The SCI Artist-Innovator Fund Application Preview is for REFERENCE ONLY.

All applications must be submitted online through CCI's Submittable platform [here](). We will not accept applications submitted by mail or email using this form. Responses to all questions/ prompts are required unless otherwise noted.

ELIGIBILITY QUIZ

1. **Are you living with a spinal cord injury?** (*CCI uses the definition of spinal cord injury [SCI] used by the program's funder, the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation: We consider those with SCI to be individuals with neurological and functional impairment due to traumatic SCI, degenerative disease primary to the spinal cord (transverse myelitis), or damage to the spinal cord due to tumors and surgery. Individuals with spinal dysfunction, paralysis, or pain syndromes caused by other disorders are not eligible [e.g., multiple sclerosis, ALS, Chiari malformation and other developmental disorders, primary orthopedic disorders, and peripheral nerve injury]. SCI applicants may be part of a team, but only if the applicant is the primary owner or lead.*)
   - Yes [Proceed to next question]
   - No [You are ineligible for consideration]

2. **Do you live and work in the USA or its territories?**
   - Yes [Proceed to next question]
   - No [You are ineligible for consideration]

3. **Do you self-define as an artist, maker, creative, or culture bearer, or does your project demonstrate deep and sustained refining that reflects a craft, cultural, or artistic practice?**
   - Yes [Proceed to SECTION 1]
   - No [You are ineligible for consideration]

SECTION 1: CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Legal First Name
2. Legal Last Name
3. OPTIONAL: Other Names Used (Stage, Artist, Preferred, or Chosen Name)
4. OPTIONAL: Business/Enterprise Name
5. Street Address
6. City
7. State
8. Zip Code
9. Email Address
10. Phone Number
11. OPTIONAL: Website
12. OPTIONAL: Social Media Handles

SECTION 2: PROPOSAL DETAILS

1. Amount Requested (Not to exceed $8,500)

2. Describe the innovation for which you seek support in one or two sentences. Begin your summary with "To support..." (The summary description will be used to introduce your proposal to panelists and should briefly and concisely describe your innovation project. This summary will be used in public-facing announcements if you are awarded funding.) [65 words max]

SECTION 3: NARRATIVE

Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the review criteria when composing their narrative responses. Regarding format, responses can be bulleted or complete sentences, whichever is easier, so long as the concept is clear and easy to understand—per word limits, 350 words amount to roughly three paragraphs.

1. **HOW WILL YOU USE THE FUNDS?** Describe what you seek to do with funding and how funding will advance your goals for your innovation (i.e., get you to the next level). Be specific about what you intend to accomplish with CCI support during the funding period. (Note: funding must be used within CCI's grant period of August 1, 2023 - July 30, 2024.) [350 words max]

2. **YOUR PRACTICE.** First, describe if and how you self-define as an artist. If you do not self-define as an artist, you may instead describe how your proposed innovation reflects an artistic or creative practice. Next, explain your process for making the product/service, with an emphasis on describing the aspects of creativity, problem-solving, and the process of refinement that make your proposed innovation a unique artistic, cultural, or creative expression. [350 words max]

3. **SOCIAL IMPACT.** Describe what social impact you will achieve through your innovation, including its impact on your community(ies). Include in your response who this innovation is meant to help or serve and how you will know if your innovation has a positive social impact. [350 words max]

4. **FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE.** Describe how this project will realize revenues and how this project will develop into a self-sustaining source of income. [350 words max]

5. **FRIENDS AND NETWORKS.** Describe the types of people you have that will support your vision and help you reach your goals. (You can include names or identify types of people anonymously.) Share enough to give us an understanding of your personal, professional, and social networks that may help realize your innovation. [350 words max]

6. **BIOGRAPHIES**. Provide a brief narrative bio that includes your qualifications for this project. If you are part of a larger team, describe their roles and capabilities for this project. [500 words max]

SECTION 4: BUDGET

A project budget is a tool for conveying to panelists what the applicant needs to realize their proposed project fully. Your budget should include both projected income and projected expenses. If your expenses are projected to exceed the requested grant award amount (up to $8,500), list your additional income sources and their status.

