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About the Creative Capital Award

The Creative Capital Award is designed to assist artists working at the vanguard of their fields, or who have ideas to propel their artistic practices forward. Artists need partners to make ambitious work, and Creative Capital set out to be just that. Through project funding, professional development, individual meetings with close colleagues, and consistent engagement with our staff, we make a commitment to work with awardees every step of the way for the time they need to get their project done.

The application is a way to help us determine which artists are ready to take the journey. To help us choose these artists, we work with hundreds of outside evaluators in all disciplines of the arts, representing different backgrounds and geographic locations. The information in this packet will help clarify what we ask on the application, how we evaluate the answers we receive, and provide insight on the type of work we support.
Award Timeline

The Creative Capital Award application is a several-month process that happens on an annual basis, and occurs on the following timeline.

February: Open Application
Project proposals are accepted in a free and open application through the month of February.

July: Second Round Review
Projects selected to advance to the second round are notified at this time. Project proposals are reviewed by a new pool of evaluators in this phase. No additional material will need to be submitted.

October: Panel Review
Projects chosen to advance to panel review are asked for a project update and are reviewed for a final panel of evaluators. No additional material will need to be submitted.

November: Decision
Panel meetings are held in person, or online. Projects are chosen for support and submitted to the board of directors for final approval. Selected artists are notified of the decision, and will be invited to attend an orientation in the spring, and a virtual Creative Capital Artist Retreat in the summer.

December: Announcement
A public announcement of the Creative Capital Awards is made in the winter.
Application Questions

The Creative Capital Award application is a highly competitive process, but we have built value into it to make the time you spend on the application worthwhile. The questions are designed to provoke meaningful reflection about your project, why it needs to be made, and for whom. Over the years, we have heard feedback that regardless of the outcome, artists have used these questions as launch pads to think about the bigger picture, and more critically about their projects and their practices.

We encourage you to review the questions below, and prepare your answers as early as possible, in a separate document.

All the questions are listed below, along with some guidance on why we ask them and how to approach a thoughtful answer.

You can download a Word doc containing only the application questions here.

Applications are due March 1, 2021 at 4pm ET. We recommend submitting as early as possible.

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Application Checklist

Eligibility
An artist must be:
- at least 25 years old upon submission of an application
- a working artist with at least five years of professional experience
- a U.S. Citizen, permanent legal resident, or an O-1 Visa holder

An artist cannot be:
- an institution
  
  *If you are an artist who is a principal in a 501(c)3 organization, you should apply as an individual artist. If you are selected for funding, the award may be made payable to you through your organization. Additionally, we are not able to provide funding to LLC or S Corp organizations.*

- Enrolled as full-time students in a degree-granting program (BA, BS, MA, MS, MBA, JD, PhD) or its equivalent at the time of being named an awardee.
  
  *If currently enrolled, you must have completed the program and received your diploma by Dec 31, 2021. This is due to the time commitments required during the first year of the program.*

- a Creative Capital Awardee
- listed as an applicant or collaborator on more than one proposed project this award cycle

Additionally, writers are not eligible to apply if they are:
- applying for an Arts Writers Grant for any project within the same year
- applying with the same project for which they have previously received an Arts Writers Grant

Prepare the following:
- answers to application questions
- a current CV/Resume
- up to six work samples (see page 16 for specific requirements)
- a working project budget
- up to three professional references
Artist Profile

• Legal Name
• Professional/Chosen Name
• Provide a short bio focused on your creative practice. (200 words max.)
  If you are applying as a collaborative, please submit short bios (of up to 200 words each) as an additional page in your resume upload.

• Pronouns
• Race/Ethnicity
• Share your tribal affiliation (optional)
• Gender
• Do you identify as a person with a disability?
• Date of Birth
• Mailing Address
• Hometown
  Artists sometimes hail from different cities than where they live and work. This is an optional field for artists who identify as coming from a different city than where they currently live.

• Primary Phone Number
• Primary Email Address
About Your Project

• Project Title
• Project Discipline (see a list of disciplines on page 17)
  
  Choose up to two disciplines. In addition to describing the form of your proposed project, the discipline(s) you select help us to match you with the most appropriate reviewers.

• Choose relevant themes for your project.
  
  Alternate & Future Worlds  Immigration
  Body, Built Environment  Internet & Networks
  Civic Practice  Labor & Consumption
  Climate Change & Sustainability  Language & Communication
  Community & Place, Criminal Justice  Media Culture
  Data & Surveillance  Memory & Personal History
  Disability  Politics
  Educational Systems  Race & Ethnicity
  Environment & Ecology  Religion & Spirituality
  Food  Science
  Gender & Sexuality  Social Justice
  History  Violence
  Humor & Satire

  Choose up to three themes. In addition to describing the subject of your proposed project, themes help us understand how you’re framing your work and gives us an opportunity to see trends across applications.

• Is this a collaborative project between you and at least one other artist?
  If so, list them below. You may have up to five collaborators.
  Read about how we define collaborations on page 20.

  Collaborators who have accepted to be part of one project cannot submit another proposal, nor will they have to submit their own proposal for the same project. Collaborations should submit one application.

