

Emergency Relief Grant Program Guidelines

Purpose

In 1985, the Craft Emergency Relief Fund (CERF+) was established, inspired by the craft community's tradition of "passing the hat" to collect donations and support artists during emergencies. CERF+ remains committed to its mutual aid origins, and engagement with craft artists. Committing to generosity, inclusion, and care, we advocate for the thrive-ability of craft artists and craft as an art form.

The Emergency Relief grant program provides \$3,000 grants to individual artists who are U.S.-based, aged 18 and older, working in craft or materials-based folk/traditional disciplines, who are facing recent, unforeseen, substantially disruptive emergencies. Because we believe that artists know best how to stabilize and the goal is to empower them in the wake of the emergency, the grant can be used in any way towards recovery efforts.

The application process is open year-round and available in both English and Spanish, with no set deadline for submissions. Typically, it takes up to 10 business days to receive a determination after applying. Grants are exclusively for individuals, with a limit of one emergency relief grant per person per event each calendar year. Additionally, once you have received support for an eligible event, we do not accept repeat applications for the same event. We can only provide one grant per emergency. Receiving an emergency relief grant does not exclude you from applying to other CERF+ programs or opportunities.

If you are assisting an artist in an emergency situation, you may apply on their behalf provided you have their permission. Ensure the artist meets the eligibility criteria and gather all necessary contact information and materials required for the application.

Before you apply, read Eligibility, the FAQ, and Application Instructions.

Eligibility

CERF+ emergency relief has the following eligibility requirements:

- be an individual craft artist,
- have a public-facing artistic practice,
- reside and work in US or US Territories, and are a minimum age of 18 years or older, and
- have experienced a recent and substantially disruptive emergency or disaster

1. Individual Craft Artist

While we acknowledge that there are varying ways that organizations, collectives and artists define, endorse, or acknowledge craft in various ways, for the purpose of this grant program, we define eligibility in the following ways:

This grant program supports individual craft artists who make original three-dimensional visual art objects by hand, including folk and traditional art forms. We prioritize craft artists who have demonstrated recent artistic practice. Applicants must create the majority of their artworks themselves, though they can incorporate store-bought elements.

We do not support art practices that include hate speech or symbols.

Materials: We welcome handmade art made from clay, glass, textiles/fiber, wood, metal, concrete, plastic, gourds, shells, bones, leather, recycled materials and many other materials to create three-dimensional craft art. We look for objects in which the artist transformed the materials into something new.

Forms: Craft forms we support are handmade jewelry, vessels, dishes, sculptures, chairs, purses, hats, masks, garments, quilts, baskets, embroidery, musical instruments, beadwork, regalia or ceremonial clothing, printmaking such as etching or woodcut, papier-mâché, mask making, knitting/crochet, dolls, bookmaking, blacksmithing, and knife making.

Function: Visual craft objects can be functional or nonfunctional.

Identity: While we use the term “craft artist” to encompass the practice we strive to support, we also welcome self-identification. Some applicants call themselves craft artists, and many others may self-identify as a maker, folk artist, cultural bearer, potter, ceramicist, mixed media artist, etc. We welcome all identities of craft artists to apply.

Notes about specific art types and practices:

Jewelry: Includes wearable items that are primarily handmade from scratch or using primarily raw materials.

Beadwork: Includes bead stringing, bead weaving, bead looming, bead embroidery, and wire wrapping with beads. This would also include using beads to create jewelry, weavings, and as surface decoration on clothing, sculptures, masks, and other three-dimensional objects.

Musical Instruments/Puppet Making: Performing artists who also make musical instruments or puppets may be eligible if making these objects is a primary part of their practice, and those objects meet CERF+'s other criteria for craft objects.

Fashion/Clothing: Garments of original design that are handmade by the designer or their immediate, local family or circle are often eligible. Clothing-making that involves a great deal of

hand embellishment, hand-weaving, unusual cuts, or that preserves a specific cultural tradition tied to cultural bearers typically falls into this category.

Printmaking: We have supported artists who primarily work in handmade printmaking techniques. These include using relief processes (such as woodcut and linoleum blocks), intaglio (etching, engraving, drypoint, aquatint, and mezzotint), and traditional lithography (such as using a stone, metal plate, or polymer plate that is hand-inked for printing). In certain cases, silk screening may also be considered an eligible art form, provided documentation shows the handwork involved in the making process.

Multi-disciplinary or Mixed mediums: We recognize that artists may have multiple artistic practices and often move in various spaces and work with different mediums. To be eligible for support, we look for craft object-making to be a primary, meaningful and/or substantive part of your current practice.

Shared Practices: For artists that work in a shared practice, such as a collective or a partnership, we will consider your practice as eligible if the overall work is focused in a craft medium as described above. Please explain your individual role in the shared practice and highlight objects that especially exhibit your part of the work in your application. If your shared artistic practice experienced an emergency, please submit one application per craft artist.

[For your reference, see the Ineligible Artistic Practices section.](#)

2. Public-Facing Artistic Practice

Our program looks for active and recent engagement or participation in the craft community and/or in the local community. This can include participating in or hosting/leading exhibitions, public cultural events, fairs, or craft shows but can also be:

- Articles, interviews, reviews, or features about the artist in written, video, or audio journalism
- Craft show or gallery representation of the artist on a website, brochure, or catalog
- Participating in an organization, group, shared studio, or residency
- Publications about the artist
- Recognition, awards, and honors
- Online presence
 - Your own artistic website
 - Being featured on another professional website such as a museum shop
 - Social media presence that focuses on your art work, making or practice
 - E-commerce
- Analog or Digital Documentation
 - Articles or journalism about you and your work
 - Brochures, Fliers, Posters, or other Documents from artistic and cultural events

3. Emergency or Disaster - Recent and substantially disruptive

We define an eligible emergency/disaster as an event or circumstance that is unforeseeable, unexpected, outside your control and has a recent and substantially disruptive effect on the applicant's craft practice/livelihood.