1. **Upload a 1-page version of your budget**. If your total expenses are projected to exceed the requested grant award amount (up to $8,500), list your additional income sources and their status (.xls, .xlsx, .doc, .docx, and .pdf file formats accepted). A sample project budget is available **here**.

2. **Enter the total amount of income** (including pending and prospective funds, if applicable):
   (The amount entered should match the income total in your uploaded budget.)

3. **Enter the total amount of expenses**:
   (The amount entered should match the expense total in your uploaded budget.)

4. **Budget Notes:** Explain any items that need clarification to help panelists interpret your budget. Budget notes can be bulleted or in a narrative format—whichever is easier. While we strongly encourage each applicant to provide budget notes, if you have none, enter "Not applicable." [300 words max]

SECTION 5: ATTACHMENTS

In this section, you will upload the required Video and Business Matrix, while the Letters of Support and Supplemental Materials are optional. Instructions for each are specified below.

1. **VIDEO – Required** (90-second limit)
   o The video allows panelists to get to know YOU and what inspired your innovation! In it, please address the following prompts:
      ✔ Describe the innovation for which you are seeking support. Is it a product or service (or something else)?
      ✔ Address what stage your innovation is in (prototyping, licensing, production, expansion of business, etc.) and how long you have been working on this.
      ✔ What impact will your innovation have on your communities?
      ✔ Why and how are you the right person uniquely able to solve the problem your innovation is meant to tackle? (Feel free to brag!)
      ✔ Include how this innovation reflects your SCI perspective and what inspired your innovation.

   o Please note that no more than 90 seconds of your video will be played to give all applicants the same amount of review time.

    o Tips on how to create your video are available **here.**

    o File types accepted: .avi, .mov, .mp4, .mpg. File size cannot exceed 400 Mb.

2. **BUSINESS MATRIX – Required** (Limited to 1 page)
   o Describe your business plan using the **provided matrix** (available as a .doc and fillable .pdf). Responses should be brief; they may be incomplete sentences or bullet points but should be clearly understood.

   o File types accepted: .doc, .docx, .pdf

3. **LETTERS OF SUPPORT – Optional** (No more than 2)
   o Letters of Support may include notes of intended commitment from investors, partners, or key stakeholders, as well as professional recommendations from community leaders, neighborhood council representatives, or local businesses associations that can speak to the merit of your qualifications, the value of the proposed project, and/or the impact of the proposed outcomes.

   o File types accepted: .doc, .docx, .pdf

4. **SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS – Optional** (Limited to 4 pages total)
   o You may include additional materials, such as images of your innovative product, a due diligence report on your enterprise, or a certificate from your local neighborhood association attesting to your contributions.

   o File types accepted: .doc, .docx, .pdf

SECTION 6: CCI + MCAD PARTNERSHIP - OPTIONAL

CCI has partnered with the Minneapolis College of Art & Design's Entrepreneurial Studies program to provide SCI Artist-Innovator Fund grantees with opportunities to test their ideas, build their networks, and seek guidance from practitioners and peers. Grantees may participate in individual and group online coaching sessions with Minneapolis College of Art & Design (MCAD) faculty to address specific business needs and questions around their developing project. Grantees may also present their projects and solicit feedback/ideas from MCAD faculty and students from Entrepreneurial Studies (and potentially other programs). Participation in these activities is optional and not required.

The following questions are optional and are meant to support grantees' post-award engagement with MCAD. This section—whether completed or not—will be concealed from panelists and, therefore, will not influence the application's review.

