

CAREER ADVANCEMENT GRANT GUIDELINES

Advancing Creatives Intensive (ACI) 2025: Denver Metro

TIMELINE

Application Opens:	Application Due Date:	Grant Award Notification:	Project Period:	Final Report Due Date:
June 16, 2025	July 11, 2025	No later than July 28, 2025	June 1 – November 30, 2025	November 30, 2025

Application Link: <https://cbca.org/aci-2025-denver-metro-career-advancement-grant/>

ABOUT COLORADO CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

[Colorado Creative Industries](#) (CCI) is a division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade. Established to capitalize on the immense potential for our creative sector to enhance economic growth in Colorado, the mission of Colorado Creative Industries is to promote, support and expand the creative industries to drive Colorado's economy, grow jobs and enhance our quality of life.

ABOUT CBCA ADVANCING CREATIVES INTENSIVE (ACI)

[Colorado Business Committee for the Arts](#) (CBCA) launched the Advancing Creatives Intensive (ACI) in spring 2022. The ACI curriculum is designed to be a launch pad for creative professionals who want to articulate and take practical steps to achieve their business goals. ACI is focused on business growth and planning for artistic careers, as well as building business skills like marketing and financial management. ACI enables artists of all disciplines to see their work through an entrepreneurial lens and employ tools to organize, plan and sustain their creative career.

By completing the program (with at least 50% attendance and no outstanding tuition balance), ACI participants are eligible to apply for a limited number of Career Advancement Grants, funded by Colorado Creative Industries, to support their ongoing work.

ABOUT ACI CAREER ADVANCEMENT GRANT

This grant award supports Colorado creative entrepreneurs and artists to advance career growth and enhance their commercial creative business. The goal of the funding is to assist awardees in achieving tangible business benefits such as increased revenue, reaching new audiences/markets, or improved management practices. This award is intended to support an existing creative business or professional career. The following list, while not inclusive of all activities for which support may be used, illustrates some possible areas of support:

- Purchase of equipment and materials to expand or improve an applicant's arts business and/or creative production
- Acquisition or upgraded technology related to business practices (e.g., online sales systems, website functionality, digital marketing platform, accounting software, business analytics tools)
- Participation in an exhibit, festival, vendor showcase or artist residency
- Presentations or participation at a conference or symposium

- Enrollment in professional development workshops or the engagement of consultants or coaches to build administrative and business skills
- Development of promotional materials such as electronic media kits or creation of high-resolution images

***Please reference Appendix A for more detailed permissible uses of funds.**

CAREER ADVANCEMENT GRANTS DO NOT FUND

- Costs exclusively tied to regular, ongoing artistic creation.
 - This grant support business or career development, or creation of new artistic work that is directly tied to business or career advancement.
- Funding to offset applicant's regular salary or wages
 - Applicant should not include expenses to compensate for personal time spent on the project.
- Reimbursement of expenses paid prior to June 1, 2025.
- Reimbursement of Advancing Creatives Intensive tuition fee.

These Career Advancement Grants support a diverse array of creative work, but if you are unsure if your project is eligible, please contact CBCA before applying. Contact: Meredith Badler, CBCA Deputy Director, at mbadler@cbca.org.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

At the time of application, applicant must meet the following requirements:

- Have been enrolled in and completed **CBCA's Advancing Creatives Intensive (ACI) 2025: Denver Metro program from April 14 through June 16, 2025**, with at least 50% attendance at sessions
- Be 18 years of age or older and a resident of Colorado
- Must have no outstanding ACI tuition balance

AWARD AMOUNTS

Applicants may request up to \$500. Award amounts will depend on applicant's usage for the funds and total funds available. No matching funds are required.

NUMBER OF AWARDS

Applicants may apply for only one Career Advancement Grant upon completion of the Advancing Creatives Intensive (ACI) program.

PAYMENT PROCESS

Awards payments will be processed and sent via check. Applicants will be required to submit a W-9 at time of Grant award notification in order for CBCA to process their check. It may take up to three weeks to process and receive the check after receiving notification of Grant award.

AWARD CRITERIA

While this Career Advancement Grant is designed for participants in CBCA's Advancing Creatives Intensive program, there is still a competitive review process to determine eligible projects and grant award amounts.

Career Impact (70%)

- Clear and specific business and career goals for arts/creative practice
- Connection between funding request and specific business and career goals

Budget (30%)

- Appropriateness of the costs associated with the proposed activity
- The purpose for which the awarded funds will be used

NARRATIVE

All applicants will respond to a set of questions about their project.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT AWARD APPLICATION QUESTIONS**NARRATIVE QUESTIONS****Career Impact:**

1. Provide your “elevator pitch” for your creative work and the proposed usage for these career advancement funds. (1,500 character limit)
2. Describe how your proposed usage of these funds will directly advance your arts business and/or creative career. How will you measure that impact? (1,500 character limit)
3. What is your proposed timeline? (1,500 character limit)

Budget:

4. In a brief narrative description, please provide the total estimated costs and any other funding sources to support this endeavor. (1,500 character limit)
 - a. Provide itemized details on the “Fund Request Spreadsheet,” submitted as an attachment (Form provided in Appendix B)

Certifications

Applicants must certify the following in their application:

- **Certification** that, if awarded a Career Advancement Grant, applicant will use it for the intended purpose indicated in their application; or notify CBCA immediately with an explanation of why that purpose has changed.
- **Certification** that the applicant will complete the Final Report by November 30, 2025.

Failure to submit any of the required attachments and certifications may be grounds for the rejection of the application and denial of funding.

FINAL REPORT

The Final Report is due no later than end-of-day on November 30, 2025.

APPENDIX A – DETAILED USE OF FUNDS

- **Purchase of equipment and materials to expand or improve an applicant's arts business and/or creative production**
 - Requested equipment should not be a major start-up cost of doing business (i.e., a photographer requesting a camera).
 - Updating or upgrading equipment or software is eligible.
 - New equipment or materials for artistic creation that are directly connected to business goals, new consumer markets and career advancement. (i.e., musical equipment to go on tour, materials for applicant's first public art installation).
- **Develop or upgrade technology related to business practices**
 - Examples include online sales systems, website functionality, business analytics tools, social media management platform, online inventory platform, accounting or financial management software.
- **Enroll in professional development workshops or engage consultants and coaches to grow specific administrative and business skills**
- **Develop promotional materials**
 - Examples include professional headshot or artwork photos, graphic design fees, printing costs
- **Participate in an exhibit, festival, vendor showcase or artist residency**
 - **Eligible:** art supplies, registration, lodging expenses, airfare, booth rental
 - **Ineligible:** food/beverage expenses, companion expenses
- **Present at a conference or symposium**
 - **Ineligible:** food/beverage expenses, companion expenses

APPENDIX B – CAREER ADVANCEMENT GRANT FUND REQUEST SPREADSHEET

Career Advancement Grant Funding Request

Project Cash Expenses (itemize below)	Amount	Description or URL
<i>Supplies & Materials</i>		
<i>Technology and Software</i>		
<i>Equipment</i>		
<i>Professional Services</i>		
<i>Travel</i>		
<i>Other Expenses</i>		

Total Cost 0

Project Income (itemize below)	Amount	Notes
<i>Career Advancement Grant</i>		
<i>Additional Income</i>		
<i>Personal Investment</i>		

Total Income 0

***You only need to complete the sections or categories that are relevant to your application
You may add more rows, as needed***