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment [guidelines](#) for further eligibility information.

2. How do you define "working craft artist"?

For the purposes of this program, eligible "working craft artists" are defined as adults who are self-taught or have received training in an artistic discipline or tradition (such as through an apprenticeship, trade school, undergraduate or graduate program), spend ten or more hours a week on their artwork, 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 practice.

3. How do you define "Craft"?

CCI uses the definition of craft put forth by the [Craft Emergency Relief Fund](#) (CERF+), which describes craft as the creation of original objects by the skillful manipulation of materials. While objects may be created from traditional (clay, fiber, metal, wood, glass) or non-traditional materials (concrete, plastic, synthetic fibers, recycled materials) and be functional or nonfunctional, both types derive part of their meaning from their association with traditional functional forms such as chairs, vessels, garments, or implements and/or their association with cultural tradition. CERF+ also acknowledges that artists working in craft disciplines may self-identify as makers, designers, potters, ceramicists, mixed media artists, etc. To be inclusive of all eligible materials-based artists, regardless of discipline, CCI uses "artist," "craft artist," "craftsperson/people," and "folk and traditional artist" throughout the program's guidelines and other program ephemera.

4. What do you mean by folk and traditional artists?

To borrow again from our friends at CERF+, we define folk and traditional artists as those who are "rooted within a common ethnic heritage, geographic region, religious affiliation, or occupation, folk and traditional artists create extraordinary work and demonstrate exquisite craftsmanship, passing down invaluable knowledge and skills honed and refined from one

generation to the next.” While folk and traditional artists may use craft, music, dance, storytelling, food, or other media for creative and cultural expression, the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment grant is appropriate for folk and traditional artists who concentrate on craft objects.

5. What do you mean by “project”?

For the purposes of this program, the “project” is defined as the tool/equipment to be purchased and the applicant's description of how the tool/equipment will impact their ability to create object-based work. Successful applications include clear descriptions of each tool/equipment to be purchased, the functionality of that tool/equipment (ie, how it will be used), and the impact the tool/equipment will have on the artist's ability to practice their craft.

Applicants should keep in mind that panelists come from a wide range of artistic backgrounds and may not have specialized knowledge of each tool/equipment. Your ability to communicate your vision clearly will help panelists fully understand the scope of your project.

6. What do you mean by “object-based work”?

For the purposes of this Fund, “object-based work” is defined as three-dimensional objects in which traditional (clay, fiber, metal, wood, glass) or non-traditional materials (concrete, plastic, synthetic fibers, recycled materials) are used to create craft objects that are functional or nonfunctional. Objects, in this case, tend to be non-ephemeral, meaning lasting longer than a short period.

Examples of object-based work include, but are not limited to, handmade jewelry, sculptures, chairs, quilts, baskets, beadwork, bookmaking, and blacksmithing.

7. Which geographic regions are eligible for consideration?

This program is open to individual craft artists, craftspeople, and folk and traditional artists in the United States and its Territories, with geographic eligibility rotating over the 2024–2026 funding cycle. Award rounds and their corresponding eligible regions are:

- 2024: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and the U.S. Territories of American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.
- 2025: Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.
- 2026: Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia.

8. How many applications can I submit?

Applicants can apply only once. In other words, applicants cannot submit multiple applications for different tools/equipment. You may request support for more than one tool or piece of equipment in the same application, so long as they're within this program's scope of support and award range (\$1,000–\$5,000).

- 9. If I've received funding through another CCI grant program, am I eligible to apply for support?**
Yes, you are eligible! Funding through another CCI grant program does not affect your eligibility to apply for or receive funds.

10. Can you give me examples of who this program doesn't support?

Given this program's definition of craft (i.e., the creation of original objects by the skillful manipulation of materials) and eligibility criterion regarding individual working artists, the following are examples of applicants who would *not* be competitive for this opportunity:

- Artists who create work with no intention of showing or selling it—the exception is traditional artists whose practice preempts public exhibition or sales of their work.
- Artists who produce commercially manufactured work, such as paintings and photographs.
- Artists who rely exclusively on premade molds or other prefabricated materials (e.g., findings, patterns, kits, and templates) to create work. (If producing work at a scale where molds, stamps, and the like are needed, then these should be created by the artist.)

11. I'm a multidisciplinary artist who sometimes uses craft-based practices/materials in my work. Am I eligible to apply?