• Is this application being prepared by someone other than the applicant(s)?

  We discourage doing this, as applicants are expected to have a full understanding of the process and requirements of the Creative Capital Award. However, if you do use an outside party you will not be penalized.
• Share a short description of your project (50 words or less)

We use this short description frequently as a reference for our staff and evaluators through the duration of the review process.

In addition to using this section to describe the work, you might use this question to describe whether the project is a standalone work or part of a larger series. We fund work that fits both categories.

• Share a longer description about your project in detail, including the final expected form that your project will take (250 words or less)

Readers will review this long description to get a deeper sense of the work. We limit the word count so that each proposal can be given a fair and proper review, therefore we encourage you to be thoughtful, specific and concise. Your response should give evaluators a vivid sense of the project so they can imagine it existing and “see” it in their mind’s eye.

We understand that this description may change as the project proceeds, but aim to be as specific as possible in this specific stage of development.

Remember to describe how the project will ultimately manifest - is it a digital work, a time-based performance, an installation, a documentary film? - and how the audience will experience it.

• Which of the following best describes the current stage of your project? (Research/Development, or Production).

The Creative Capital Award is designed for artists in one of these two phases of their project lifespan. We understand if the status straddles one of the two phases, and often we have seen artists in production mode decide they need to do more research. The Creative Capital Award is not appropriate for projects near completion or just before premiere. Creative Capital does not fund completed projects looking for presentation, distribution, or publication only.

“Research and development” means the preliminary research into issues of content or technology necessary to complete the project, working on the ideas behind the project, and/or making the blueprint from which the work will be made.

We define “production” as the process of transforming an artistic idea or blueprint into an actual production or work. Some examples include casting, shooting or drawing animation cells for a filmmaker and making objects (photographs, paintings, installation elements) for a visual artist.
• Projected premiere date (When do you expect your project to premiere to the public?) We cannot support projects that are slated to premiere before March 2023.

Given our unique brand of support, and all that is required of our awardees in their first year, we find that projects in their initial stages, with longer timelines (2-5 years or longer), are best suited to the award. If your project is in its later stages, and/or would premiere within two years of receiving the award, this may not be the most appropriate award for you.

We understand that project timelines are estimations, and can be accelerated or delayed due to a host of factors. If you are unsure of a specific date, give it your best guess.

• Include a project timeline, including key project phases such as research, studio time, outreach, editing, revising, etc. as well as any major project milestones such as publications, anticipated exhibition, and public presentations. (250 words or less)

The timeline gives our evaluators a full sense of your project’s lifespan. It is also designed to help artists think long-term about their project.

Artists who receive the Creative Capital Award will spend the first year as an awardee going through a comprehensive program involving workshops, one-on-one meetings, and gatherings, including the Artist Retreat, in June. This first year is intended to help the artist expand or hone the project with the partnership we have embarked upon. That means that works that premiere a year after the artist receives the award do not make a great fit for Creative Capital. More appropriate are artworks that will premiere 2-5 years (or any time beyond that) after receiving the award, and we are explicit about that when instructing evaluators who review applications.

This timeline is only an estimation—we understand that project timelines are accelerated due to many factors, as they can be delayed, even years, because of unforeseen circumstances.

We don’t expect exact dates, but give a rough estimate of the steps needed to complete the project. We will not hold you to this timeline—it mainly gives us a sense of how you see the project unfolding and what amount of time will be required to make the project successful.
Core Questions

• How does your project take an original and imaginative approach to content and form? Be as specific as possible. (100 words or less)

  Creative Capital has always been committed to supporting pioneering, original, idea-driven work. How is the project pushing boundaries, taking risks, and exploring an idea in a new or different way?

  When responding to this question, consider how the project is pushing boundaries, taking risks, and/or exploring an idea in a new or different way. You may also consider how the project is pushing your own practice in new ways.

• What kind of impact—artistic, creative, intellectual, communal, civic, social, etc.—do you hope your project will have? What strategies will you employ to achieve the desired impact? (100 words or less)

  In developing a project idea, it is important that artists understand what they wish to accomplish by presenting the work to an audience. Impact is not measured by budget, audience size, or number of tour stops. Some work is intended for a small audience that is linked by a particular issue or history. Some artists seek to challenge the very form in which they practice. Others might seek to dismantle inequitable social structures and power dynamics, or develop work that imagines a world where specific issues have been eradicated. Whatever the case, we want to be sure that you are clear about the intent and impact of your project in its final form.

• Do you have a vision for where your project might take place?

  This question helps us determine where a project will premiere, whether it’s in a community, a theater, a film festival, or any other kind of public venue. We understand that some projects may not have a venue location, like book or poetry projects, and others may have digital venues.

• If yes, where? Pick all that apply.

  (Physical community, digital community, presenting institutions, or other)

• If “Other”, please specify (10 words or less)

  If you have existing relationships with or access to any of these, please add them as a reference (you may add more than one). If you do not have relationships, it’s ok not to add them.

