



INVESTING IN ARTISTS

TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

2024 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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 2021). See the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment (“T&E Fund”) guidelines for further information about eligibility.

2. How do you define “working craft artist”?

For the purposes of the T&E Fund, 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 T&E Fund’s guidelines and other program ephemera.

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

To borrow again from our friends at CERF+, “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. Which geographic regions are eligible for consideration?

The T&E Fund 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, West Virginia, Tennessee, Texas, 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

6. How many applications can I submit?

Applicants can apply only once. In other words, applicants cannot submit multiple applications for different projects. To be clear, you may request support for more than one tool or piece of equipment in the same application, so long as they’re within the T&E Fund’s scope of support and award range (\$1,000–\$5,000).

7. If I’ve received funding through another CCI grant program, am I eligible to apply for T&E Fund support?

Yes, you are eligible! Funding through another CCI grant program has no bearing on your eligibility to apply for or receive funds through the T&E Fund.

8. Can you give me examples of who this program doesn’t support?

Given the T&E Fund’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.)

9. I’m a multidisciplinary artist and sometimes use craft-based practices/materials in my work. Am I eligible to apply?

The T&E Fund is for individual artists who demonstrate a sustained commitment to their craft medium by way of training, 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.

10. 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.

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

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, the T&E Fund 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.

12. 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.

13. 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 the T&E Fund'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

14. 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?

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

You are required to submit a minimum of five (5) and up to 10 (ten) high-resolution images of artwork you have created in the past three years (i.e., since 2021).

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.

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 of technical assistance to resolve issues will be significantly limited.

EVALUATION

16. 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.

17. What makes an application competitive?

The most competitive applications are the ones that are clearly 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, and 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, such as people of color, folk and traditional artists, and women. 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.

18. 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 is *essential* to facilitating the applicant's artistic practice and career and ensuring that both can flourish.

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

Artists have new and evolving challenges as they move through their careers. For this reason, CCI does not give preference to particular career stages. Competitive applications will

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

20. 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 November 20, 2024, by 5 pm PST. 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. See [here](#) for safelist instructions by email service provider.

21. 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 November 20, 2024.

GRANTEES

22. How many grants will you make?

For the 2024–2026 grant cycle, there is \$50,000 available in each funding round. Since applicants can request \$1,000–\$5,000, we anticipate awarding roughly 10–20 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.

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

Regarding payment method, grantees can receive a direct deposit payment through Tipalti.com—CCI's secure, third-party accounting software platform—or via a mailed check. In either case, CCI prefers to issue the award in two payments: The first installment will be 90% of the grant funds. The remaining 10% will be paid upon completion and approval of the required final report. Processing times will depend on the method of payment chosen and, in the case of the first installment, the return of an electronically signed grant agreement and creation of a Tipalti account.

We understand that fund disbursement may impact disability-related and other social supports; therefore, we will structure options that work for each grantee's unique financial situation. Grantees may also use their fiscal sponsor or incorporated 501(c)(3) nonprofit to contract with CCI and receive the awarded funds.

24. If awarded a grant, how can 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.

25. 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 grant awards over \$599 may be taxable as ordinary income. We recommend that you consult a qualified tax advisor for further information.

26. 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 December 2025. CCI will provide instructions in the grant agreement, including how to submit the report through Submittable.

27. Will you announce the names of grantees?

The names of the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment 2024 grantees will be announced via a press release that is shared on CCI's website (issued on or around January 1, 2025) 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

28. 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're working properly; if they are, you're ready to submit your application!

29. 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.

30. 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 "T&E Fund" in the subject line) or call us at 415.713.7650 during our office hours (Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm PDT).

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.