

CREATIVE IMPACT FUND

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who can apply for a Creative Impact Fund grant?

Artists living in Cuyahoga County and working in the disciplines of craft, dance, design, film, interdisciplinary work, media, music, theatre & performance, traditional/folk arts, visual art and writing/literary art are eligible to apply. Artists must be 18 years of age or older and have been actively creating for at least the last three years.

2. I was awarded an artist grant in Cuyahoga County last year. Can I apply for CIF in 2026?

If you received a grant through any of the following Cuyahoga Arts & Culture funded- grant programs in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, or 2025 then unfortunately you're ineligible for CIF this year:

- Creative Impact Fund (Assembly for the Arts)
- Premiere Fellowship (Cleveland Public Theatre)
- Individual Artist Fellowship (Cleveland Public Theatre)
- Unidos por el Arte (Julia de Burgos Cultural Arts Center)
- Room in the House Fellowship (Karamu House)
- Urgent Art Fund (SPACES)

3. I have a studio and/or work in Cuyahoga County but live in another county. Can I still apply?

No. Artists must be current residents of Cuyahoga County at the time of application with plans to remain in the county for the duration of the grant year. Residency is defined as the location where you live more than 6 months of the year, receive utilities and the address you use for tax filing purposes. Your studio address is eligible if it meets this definition.

4. Can my organization or for-profit business apply for a CIF grant?

No, the CIF is for individual artists only. However, if you are an artist with an active creative practice working at an organization or running a business, you're more than welcome to apply *as an individual*.

5. Can I apply for the CIF as a curator?

No, the CIF is for artists who actively make their own art. If you perform a curatorial role, in addition to your own practice as an artist or if curation is a key component of your creative work, you are welcome to apply, but be sure to clearly define your personal creative artwork in your application.

6. How does Assembly define 'Artist'?

For the CIF program, Assembly defines artists as independent professionals who derive income from creating, performing, teaching or supporting the development of work in the following creative disciplines:

- **Craft** (ceramics, fiber, glass, jewelry, metals, textiles)
- **Dance & Choreography** (create or perform movement-based works)
- **Design** (fashion, graphic, industrial, object, all forms of architecture)

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- **Film** (filmmakers, cinematography, directing, screenwriting, motion pictures, animation)
- **Interdisciplinary** (work creating intentional connections between multiple creative disciplines)
- **Media** (work at the intersection of technology, content creation, aesthetics, storytelling, and digital cultures)
- **Music** (composing, songwriting, performing, DJing, producing)
- **Theatre & Performance** (directing, playwriting, acting, comedy, puppetry, set design, lighting/installation, and performance art)
- **Traditional or Folk Arts** (work related to the continuity and evolution of a tradition and/or cultural heritage such as cultural dance, cultural music, oral expression and traditional crafts)
- **Visual Art** (painting, sculpture, photography, installation, performance art, sound art, video, printmaking, illustration, drawing)
- **Writing / Literary Arts** (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, spoken word, literature for children, criticism, graphic novels, journalism, arts writing)

Assembly understands that creative individuals exist in every industry. However, to prioritize and concentrate funding, **the following industry areas are not included in our definition of artists:**

- Cosmetology, Salon and Barber services
- Culinary and Restaurant services
- Curators and Presenters of other artists' work

If you have questions about whether your creative discipline meets this definition, you may contact grants@assemblycle.org.

7. How many applications can I submit to CIF in 2026?

Artists can submit one (1) application to the program per grant year.

8. Can I receive a CIF grant and a Boost Fund grant in 2026?

Yes! Artists are eligible to apply for and receive both a Creative Impact Fund and a Boost Fund grant through Assembly in 2026.

9. What is the difference between an unrestricted grant and a project grant?

Unrestricted grants (sometimes called flexible funds) are not tied to a specific project and are meant to provide you with the flexibility and financial means to engage in whatever artistic endeavors you wish to pursue. Unrestricted funds are an investment to support your creative vision and advance your career. Project grants support the development, production, creation, completion, or presentation of a specific project, work, or a series of works. Funders typically request a budget and documentation of expenses for final reporting, including receipts. The Creative Impact Fund is an unrestricted grant.

10. Do I have to submit a project proposal with my application or complete a specific project in my grant year?

No. No project is required to be proposed or completed for the CIF grant. However, these funds are meant to

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support and enhance your arts practice, so evidence of the creative work you have done over the grant year will be requested in your final report.

11. What can CIF funds be spent on?

The goal of CIF is to help you be a more active creator. This unrestricted grant can be used to support the cost of operating your creative practice, as well as daily living expenses you incur throughout the year. This includes costs like supplies and materials, studio rent, artist fees, performance or exhibition costs, mortgage, rent, and travel are all eligible expenses. Please visit the [Guidelines](#) for a full list of eligible and ineligible uses of these funds.

12. Are CIF funds taxable?

Yes. Please consult with an accounting or tax professional to determine and reserve funds to cover taxes. Grantees will be required to submit a W-9 to receive their award and will be issued a 1099 at the end of the year.

13. Who will decide which artists receive funding?

A carefully selected review panel comprised of artists and arts professionals representing a wide range of creative disciplines will make all CIF funding decisions. Assembly for the Arts staff does not make any decisions on which artists receive funding through this program.

14. How will the review panel make their decisions?

Review panelists will evaluate each application based on the criteria below and provide a numeric score. Aggregate scores will determine which applications move to the final round of panelist deliberation.

Selection Criteria:

- The artist shows evidence they have been actively creating for at least the last three years.
- The artist demonstrates innovation in their practice which includes originating new work, experimenting with new ideas, taking risks and pushing boundaries in your field.
- Completeness and quality of the application.
- The artist is making work that creatively impacts their neighborhood or community, or looks at new ways to address social, personal, political, community and/or global themes.
- The work is thoughtful and well-executed (it's clear that you spend significant time thinking about and creating your work).
- There is evidence of inventive and thought-provoking engagement with viewers, audiences, and participants.

The Assembly for the Arts CIF selection panel does not make funding decisions on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, religion, disability, or any characteristic protected by law.

If you have more questions about the Creative Impact Fund, please email grants@assemblycle.org and our team will be happy to help you!