• References (optional)
Creative Practice & Process

• Who are the specific audiences/communities that you hope to engage through this project? Think beyond the broad art community where possible. How are you hoping to reach them? (100 words or less)

We seek to support ambitious artists striving to contribute to and expand creative, intellectual, civic and/or social dialogue using artistic means—this is a chance to explain how the project does this. We encourage artists to begin thinking, at the earliest possible phase of their project, about whom they hope to reach. Tip: As you answer this question, think beyond answers such as “the art world,” “theater-lovers” or “readers.” This is an opportunity for you to clearly articulate what kind of individuals, communities, or organizations you feel would be most responsive to and appreciative of this project.

• How might your proposed project act as a catalyst for your artistic and professional growth? In what ways is it a pivotal moment in your practice? (100 words or less)

At Creative Capital, we seek to help artists actualize ambitious projects, but also (and perhaps, more importantly) achieve their long-term creative goals. This question will help reviewers understand how this project fits into a longer narrative arc in your professional momentum.

• How would the Creative Capital Award’s non-monetary support help you to realize your goals for your project as well as your long-term professional growth? (200 words or less)

The Creative Capital Award is not just a check. We seek to support artists with the monetary (up to $50,000 in direct project funding) and non-monetary services (financial or legal counsel, professional networking, promotional support, strategic planning, and more) required to help artists develop sustainable artistic practices or achieve ambitious, new planes in their careers. We are looking for artists who understand the importance of this kind of holistic support and are desirious of this more involved form of partnership.
• What are the main influences on your work as an artist? How does your past work inform your current project? Examples may include other artists’ work, movements in a particular form, personal history, cultural history, work from outside of your field, etc. (200 words or less)

*We recognize that all artists, while producing their own work, practice within a context of works in progress as well as art history. Your answer to this question will help reviewers understand how you situate your work in a timeline and how it might respond to existing history in your field. It also demonstrates your understanding of the professional landscape. This is an opportunity for you to explain how the work fits into a larger context, be that aesthetic, social, or philosophical.*

**Personal References**

• Provide the contact information for one or more reference.

*Your professional reference should be someone who can provide a knowledgeable evaluation of how you and your creative practice might benefit from receiving support from Creative Capital. This is meant to be a professional reference, not a personal character reference.*

• Applicant artist website (optional)

• How did you hear about the Creative Capital Award application?

**Resume**

• Please submit your resume or CV, demonstrating at least five years of professional artistic practice, below. (PDF files only)

*For tips on writing a resume, go to page 31.*
Budget

• Itemized Budget: Please upload an itemized budget below as a PDF file for your proposed project, inclusive of income and expenses sections. The two sections should arrive at the same total; when necessary, indicate missing income as “To be raised.” This gives us an honest sense of how much it will take to make the project happen, including reasonable fees for the artists involved. It is also a window into the scale of the project and if you have a reasonable understanding of what it will take to execute it. Think of this as another way to tell the story of the proposed project. It’s important to understand that this is just an estimate, and that the budget is subject to change. We expect that this amount will often exceed the total that Creative Capital might contribute to a project. Make sure to always pay yourself and active partners. Learn to create a budget on page 26.

• Total Estimated Budget (USD, numbers only; no currency symbol or commas)

A well thought out budget helps evaluators understand your grasp of exactly what elements are required to actualize your project. We understand that this amount will often exceed the $50,000 total that Creative Capital might contribute to the project - that’s okay! After all, we are looking for ambitious projects. It is also a window into the scale of the work. Think of this as another way to tell the story of the proposed project. We understand that this is just an estimate and is subject to change.

The budget means the total cost of producing the project including research, fees, equipment, materials and should always include reasonable fees for the artist(s) involved.

• Amount raised to date for this project (USD, numbers only; no currency symbol or commas)

This question helps to determine where you are in the timeline of your project and how Creative Capital funding might fit into the big picture of the work. If you have not raised any funds to date, please enter “0” and note that you will not be penalized for this response. As we are looking to fund projects in their early stages, we recognize that you may not have begun the fundraising process yet. Please note, this amount should not include personal funds, or the amount you are requesting from Creative Capital.
Work Samples

Work samples are a critical element of your application and should be reflective of your practice and the highest quality of your work. Beyond that, they should illustrate your ability to execute the proposed project. These samples can be documentation of the work you have done on the project thus far, mockups of plans for your proposed project, and/or documentation of prior work.

It is okay if you don’t yet have any formal documentation of the project you are proposing. Previous awardees have used sketches or mockups to give a visual sense of their projects. Additionally, if you are sharing past work, we encourage you to use the description field to illustrate to reviewers how this work is connects to your proposed work.

We also encourage you to consider the order in which your work samples are uploaded and the sequence in which they’ll be reviewed.

Make sure you provide a link to the work and include the password or passwords if applicable. It is your responsibility to include the correct information. If you fail to provide the correct link or fail to include passwords, we are not responsible for reaching out to get the correct information and reviewers will not be able to review your samples. Keep in mind that the application can last three rounds, and over ten months, so your links and passwords should remain up to date during that time.

See tips for choosing work samples on page 23.

