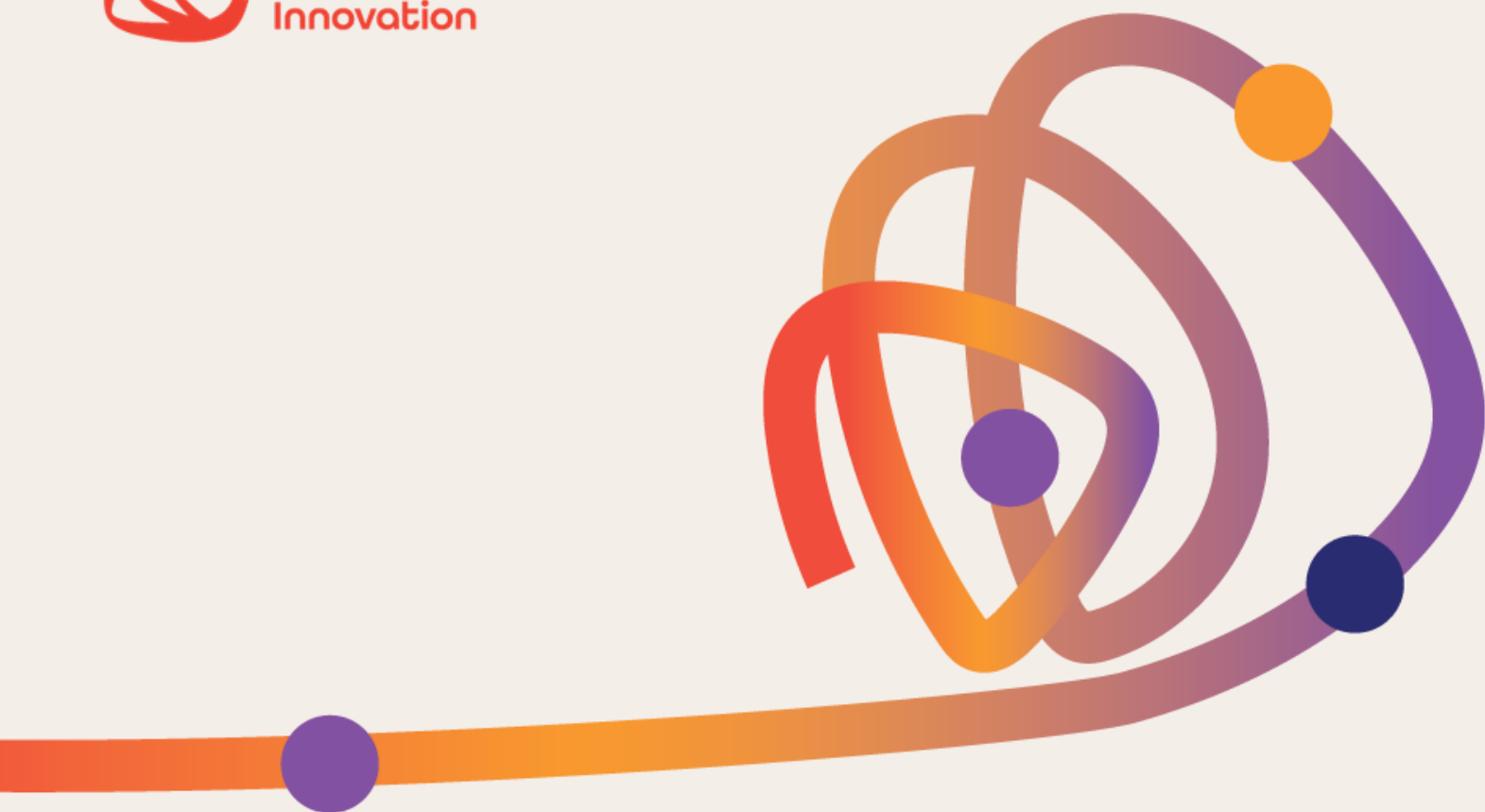




INVESTING IN ARTISTS: TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

2026 Guidelines & FAQ

Updated as of July 20, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

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linchpin support, such as enabling the artist to meet demand, address safety requirements or other regulations, replace outdated or damaged equipment, or reach a higher standard of quality or craftsmanship.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.