This program is for individual artists who demonstrate a sustained commitment to their craft medium through training, a record of artistic achievement/cultural relevance, and quality of work. Secondary or occasional incorporation of craft arts into your practice would not be competitive for this grant opportunity.

12. Can organizations, companies, or collectives apply?

Only individual artists may apply for this grant. Applications from organizations, companies, or artist collectives will not be accepted.

13. I need support for routine supplies and materials. Is the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment grant program a good fit for me?

Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment helps individual craft artists purchase artistic tools and equipment that support their ability to make object-based work. Funding is meant to provide *linchpin support*, such as enabling artists to meet demand, address safety requirements or other regulations, replace outdated or damaged equipment, or reach a higher standard of quality or craftsmanship. Put another way, this program will support artists' acquisition of fixed assets (tools, equipment) that are necessary to the production of their artistic work and the sustainability or advancement of their careers. Routine art supplies and materials would be an ongoing cost that is outside of the scope of this program.

14. Why are you rotating geographic eligibility? How did you determine which regions to make eligible each year?

We are rotating geographic eligibility to manage application volume and target our outreach. We segmented geographic eligibility based on 2020 U.S. Census population data, known regions of craft activity (defined as the Southwest, Appalachia, and New England), and contiguity. In Year One of the 2024–2026 funding cycle, the supported regions have a collective population of 92,736,965, include the Southwest, and are generally contiguous (with the exception of the U.S. Territories, Alaska, and Hawaii). The States supported in Year Two have a collective population of 120,431,045, include most of the region associated with Appalachia, and are contiguous. Year

Three's supported States and the District of Columbia have a collective population of 121,905,166, include all of New England and some portions of the Appalachian region, and are contiguous.

15. Will you make changes to the eligibility criteria in future funding rounds?

We understand that guidelines and accompanying program materials (such as the application, FAQs, etc.) may be refined following insights gained during this program's pilot application round. Any adjustments made will be minimal in nature, ensuring no substantive changes to the Fund's scope, eligibility criteria, or review process during the 2024–2026 cycle.

APPLICATION

16. The narrative asks that I include “resources needed to support this request and their status” in my project description. What does this mean?

This component of the prompt is meant to provide panelists with details about what you need in order for your project to be realized, and the state of these resources. Resources may include funding, space/storage, installation or training support, insurance, or safety protocols, to name a few. You're also asked to describe the status of these resources; for example, are they secured? In progress? In the research stage? And, if they haven't been obtained, what steps are you taking to secure them?

17. What is the work sample requirement? What makes for a strong work sample?

Applicants must provide work samples in the form of a video and/or high-resolution images. These samples should consist of object-based creations made by the applicant within the last three years (i.e., since 2022). Each applicant must submit at least five high-resolution images (up to ten) or at least one video (with a maximum of three).

Acceptable file formats are .jpg, .png, .avi, .mp4, .mov, and .mpg.

The work sample is critical to the application and should represent your artistic work in the best possible light. When deciding how to present your work, please remember that the panel will have at most five minutes to review your sample(s). Therefore, you should pick the strongest sample to present first. In addition, we recommend that you select samples that reinforce other parts of your application. For example, if you work primarily in glass, you should provide samples of your glasswork. Applicants should ensure that the images and/or videos they submit are clear and high-resolution.

We will not accept work samples by mail or email. The application preview includes acceptable work sample formats and specific instructions on accepted formats. **You are encouraged to prepare and upload work sample(s) well in advance of the deadline.** Should you wait until the day of the deadline and encounter technical difficulties with file formats, the upload process, or other application components, the ability to receive technical assistance to resolve issues will be significantly limited.

EVALUATION

18. What will the review process be like? Who reviews the applications?

CCI will invite panelists with craft expertise to review eligible applications against the evaluation criteria and make award recommendations. Additional field experts may advise on technical

proposals or conduct site visits with applicants to assess artistic practice, context, or work settings.

19. What makes an application competitive?

The most competitive applications are the ones that are written, generally brief and to the point, and demonstrate a strong alignment with each criterion. Applications will also be evaluated based on the strength of the artist's work, clarity, and readiness of the proposed project, as well as the timeliness and impact of the requested funding on the artist's career and ability to produce work. Panelists will also aim to ensure that recommended grantees reflect the diversity of the craft landscape, with a priority for those who are underrepresented or under the radar in the field or their specific discipline. To that end, the panel will seek to balance the final grantee pool across factors, which include geography, disciplines, communities served, and cultural form/tradition represented.