Each work sample should have the following: Details about the work (title, materials, year it was completed)

Description (100 words or less) that provides the following: Contextual information about the work sample that helps reviewers better understand what they are seeing/hearing/reading. Your rationale for including this particular work sample.
All applicants are required to submit six work samples, with the exception of literature applicants. Literature applicants may submit one to three typed work samples not exceeding 25 pages of prose, or 10 pages of single-spaced poetry.

- **Audio Samples:** Audio Work must be shared through a streamable link. You can upload your audio files for free using SoundCloud. Find out how to create an account on SoundCloud’s Help Page. Each sample should be no longer than three minutes.

- **Video Samples:** Video Work should be uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo. Each sample should be no longer than three minutes. If you link to a longer video sample, provide a timestamp where reviewers should begin and end watching/listening (ex. “Start at 10:05:05 and End at 13:05:05”). Please note that if you don’t provide this guidance, reviewers will be instructed to view only the first three minutes.

- **Visual Samples:** Visual Work should be uploaded as single file images at least 72 dpi with a file size of 25MB or smaller. Files can be uploaded in any of the following formats: pdf, jpg, gif, or png. PDFs should not contain more than one image, or be a compilation of more than one work sample. Please save your work samples with your project name (Example: Worksample-Example-Name.extension). All work sample file titles should be less than 30 characters.

- **Literary Work:** Written work should be uploaded as .PDF files. You may submit up to three typed work samples in a 12 point font, not exceeding 25 pages of double-spaced prose or 10 pages of single-spaced poetry in total. Reviewers will be instructed to read only the first 25 pages of prose or 10 pages of poetry.

**Invite Collaborators (optional)**

- Provide contact information for one or more collaborators.

*This is for verification purposes only. If collaborators accept this invitation, they will be named on the project. If not, they will not be considered an official collaborator and are therefore not be eligible to be named as an awardee/awardees. Additionally, sending invitation emails does not grant your collaborators access to the application portal. One application per project should be submitted by the person who began the application.*
List of Disciplines

You will be asked to select up to two disciplines that most applies to your proposed project. This helps us make sure each project proposal is reviewed by the appropriate evaluator.

Animation
A dynamic visual project that creates the illusion of movement through a series of photographed frames or the use of computer software.

Architecture & Design
The use of design for practical constructions including buildings, public spaces, interiors, furniture, clothing, typography, and graphics.

Artistic Activism
Practices that seek tangible change in social, political, environmental, or economic conditions.

Augmented Reality
An artwork that uses responsive technology to integrate images into the user’s real-world view.

Bio Art
Work involving living organisms and life processes.

Comedy
Practices that use humor to consider social norms and challenging topics.

Craft
Artwork created by hand with a skillful technique or methodology.

Cultural Organizing
Practices that mobilize community members and reflect their cultural expressions.

Dance
A live performance following the movement of one or more bodies.

Dance Film
An artwork capturing movement that is staged and performed for camera.

Data Visualization
A graphic interpretation of facts or statistics that presents new ways of understanding information.

Digital Media
A blend of technology and content that is often responsive, and delivered on an electronic device.

Documentary Film
Creative nonfiction that uses moving images to question or expand the notion of truth of an actual event, era, or life story.

Drawing & Illustration
Visual art that uses line to create an image with dry or digital media.

Experimental Film
A film project that re-evaluates cinematic conventions and explores alternatives to traditional narratives or methods of working.
Games
A digital or analog activity with an established set of rules involving skill, chance, or endurance.

Graphic Novel
A text that uses images to advance its narrative structure.

Hardware
A project creating the mechanical equipment necessary for conducting an activity, distinguished from the theory or software that make the activity possible.

Installation
An artwork comprised of multiple parts that create or alter a physical environment.

Internet Art
Artwork that uses the internet as a medium and distribution platform.

Jazz Performance
A live or recorded performance of original jazz music.

Literary Fiction
Works of imaginative prose such as novels, story collections, or those cast in hybrid forms.

Literary Nonfiction
Prose works that include narrative nonfiction, cultural criticism, essay, memoir, and work cast in hybrid forms.

Multimedia
Artwork that blends multiple interfaces such as video, sound, text, or interactive content.

Multimedia Performance
A live performance created with multiple interfaces such as video, installation, and interactive or immersive elements.

Music Composition
The writing and production of an original song or instrumental music piece.

Music Performance
A live performance of an original score.

Musical Theater
A staged theater performance that expresses ideas and emotions through the integration of theater and vocal performance.

Narrative Film
A film that tells a story.

Opera
An extended dramatic composition in which all parts are sung with instrumental accompaniment and typically include arias, choruses, and recitatives.

Painting
A primarily flat object covered with pigmented media or other tactile materials.

Performance Art
A performance that integrates various live and static arts including acting, poetry, music, dance, painting, video, and sculpture.

Photography
Images created using lens-based technologies.

Poetry
Written or spoken literature that uses aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language to engage meaning.

Public Art
A project in any media that has been planned and executed with the intention of being publicly accessible.
Puppetry
An inanimate figure in movement manipulated by human control.