1. **Do you need support in any of the following business topics? (Select up to three):**
   Branding; Business Models; Content Strategy; Design Thinking; Digital Strategy; Finance;

Fundraising; Legal; Marketing; Pitching; Product Market Fit; Rapid Prototyping; Understanding Your Audience; Team Dynamics; Tech Development; Write-in Option [25 words]

2. **Are there particular challenges you are facing with your project for which you would like to seek advice/consultation from the MCAD faculty?** [100 words max]

3. **Would you be interested in sharing your work/perspectives/project-in-development with students or other communities at MCAD?**
   - Yes
     - *Are there specific areas of study (arts, design, entrepreneurship, sustainability, social justice, leadership, [and more](#)) or communities (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, etc.) that you're interested in connecting with?* [100 words max]
   - Maybe
     - *Are there specific areas of study (arts, design, entrepreneurship, sustainability, social justice, leadership, [and more](#)) or communities (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, etc.) that you're interested in connecting with?* [100 words max]
   - No

4. **Would you be interested in engaging with an MCAD class to conduct research or work through a design challenge or other defined need related to your project?**
   - Yes
     - *How might you want to engage with an MCAD class?* [100 words max]
   - Maybe
     - *How might you want to engage with an MCAD class?* [100 words max]
   - No

SECTION 7: AWARD ADMINISTRATION

If you are recommended and approved for funding, the information requested below will expedite the preparation of your grant contract and the processing your award payment. We appreciate your support.

1. **Bio**: Enter a brief, two to three-sentence bio. [75 words max]

2. **Image**: Upload a landscape-oriented photograph of yourself or a representative image of your work. (.jpg and .png accepted)
   o Upon uploading the image, you will be prompted to provide the names of any individuals in the image (L to R), location, photographer credit, and year.

3. **Who will receive the funds if you are awarded a grant?** (Depending on the applicant's response, additional prompts will appear.)

o **I will as an individual.**

✔ CCI can customize a payment plan (e.g., paying out the grant in 12 monthly installments versus two payments) that supports your financial circumstances. Would you like to discuss payment options with CCI?
▪ Response Options: Yes; No; I'm not sure

o **I will use my fiscal sponsor.**

✔ Provide the fiscal sponsor's name, mailing address, and the authorized contract signatory's first and last name, title, and email. If you do not have this information, enter "Please contact me."
✔ Upload a copy of the fiscal sponsorship agreement.

o **I will use my business.**

✔ Provide the business name and mailing address. If the authorized contract signatory is someone other than yourself, enter their first and last name, title, and email.

o **A nonprofit I am affiliated with will receive the funds.**

✔ Provide the nonprofit's name, mailing address, and the authorized contract signatory's first and last name, title, and email. If you do not have this information, enter "Please contact me."
✔ Upload a copy of the nonprofit's 501(c)3 IRS determination letter.

o **I'm not sure; please contact me.**

SECTION 8: DEMOGRAPHICS

CCI is committed to distributing resources equally, equitably, and fairly in ways that reflect the diversity of application pools and populations. To that end, we ask you to fill out demographic data, so we better understand the communities we are trying to serve. Please note that while the panelists will see this information and may consider it in ensuring that the overall grantee pool is diverse in many ways (projects, enterprises, and demographics of all types), demographics in themselves are not being judged as a category of consideration.

Response options for the questions below will be available in the online application, including "Prefer Not to State."
● With which gender(s) do you identify?
● Do you identify as LGBTQIA?
● Do you identify as a person with a disability?

- How do you identify?
- What is your age range?
- What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?
- Do you owe any student loans currently?
- What is your annual household income?
- What is your artistic discipline or area of cultural production?
- What is your career stage?
- Select all the ways in which you *try* or have *tried* to raise money.
- Select all the ways in which you have *succeeded* in raising money.
- How did you hear about this opportunity?

SECTION 9: CERTIFICATION

I certify that I have read and met the eligibility requirements stated in the SCI Artist-Innovator Fund guidelines and that all the information provided in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I further acknowledge that the Center for Cultural Innovation is not liable for damage or loss of materials submitted.

[check box] **By checking this box, I certify the above to be true.**