



INVESTING IN ARTISTS

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

Guidelines

(effective May 19, 2026)

The **Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment** program will award grants of \$1,000–\$5,000 to **individual craft artists** to purchase artistic **tools and equipment** that support their ability to make object-based work. This program is open to individual craft artists, folk and traditional artists, and craftspeople in the United States and its Territories, with geographic eligibility rotating over the 2024–2026 funding cycle. See the ELIGIBILITY section below for details.

Funding will be awarded through a competitive grant application process. Competitive applicants will present a clear request, demonstrate a sustained commitment to their craft discipline, and illustrate how funding will provide linchpin support, such as enabling the artist to meet demand, address safety requirements or other regulations, replace outdated or damaged equipment, or reach a higher standard of quality or craftsmanship. In other words, funding will support craft artists' careers and their ability to make work. A total of \$60,000 is available in the 2026 funding round.

Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment is administered by the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI), a trusted intermediary focused on the economic security of individuals in the arts, with funding support provided by the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation.

ABOUT

The Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) established the Investing in Artists grant portfolio in 2007 to enhance the working lives of and strengthen the creative support system for California artists working in all disciplines. From 2007–2011, and with the support of the James Irvine Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Investing in Artists awarded grants to individual artists across disciplines to acquire tools and equipment, produce new artistic work, and develop plans for marketing and presenting artistic work. With the continued support of the Hewlett Foundation, [Investing in Artists: Artistic Innovation](#) has continued to support the development of new work by Bay Area performing and media artists through the portfolio's annual Artistic Innovation grant.

In 2024, with the partnership of the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation, CCI revived Investing in Artists' support of tools and equipment, with a new focus on the disciplines of both craft and folk, and traditional arts, and with expanded geographic eligibility across the U.S. and its Territories.

Access to tools and equipment plays a significant role in every artist's ability to innovate, contribute, and start their careers. However, affordability, availability, and career stage can present significant barriers to meeting this structural need. These barriers to entry are amplified for craft artists, especially those who are underrepresented in their discipline and/or the field at large. This program responds to these circumstances by supporting craftspeople in acquiring the tools and equipment they need and bringing greater visibility to the field and its practitioners.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for funding consideration, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Identify as an individual **working craft artist**¹ (see definition below).
- Align with CCI's definition of craft² (see definition below).
- For the 2026 funding round, **eligible applicants must reside full-time in 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, or Virginia.**
 - *In 2024, funding was available to craftspeople residing full-time in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, as well as American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.*
 - *In 2025, funding was available to craftspeople residing full-time in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, or Wisconsin.*
- **Presented artistic work in a public context**—including online/digital platforms—within the last three years (i.e., since 2023).
- Are **18 years or older** at the time of the application deadline.

¹ 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.

² 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 or non-traditional 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 this program’s guidelines and other program ephemera.

Examples of eligible requests:

- New or used tool/equipment purchases
- Repairs to broken equipment
- Installation of equipment
- Materials needed to build equipment
- Tool/equipment storage

The following applicants/requests are **ineligible** for funding consideration:

- Artist collectives, coops, or collaboratives;

- Nonprofit or fiscally sponsored organizations;
- Recipients of the Maxwell/Hanrahan Award in Craft, administered by United States Artists;
- Incomplete applications and those with inaccessible work samples or other required files;
- Full-time or matriculating students;
- Applicants who submit more than one application;
- Requests to support training in or experimentation with a new medium;
- Requests for routine art materials or supplies;
- Requests for fixed costs (e.g., studio rent, equipment/tool insurance or ongoing maintenance, utilities);
- Requests to support capital improvements or repairs, purchases made before the award of the grant, consultant fees, personal compensation, or payment of debts, credit cards, loans, or other financial responsibilities; and
- Applicants who have a conflict of interest (family or financial relationships) with the boards, staff, and directors of CCI or the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation.

AWARD DETAILS & REQUIREMENTS

Award Range: \$1,000–\$5,000

Funding Available: \$60,000

Period of Support: September 2026–September 2027

Requests must be between \$1,000 and \$5,000. We anticipate a high volume of applications. For this reason, partial funding may be awarded.

All projects (e.g., purchasing or repairing tools/equipment) must be completed within twelve months of receiving the grant award. Grantees must complete a brief final report describing the impact and use of funding (e.g., line-item expenses) and provide documentation of the activities supported, such as high-quality images, URLs to relevant press, or video recordings. Reports are due in October 2026 through Submittable. Further details will be provided in CCI’s grant agreement.

REVIEW PROCESS & CRITERIA

CCI will invite panelists with craft expertise to review eligible applications and make award recommendations.

Panelists will evaluate requests using these criteria:

- **Vision:** Proposed project (i.e, purchase or repair of tools/equipment) is clear and has a strong rationale. Details are provided about the specific tools/equipment requested, associated costs, timeline, resources needed, and their status, and other considerations required to carry out the project.
- **Impact:** Evidence that purchasing or repair of tools/equipment provides vital, linchpin support for artist’s career and ability to produce work. Applicants must provide a clear rationale as to how the tools and equipment will enable 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.
- **Artistry:** Applicant demonstrates sustained commitment to their discipline by way of training, record of artistic achievement/cultural relevance, and quality of work.

Panelists will 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 and/or tradition represented.

APPLICATION

The application consists of the following required sections:

1. Contact Information & Application Details
2. Narrative
3. Résumé
4. Budget
5. Work Samples
 - a. Applicants can submit either images or video work samples. Each applicant must submit at least five high-resolution images (up to ten) or at least one video (with a maximum of three). Panelists will review up to 3 minutes of video total.
6. Award Administration Information
7. Demographic Survey (Optional)
8. Application Certification

An **Application Preview** (.doc and .pdf versions available) is available [here](#). We encourage you to review it in advance to prepare your narrative responses and the requested materials. The application preview includes important details such as word limits, work sample instructions, and accepted file formats.

TIMELINE

Application Opens	May 19 at 9:00 a.m. PT
Information Session	May 21 from 9:00–10:00 a.m. PT Register Here <i>Note: If you were unable to attend, email us to access the session's recording and presentation deck!</i>
Office Hours	June 3 from 9:00–10:00 a.m. PT Register Here June 15 from 11:00–12:00 p.m. PT Register Here June 25 from 1:00–2:00 p.m. PT Register Here <i>Note: These are not formal presentations, nor will they be recorded. Office Hours are an opportunity to have your questions addressed by CCI staff in real time. We ask that you review the grant guidelines, application preview, and Frequently Asked Questions in advance to ensure everyone's time is used efficiently.</i>
Application Deadline	June 26 at 11:59 a.m. (morning) PT
Panel Review	Week of August 31
Notifications	September 10 by 5:00 p.m. PT
Period of Support	September 2026–September 2026

HOW TO APPLY

Applications will be accepted beginning **May 19, 2026, at 9 a.m. PT and until June 26, 2026, at 11:59 a.m. (morning) PT**. All applicants will be notified about their funding status on September 10, by 5:00 p.m. PT. 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.

Note: The Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment grant deadline, notifications, and technical assistance workshops utilize Pacific Time. Please plan accordingly. For help converting to the Pacific Time Zone, see [here](#).

Access the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment 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 December 2026 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 (include "IA: Tools & Equipment" in the subject line) or call 213.870.7129 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](#).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment is supported by a network of promotional partners (see [here](#) for a complete list). Funding is provided by:

Maxwell | Hanrahan
F O U N D A T I O N