Sculpture
A work of art that operates in three dimensions.

Social Practice
A genre of participatory art which often focuses on the engagement of individuals, communities, institutions, or a combination of these.

Software
Programs used to direct the operation of a device for storing, processing, transmitting, and displaying data.

Sound Art
Audible work that does not follow the conventions of music or voice recording.

Theater
A project that is presented through a live, dramatic performance.

Video Art
A moving image created independent of cinematic and theatrical conventions and often shown in a visual arts context.

Virtual Reality
Visual technologies that immerse the user to alter their senses and perceptions.

Image from *Crossing* by Bandaloop
Applying for the Creative Capital Award as a Collaboration

Our definition of “collaboration” may be different than what you have in mind, so please read this section carefully before submitting.

Creative Capital allows between two to five collaborators on each project. “Collaborator” or “collective member” is someone who is a co-owner of the project and generative part of the team. It is imperative that these “co-owners” be designated on the initial application. On the other hand, people who provide services on a “work for hire” basis for the project are not considered collaborators.

*Keep in mind that all information and members must be agreed upon collectively and submitted through the application. No changes to collaborations may be made after the application has been submitted.

Generally, collaborative projects fall within ongoing team or collective collaborations, or one-time collaborations. In each case, collaboratives should select one person as their main contact, as Creative Capital will need to ensure that resources are being distributed equally and fairly.

Ongoing Team or Collective Collaborations

We often see two to five artists joining forces to regularly work on projects, and they sometimes produce work under a group name. These collectives can apply under the group name, but the information of each individual artist should be entered into the application (contact info, name, location, website, etc.) whether or not it is intended for external communications.
For example, the artist collective **Fallen Fruit** is made up of two artists, David Burns and Austin Young. When we speak about the work they make together, they are referred to as Fallen Fruit. On our website, their project is made by Fallen Fruit, but we reference the two individual artists below their collective bio.

Another example is **The TEAM**, a group of performing artists pioneering how theater works are made. Each member has their own respective practices and make distinctive work—and we note that on our website—but when they work together, they are The TEAM. The collective known as Eva and Franco Mattes exclusively make work as a collaboration, and never as individuals, so they are noted as a single entity.

In every example, each individual artist that make up the collective will be required to sign letters of agreement with Creative Capital to receive support. If applying as this kind of collective, be prepared to point to an ongoing body of work. It’s possible that members of collectives drop out, and go on to do their own work, and that’s OK! We understand that working relationships evolve even after a project receives a Creative Capital Award. However, artists cannot be added to receive the Award after the applications are submitted.

**One-Time Collaborations**

If you are making work together with another artist for the first time, you are welcome to apply for a Creative Capital Award as a unified team. We understand that collaborations may be necessary for one-off projects, but the application must be approved and reviewed by all members of the collaboration, and not just the leader that you have selected for your team. Keep in mind that if your collaboration receives an award, all parties in the collaboration will be required to sign a letter of agreement stating their intention to finish the project together.
For example, artists Shaun Leonardo, Melanie Crean and Sable Elyse Smith received the Creative Capital Award for their project *Mirror / Echo / Tilt*. While they may go on to do future work together, they applied as a first-time collaboration.

Whereas ongoing collectives will have a body of work that they made together to point to in their application, one-time collectives will not. These types of collectives will need to make a very strong case regarding their commitment to work together for the entire multi-year life cycle of the project in order to be competitive. Because the Creative Capital Award represents a long-term commitment of support beyond the life a project, we want to ensure that members of a collaboration are equally committed to working together.

![David Burns and Austin Young of the artistic collaboration Fallen Fruit.](image)
Choosing Work Samples

Acknowledging What Work Samples Do
The first thing to keep in mind is that during a review process, evaluators aren’t just looking at your work alone. In a single day, an evaluator may be looking at upwards of 100 different projects, many of which may be addressing similar issues or share aesthetic similarities. The evaluators want to give their full attention to your project, so choosing great work samples can help them do that.

Your entire application—including words, images, audio, and video—is an exercise in persuasion. As an applicant, your job is to show the evaluators that you have a terrific and innovative idea, and you have the capacity and experience to pull off that idea. Essentially, you want to prove to the granting organization that they would be missing out by not joining you on your extraordinary creative journey. Great work samples will help make this happen.

Documentation is Key
Going the extra mile to obtain great documentation of your work could be a defining factor in securing funding for your project. When collecting work sample documentation, hold yourself to the same high standards that you hold in your art practice. You wouldn’t produce a play in a setting where the audience can’t hear what the actors are saying, so don’t submit video of a performance that makes it hard for the evaluators to hear the dialogue. For performing arts especially, collecting great documentation may require working videographers, editors, and boom mics—which can get expensive—but if it means getting that next big grant, it can pay off. Or, consider working with a colleague who can help with these needs by trading skills or other in-kind services.
For evaluators who don’t know you, your work sample IS your work—it’s the single way they will experience it. So, make sure it’s the best representation of it. And remember, the strongest work samples will capture your singular sensibility and areas of exploration.