GUIDELINES

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 artist¹. (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.

Eligibility (continued)

²CCI 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

Eligibility (continued)

- 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 2027 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.

Review Process & Criteria (cont'd)

- **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 Note: If you were unable to attend, email us to access the session's recording and presentation deck!
Office Hours	June 3 from 9:00–10:00 a.m. PT June 15 from 11:00–12:00 p.m. PT June 25 from 1:00–2:00 p.m. PT <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 14 by 5:00 p.m. PT
Period of Support	September 2026–September 2027

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](#).

Acknowledgement

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
FOUNDATION

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 14, 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.

Budget Template

Download a customizable version [here](#).

Applicants must upload a budget; however, they are not required to use this budget template. Please create a project budget using your preferred format.

Please note: Project Budgets are limited to one page. If this template is used, make sure the orientation is set to "Portrait" and view the "Page Break Preview" to ensure that the page limit is adhered to.

INVESTING IN ARTISTS: TOOLS & EQUIPMENT - PROJECT BUDGET TEMPLATE

INCOME

ITEM	AMOUNT	STATUS (E.G., PROSPECTIVE, PENDING, CONFIRMED)
Request from Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment	\$2,000.00	Pending
Income Total	\$2,000.00	

EXPENSE

ITEM	AMOUNT	
Kiln	\$1,500.00	
Income Total	\$9,000.00	

FAQs

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 2023). 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.

FAQs cont'd

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 non-functional. 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:

FAQs cont'd

- 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.)

FAQs cont'd

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. I AM A TEACHING ARTIST. CAN I REQUEST FUNDING TO PURCHASE OR REPAIR A TOOL OR PIECE OF EQUIPMENT I WILL USE IN AN ACADEMIC CONTEXT? FOR EXAMPLE, I AM A UNIVERSITY STAFF MEMBER AND RUN THE WOODSHOP. I WILL OWN THE EQUIPMENT, BUT ALSO TEACH STUDENTS USING IT. WOULD I BE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING?

Yes, teaching artists are eligible for this grant opportunity! If applying as a teaching artist, the applicant must show how the funds awarded for purchasing or repairing tools and equipment will improve their individual craft practice outside of an academic setting. This program supports individual artists; therefore, applicants should explain how funding would benefit their individual practices.

Please note that teaching artists who are also pursuing a degree (e.g., enrolled full-time or matriculating students) are not eligible for this grant. Additionally, funds awarded cannot be used to cover costs incurred by a university or craft school.

13. CAN I REQUEST FUNDING TO PURCHASE A CAMERA OR RECORDING DEVICE TO DOCUMENT MY CRAFT-BASED WORK?

Unfortunately, this type of request is not eligible for funding in this grant opportunity. The Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment program supports artists in purchasing or repairing tools or equipment that enhance their ability to make object-based work. Funding for documentation, display, or reference purposes would not be considered eligible for this grant.

14. CAN I REQUEST FUNDING FOR TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT THAT SUPPORT ME IN TRANSITIONING MY PRACTICE FROM MY VISUAL ARTS PRACTICE TO A CRAFT ARTIST?

FAQs cont'd

Unfortunately, funding requested to support an applicant's ability to transition mediums would not be competitive for this grant opportunity. The Investing in Artist: Tools & Equipment program supports working craft artists who also 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.

15. 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.

16. CAN I REQUEST FUNDING TO PURCHASE AND / OR REPAIR MY ERGONOMIC TOOL / EQUIPMENT (E.G., CHAIRS, WRISTBANDS)?

Yes! Funding requests for ergonomic tools and equipment, such as chairs, standing desks, workbenches, and wristbands, that supports your safety and protection are eligible for funding.