20. What does the term "linchpin support" mean?

As part of the review criteria, applicants must demonstrate that the proposed project will offer vital, linchpin support that will impact their career and ability to produce work – enabling them to meet demand, adhere to safety requirements or other regulations, replace outdated or damaged equipment, reach a higher standard of quality or craftsmanship, or realize other professional needs. By "linchpin support," we want to understand how the proposed project (i.e., purchase or repair of tools/equipment) is *essential* to facilitating the applicant's artistic practice and career and ensuring that both can flourish.

21. Is preference given to emerging or established artists? Does career stage matter?

Artists face new and evolving challenges as they progress through their careers. For this reason, CCI does not give preference to particular career stages. Competitive applications must demonstrate the impact of the proposed project on the artist's career at the current point in time. Quality of artistic work and track record will also be factors in determining who receives a grant.

NOTIFICATIONS

22. 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 on October 14, 2025, by 5:00 pm PT. Check your spam folder if you haven't heard from CCI by the promised notification date and time. 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. For safelist instructions by email service provider, see [here](#).

23. If I'm declined for funding, will you offer feedback on my application?

Depending on the volume of applications, CCI may provide feedback through a webinar that addresses panelists' general application observations, one-on-one scheduled phone calls with applicants, or written feedback. Details will be provided when notifications are shared on October 14, 2025.

GRANTEES

24. How many grants will you make?

There is \$60,000 in the round for 2025. Since applicants can request \$1,000–\$5,000, we anticipate awarding roughly 12–22 grants each funding round. However, the actual number of grants awarded will depend on the quality of the applications received and the financial requirements of the funded projects.

25. If awarded a grant, how will funding be disbursed?

CCI will issue the award in two payments: The first installment will be 90% of the grant funds, which will be paid once the grant agreement is signed and returned. The remaining 10% will be paid once all grant requirements have been met and a final report has been submitted and approved by CCI.

The payment will be processed via direct deposit through Tipalti—CCI's secure, third-party accounting software platform. 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 also have the option to use a fiscal sponsor, LLC, or an incorporated 501(c)(3) nonprofit to contract with CCI and receive the awarded funds on their behalf.

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.

26. If awarded a grant, how can the funding be used?

Funding awarded through Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment should be used according to the proposed budget included with the grantee's initial application. Changes to the proposed budget should be discussed with CCI before implementation.

Additionally, 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). All funds awarded must be used to support and further your artistic work and contribute to a broader public benefit. Further details are provided in the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment grant agreement.

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

Artists who receive funding through the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment grant program should know that grants over \$599 may be taxable as ordinary income. We recommend that you consult a qualified tax advisor for further information.

28. What are the grantee requirements?

Grantees must complete a brief final report describing the impact and use of funding (i.e., line-item expenses). Reports will be due in November 2026. CCI will provide instructions in the grant agreement, including instructions on how to submit the report through Submittable.

29. Will you announce the names of grantees?

The names of the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment 2025 grantees will be announced via a press release that is shared on CCI's website (issued on or around January 1, 2026) and in CCI's

Annual Report, an online publication produced each fiscal year (July 1–June 30) and made available for download on our website. In addition, grantees may be highlighted through CCI’s communication platforms, such as our e-newsletters, social media channels, and website.

SUPPORT

30. I need help preparing my application. What do you recommend?

We’re glad you asked. We recommend preparing your application in Word or Google Docs and sharing your draft with a friend or peer for feedback. From there, copy and paste your responses into the Submittable online application and upload the required items (budget, résumé, work samples). Test the uploaded items to ensure they work properly; if they are, you’re ready to submit your application!

31. I’m having issues with Submittable (e.g., lost password, error messages, trouble uploading) and need help. Who do I contact?

For technical assistance (e.g., password or upload issues), request support from Submittable 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.

32. I still have questions. What do I do?

CCI staff are here to help! For questions regarding the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment guidelines or application, email us at grants@cciarts.org (include “IA: Tools and Equipment” in the subject line) or call us at 213.870.7129 during our office hours (Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm PT).

Deaf applicants and those with hearing loss can contact CCI using the [California Relay Service](#). Our staff are trained in making and receiving these calls.