What If No Work Samples Exist for the Project You Are Proposing?
It’s possible that some of the work you are pitching in an application won’t be far enough in development for you to provide documentation. Don’t worry—you can use previous work samples to help the evaluators imagine what your future work will look like. The work samples should build a bridge between what you’ve done before and what you propose to do in the future. Even if you are proposing to make your first feature length film, your work in shorts will paint a picture of your capabilities.

Do not assume that the evaluators will make the connection between your past and future work, however. Instead, help them connect the dots where you can by filling out descriptions of the work. Describe your work sample to give them a sense of what they’re looking at and how it connects with your future projects.

Get Feedback From People You Trust Before You Submit
It may be helpful to show your work samples to a couple of friends or colleagues before you submit. Consider choosing someone who knows your work intimately, as well as someone who has never seen it before. Discuss their perceptions of the project. Your informed viewpoint of your work may not be shared by someone who has never seen it before. You may be surprised to learn that others see something completely different.
Do Work Samples Have an Expiration Date?
Try to submit completed work from the last five years to give the evaluators a sense of what your most recent work looks like. It may appear suspicious if your work samples are too old—it looks like a gap in your work resume.

While completed work is best, work-in-progress supplements are acceptable if you feel they will make the best case. No matter what, organizations want to see at least some fully produced work.

Drop Evaluators into the Action
Remember, in any grant application process, your project is not the only sample that an evaluator is reviewing. First impressions count!

For time-based works, the first few seconds or sentences are crucial. Don’t do a slow buildup with lengthy intertitles. Instead, drop us into the action and make us feel like we are right there with you. You want to capture attention quickly and then hold it for the duration of your sample.

Do not submit trailers, a reel of greatest hits, or a series of quick edits of your work. Submissions should be a continuous excerpt so we can see how it unfolds. If you’d like evaluators to see more than one section of work, divide it across multiple samples.

Similarly, when submitting written samples, you do not want to overwhelm evaluators with hundreds of pages of text to read at once. That is why we ask literature applicants to submit one to three typed work samples not exceeding 25 pages of prose, or 10 pages of single-spaced poetry in total. All other applicants are required to submit six work samples. When combining written samples with other types of media, keep each sample of written prose to 5 pages, or 2 pages of writing per sample for poetry. (See page 16 more specific file requirements for each media type.)
Creating a Realistic Budget

How Can Budgets Help?
The budget isn’t only a way to give an idea of how much a project costs, it also allows granting foundations to see how realistic you are about what the project entails. Artists can use itemized budgets as a management tool to set milestones throughout the life of a project. For example, a successful budget can function as a launching pad for fundraising—it gives you goals to work toward. Budgets can be used as a flexible document to use as check-ins and to update as the scope and timeline of a project changes.

Budget Rule Number One: Pay Yourself
When writing a budget, artists must make sure they pay themselves and all of their collaborators. This may be a new concept for some artists, but it’s important. It makes sense to figure out what your time is worth at the beginning of the project rather than to under-budget and wind up dipping into your personal finances. A budget that includes a fee that compensates artists for their time will look more informed to evaluators than one that doesn’t have an artist fee at all.

Of course, there is more than one way to figure out what an artist fee looks like. Here are two ways to calculate the fee for your budget:

If this project is the artist’s primary source of income, time spent can be represented as a percentage of a reasonable, annual salary. For example, if $35,000 is your annual salary, and you estimate you will spend six months working full-time on this project, your fee—one-half of the “annual salary”—would be represented in the budget as follows:

Artist’s fee for six months: 50% of $35,000 = $17,500
If this project is not the artist’s primary source of income—perhaps you are working on it concurrently with other projects or if you have a full-time job that supports you—the artist can represent time spent as a percentage of the total project budget.

Organizations and individual artists typically budget 15-25% of a project’s costs to cover administration and overhead (also known as A&O). Even if the project budget pays for expenses in other ways—by covering items like travel, and research costs—the A&O line will compensate the artist for the time spent planning and fundraising for the project.

Artist fee (2) for six months: 20% of $250,000 = $50,000

**This line item assumes two collaborators receiving $25,000 each

Whichever way you choose to represent the artist fee in the project budget, the goal is to compensate yourself and your collaborators fairly.

Do You Self-Finance Projects?
It’s easy to forget that “self-financed” expenses are still project expenses, and need to be accounted for in your project budget. If you’ve been using personal finances (like credit cards or personal income) to cover creative expenses, check your receipts and add them to your total expenses.

However, we discourage all artists from self-financing their projects.

Include Income You Will Make from the Project
A complete budget includes expenses and income. Make sure that you include all possible income and designate sources as confirmed, projected, or pending. If you still need to raise money for your project but don’t have an identified source, you can write “to be raised” followed by the amount.
In-Kind Donations

There are two important things to remember about in-kind goods and services:

- In-kind goes in as income and comes out as an expense at the same amount
- This dollar amount should represent the fair-market value of the in-kind goods or service

Because it may take time to figure out the fair-market value of a tool donated to your project, such as a used computer, it’s helpful to separate the in-kind budget. Unless you have no in-kind funds, your complete budget will have three distinct sections: expenses, income, and in-kind. If you’re not yet sure of the fair-market value of your in-kind line items, you can write “value to be determined,” and add the dollar amount once it’s confirmed.