17. CAN I REQUEST FUNDING TO PURCHASE AND / OR REPAIR ELECTRICAL TOOLS OR EQUIPMENT (E.G., HVAC SYSTEM, AIR VENTILATION) THAT ENHANCE MY WORK / ARTMAKING STUDIO?

Yes! Requests that make your studio or workplace a safer environment to practice your craft are considered eligible for this funding opportunity. Examples of safety repairs/purchases can include, but are not limited to, repairs to electrical wiring and ventilation systems, the purchase of microscopes, or the repair of workbenches.

18. CAN I REQUEST FUNDING TO PURCHASE / REPAIR STORAGE OR SHELVING FOR MY OBJECT-BASED WORK?

Yes, funding requests that allow for the purchase or repair to storage or shelving that supports the safety and efficiency of your craft-based practice is eligible for funding. Examples include but are not limited to a flat file cabinet for artisanal papers, dry racks/damp shelves for ceramics-based work, and storage carts/bins for keeping object-based work protected. Please note that funding requests for the construction of a studio and/or shed would be ineligible for this grant program.

FAQs cont'd

19. 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.

20. HOW DO YOU DEFINE ROUTINE ART SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS?

The Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment program helps individual craft artists purchase artistic tools and equipment that enhance their ability to create object-based work. Routine art supplies and materials are considered ongoing costs outside the scope of this program. For this grant, routine supplies such as thread, pencils, brushes, sponges, etc., are excluded. The Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment program aims to support the acquisition or repair of tools or equipment that may be inaccessible to craft artists, especially those with cost or access barriers.

21. 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.

FAQs cont'd

22. 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

23. 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?

24. 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 2023). 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.

FAQs cont'd

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

25. 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.

26. 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.

27. 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.

FAQs cont'd

28. 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

29. 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 September 14, 2026, 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](#).

30. 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 September 14, 2026.

Grantees

31. HOW MANY GRANTS WILL YOU MAKE?

There is \$60,000 in the round for 2026. 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.

FAQs cont'd

32. 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.

33. 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.

34. 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.

35. 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 October 2027. CCI will provide instructions in the grant agreement, including instructions on how to submit the report through Submittable.

FAQs cont'd

36. WILL YOU ANNOUNCE THE NAMES OF GRANTEES?

The names of the Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment 2026 grantees will be announced via a press release that is shared on CCI's website (issued no later than November 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

37. 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!

38. 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.

39. 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.

Submittable Quick Tips

- You must create a free Submittable account or sign in with your Google or Facebook credentials to submit your [Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment](#) grant application.
- You can [save a draft](#) of your work if you want to finish the application later.
- If you need to make changes to your application after it has been submitted, send a request to CCI to [edit the submission](#). We are generally able to accommodate these requests during the open application period. However, if the review process has already started, we cannot open your submission for editing.
- Submittable works best on Google Chrome, Firefox, and Safari. Internet Explorer is not supported. Please make sure you are using a supported browser.
- [You can download Firefox by following the instructions linked here.](#)
- [You can download Chrome by following the instructions linked here.](#)
- All applicants will be notified by email regarding their application status. To ensure the timely delivery of all communications, please safelist notifications@email.submittable.com. See [here](#) for instructions by email service provider.
- Visit Submittable's [Help Center](#) for answers to frequently asked questions.
- If you need technical assistance (e.g. password or upload issues), request support at: <https://www.submittable.com/help/submitter/> (located at bottom of page).

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Center For
Cultural
Innovation

Investing in Artists: Tools & Equipment 2026 Guidelines & FAQ

APPLY BY: JUNE 26

[HTTPS: / / CENTERFORCULTURALINNOVATION.SUBMITTABLE.COM /](https://centerforculturalinnovation.submittable.com/)