Other Things to Know

As you’ll see in the budget examples we provided below, income should equal (or exceed) expenses. Simply designate any un-raised funds as “to be raised.”

If you’re using your personal computer, equipment, etc., for the project, you can note this in the in-kind section of your budget. While it may be impossible to figure out the dollar amount of your equipment’s depreciation due to project-related wear-and-tear, your budget will at least reflect your “loan” to the project. If you believe that you will need to replace or upgrade your personal equipment as the direct result of heavy use during this project, it’s a good idea to include an “equipment replacement” line in the expenses section of your budget, just in case.
If you work out of your home, you can figure out the value of your workspace and include it in the project budget. The formula is similar to the one for figuring out your fee: what percentage of your home are you using for what period of time? This does not mean that you can claim your entire rent as a project expense. Instead, this is similar to the home-office deduction allowed by the IRS. In addition to listing home office your studio use as an expense, you should also determine the extent to which you will use your home phone or internet connection for project-related communications.

Sample Budgets
The following page contains the sample budget for a performing arts project that you can use as a guide.

Download sample budgets for other disciplines through the hyperlinks below.

Please note that the sample budgets are quite simplified.

- Performing Arts Sample Project Budget (Theater, Dance, etc.)
- Visual Arts Sample Project Budget (Painting, Sculpture, etc.)
- Moving Image Sample Project Budget (Video art, Filmmaking, Documentary, etc.)
- Literature Sample Project Budget (Screenplays, Novels, Poetry, etc.)
- Emerging Fields Sample Project Budget (Tech, Multimedia, Digital Media, etc.)
Performing Arts — Sample Project Budget
This is a sample budget for performing art projects, including theater and dance.

INCOME
Commissioning Fee $15,000
State Arts Council $10,000
To be raised $85,000

Total Income: $110,000

EXPENSES
Artists’ Fees
Artistic Director $35,000
Performers $39,000
Costume Designer $2,500
Composer $6,000
Videographer $2,000

Sub-total: $84,500

Production Costs
Rehearsal Space $5,000
Costumes $1,500
Set Design $1,200
Lighting & Sound $3,000
Equipment Rental $1,800

Sub-total: $12,500

Research & Travel
Travel to Tallahassee, FL $1,000
Car rental $500
Food & Lodging $1,500

Sub-total: $3,000

Marketing & Promotion
DVD production & duplication $1,000
Photography $1,000
Printing materials $750
Press Kit assembly & postage $1,500
Website design $1,500

Sub-total: $5,750

Administrative Costs
Office materials $250
Utilities $1,000
Assistant $3,000

Sub-total: $4,250

Total Expenses: $110,000
Creating Your Artist Resume

An artist’s resume is a 1-3 page document which organizes your professional experiences, achievements, and credentials for easy scanning by the reader. It should list the facts that place you in your discipline, and reflect where you have already received support.

Best Practices:

1. Maintain a list of everything you have done in your career (a Curriculum Vitae or C.V.). It may not be the document you distribute, but it will reflect your entire professional history, so it’s an important document to keep.

2. Unlike a C.V., your resume is a fluid document that can and should be tailored for a particular opportunity. You may also have different kinds of resumes: one will be shaped for exhibition/performance/publication opportunities, while another may be used to apply for jobs or freelance situations, or to stress your activities as an educator, producer, curator or critic.

3. As you accumulate professional experiences, begin to eliminate lesser listings. Choose only the most important and title the category “selected.” This alerts the reader to the fact that you have done more than what’s listed.

4. Save your creativity for your art. Keep the format of your resume clean and neat, so it is easy to read. You want to be sure all the information in your resume is up-to-date, accurate, and free of grammatical and spelling errors.

5. Save a version as a PDF file to preserve the formatting. The PDF version can be attached to emails and included as a downloadable, print-ready document from your website.
What to include in your resume:

1. **Contact Information:** This includes your name, mailing address, phone number, email address and website. If appropriate, also include your studio address and phone number.

2. **Short Bio:** This can be as simple as the year and place of your birth and where you live and work now. Other information is optional.

3. **Achievements:** List the most recent events first and work backward in chronological order. Include the year, exhibition/performance/publication title, sponsor/producer (gallery, publisher, museum or organization), city and state.

4. **Exhibitions (for visual artists):** If you have had four or more one-person exhibitions, create two categories: SOLO EXHIBITIONS and GROUP EXHIBITIONS. If you have had mostly two-person shows, the category could be SOLO & TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS. If you have had fewer than four one-person exhibitions, use one category, EXHIBITIONS to cover both group and one-person shows. Highlight the one-person exhibitions with an asterisk (*). Consider including the curator’s name.

5. **Collections (for visual artists):** List corporate collections, institutions and well-known individuals who have collected your work. Do not list works owned by friends and relatives.

6. **Performances/productions (for performing & visual artists):** You may want to include any other featured collaborators on the piece.

7. **Performances/productions (for playwrights):** Indicate if your play was given a reading or a production. Also indicate whether your play is a one-act, full-length or musical.

8. **Publications (for literary artists):** Include book title, publisher and year of publication. You may wish to make separate distinctions between chapter books, anthologies and journals.

9. **Readings (for literary artists):** List the title of the work presented and the location.
10. **Recordings (for musicians):** List all recordings of your work. Include disk title, work title (if you are not the only artist on the disk), record label, catalog number, year released.

11. **Repertoire (for dancers & musicians):** List works you perform. Include title, choreographer or composer. If you perform on a special instrument, include it here.

12. **Works completed and in production (for filmmakers & new media):** List your work that is both completed and in production. Categorize by your role (director, writer, etc.) or the type of work (TV, feature, documentary, etc.).

13. **Screenings & Festivals (for filmmakers and new media):** List the screenings and festivals. Include festival name, location and year.

14. **Commissions/public art projects:** List titles of the commissioned work or public projects, dates, sites and sponsors/producers.

15. **Awards and Honors:** List recent awards first, working backward in chronological order. Include project grants, prizes won in competition, artist-in-residence programs and fellowships.

16. **Related professional work:** This can include teaching positions, lectures, curatorial projects, films, adaptations, installations or recordings on which you have assisted/performed, etc.

17. **Bibliography:** List all publications in which you have been mentioned or reviewed, and articles that you have written related to art. Refer to [The Chicago Manual of Style](https://www.cmu.edu/chicago-manual-of-style/) guidelines.

18. **Education:** If you are a recent graduate, education should be your first or second category. If you are a mid-career artist, it should be your last. List education credits in the following order: any degree you are currently a candidate for; graduate degrees earned; undergraduate degrees earned; other institutions of higher education and notable artists you’ve studied with (musicians and performers).
What Creative Capital Award Evaluators Look for in an Application

Clarity and Communication
Panelists emphasized the importance of a concise, direct application, free of jargon or “art-speak.” Applications should quickly get to the heart of the work, its impact, and desired audience, and the “why” of your project. Successful applicants were able to communicate the originality and urgency of the project using concise explanations of the research and methodologies behind their practice.

Since panelists are experts across a range of disciplines, artists are cautioned against making assumptions about reviewers’ prior knowledge. Describe your project as if you were writing a children’s book.

Project Idea
What is the artistic strength, vision, originality of the proposed project? This includes demonstrating boundary-pushing, bold, and singular ideas. It’s important for us that artists show that they have a deep engagement to the project and represent it with a clear vision and intended audience. Projects should challenge the status quo and spark new conversations.

Great Work Samples
There should be a dialogue between your written proposal and your submitted work samples. They should work together to tell a cohesive story of where you’ve been as an artist and where you wants to be.
Video and film samples especially should be approached with intent and deliberation—the first few seconds and frames make a critical impression. Artists know their work well, but many of the reviewers will not be familiar with it. Be specific about why you chose a clip, and what you would like reviewers to focus on.

Since the evaluators have limited time to review applications, the key is to show past proficiencies and the originality of their vision. Panelists cautioned against referencing too many other artists or existing works. Most importantly, remember that the panelists want to understand you and champion your work—they just need to see compelling evidence of the work they are supporting.

**Capacity**
We want to make sure that the applicant has the appropriate professional capabilities to execute the project—especially if the impact is ambitious! The Creative Capital Award is not ideal for artists just beginning their creative practices—that’s why we require artists have five years of experience. It’s important that the applicant demonstrates a deep understanding of the professional landscape of their field. They should also have a certain amount of momentum in their career that we can help them build upon.

**Timing**
The urgency of a project, whether in response to a political moment or to a pivotal point in the artist’s career, is a key component that brings some applicants to the top of the pile. Reviewers often ask, “Does the project need to happen now, and is this artist the best equipped to execute it?” Your application should answer those two questions to reviewers with clarity and conviction.
Readiness

Beyond looking at the ideas of the artist’s project, we ask evaluators to determine if the applicant is ready to examine their creative and professional approach. Because we offer more than just financial support, we want to know if the applicant could benefit from additional counsel and career development services to complete their project. This is an integral part of the program and applicants should demonstrate a capacity and interest in being a part of a supportive learning community.

Projects that are within a year of completion, or artists who are not at a phase in their career to take advantage of the non-monetary services that Creative Capital provides are less likely to receive the award.

Finally, we’re looking for artists who demonstrate a strong sense of mutual generosity and engagement in a community. Artists who receive Creative Capital Awards stay in our community of supporters long after they’ve premiered their projects, and we expect them to pay forward what they gain from us to future artists. We value artists who are generous toward their peers and professional colleagues.
Additional Resources

Info Sessions

Before each application round, Creative Capital staff lead online and in-person information sessions to answer questions about applying for the Creative Capital Award. Each session asks at least one awardee and reviewer to provide insights to the application process.

You can find upcoming dates to join live Q&As on the calendar page of our website.

Archived info sessions, as well as free workshops, can be found on our YouTube.