Disaster events: Fires, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other acts of nature.

Emergency events: Theft, accidents, injuries, and major illness.

The examples cited above are not exhaustive but represent the most commonly supported scenarios by the program. Emergencies vary based on an individual's circumstances.

Activities such as routine or ordinary medical care or procedures, car maintenance and repairs, unemployment or slow business or recurring/ongoing circumstances are not eligible for this program.

If you are a craft artist and you do not see your emergency above, you are welcome to reach out to programs@craftemergency.org and ask questions.

4. Reside and Work in U.S or U.S Territories

Applicants must live and work in the U.S. or U.S. Territories for at least the last two years.

5. Minimum Age

Applicants must be 18 years of age or older.

Who CERF+ Does Not Fund:

- Individuals who have not lived and worked in the U.S. or U.S. territories for the last two years.
- Individuals who are younger than 18 years old.
- Individuals who are not craft artists as outlined in the Eligibility requirements (see [Ineligible artistic practices](#) below).
- Organizations, collectives, or groups.

Ineligible artistic practices:

Because all artistic practices are not eligible for funding through this program, visit this [link for additional resources](#) you can explore.

- Two-Dimensional Art:
 - Painting, poured paintings, and spray paint art
 - Monoprints and monotypes
 - Photography
 - Drawing, illustration, and graphic design
 - Collage
 - Video and digital media
 - Digital printmaking
 - Illustration including comic strips, graphic novels, and comic book art
 - Tattoos
- Jewelry design: jewelry that is primarily assembled from parts that are factory-made or made by third parties with no significant hand alteration and transformation of the items.
- Performing arts practices such as dance, music, and theater.
- Set design and related design or building elements.
- Literary arts practices such as fiction/nonfiction, journalism, poetry, screenwriting, playwriting, storytelling, biographies, copywriting, blogging, and academic writing.
- Consumable Items: Food, beverages, soap, candles, oils/essences, flower arrangements, makeup, hairstyling, and nails.
- Objects made from plans, kits and patterns that are manufactured or designed by someone other than the maker.
- Objects made from manufactured or purchased molds and casts.
- Art that is factory-made or made by third parties without significant hand alteration and transformation of the items.
- Clothing design: garments that are factory-made or made by third parties or that are only slightly altered with no handiwork such as embroidery, applique, or beadwork.
 - Clothing that is designed by the applicant, but constructed by contractors
 - Premade T-shirts or other garments that have been silkscreened or embellished with downloaded or iron-on designs
- Artificial flower arrangements and wreaths that are assembled from store-bought elements.
- Downloaded Visual Art Forms designed by someone other than the applicant such as:
 - 3D printing with downloaded models
 - Fuse bead/melttable bead art with downloaded patterns such as Perler, Melty, and Hama beads
 - Computer-controlled plotting machines such as Cricut and Glowforge with downloaded designs
- Repair, conservation, or restoration of antiques, furniture, cars, or art objects.
- Taxidermy
- Architecture or Home Renovation
- Picture Framing or Canvas Stretching

Ineligible emergencies:

We acknowledge that there are many difficulties that may arise in a person's life. These situations may be very distressing and challenging. As our process evolves and new circumstances arise, we acknowledge that this list is not comprehensive and is updated annually.

CERF+ does not provide financial support for the following:

- Loss or lack of employment/General Indebtedness
- Low sales or poor marketplace/festival/fair turnout
- Equipment failure
- Routine/ordinary dental work such as cleaning and extractions
- Routine/ordinary medical problems
- Routine/ordinary car maintenance or repairs
- Remodeling/capital improvements
- Art making projects or related expenses of any kind
- Immigration and visa fees

Determination Process

Applications are evaluated on a case by case basis. We do not guarantee any applicant a grant. CERF+ considers how the event affected the applicant's life and the nature of the event.

The Determination Process follows these steps:

- 1) CERF+ Staff reviews the application to ensure it meets the eligibility standards listed below:
 - a) Is the artistic practice eligible according to the Individual Craft Artist requirements?
 - b) Does the artist meet the Public-Facing Artistic Practice eligibility?
 - c) Is the Disaster/Emergency eligible according to the requirements?
 - d) Residency or citizenship is met.
 - e) Minimum age is met.

Staff may request additional information for clarity of the application.
- 2) Staff reviews the application and determines if the application will be approved or declined.
 - a) Staff may consult with the Grants Committee for additional consideration and review before making a final determination.
- 3) Applicants are notified of the outcome with links to additional resources as is possible.
 - a) Outcome notification timing varies depending on the volume of applications, correspondence for follow up questions, and the time needed to complete the determination process.

CERF+ regularly reviews guidelines, eligibility and grant award amounts. If you have received help from CERF+ in the past, be aware that the process and grant amount may have changed since that time. We are happy to discuss how recent changes may affect your application.

Prior grant recipients

We limit the frequency and total number of Emergency Relief grants that an artist may receive: Artists are eligible to receive one grant per emergency and no more than one emergency relief grant per calendar year. Artists are eligible to receive a maximum number of 4 emergency relief grants over the course of their lifetime.

Appeals Process

Because we do not guarantee approval of every application, decisions not to approve a grant application will include ineligibility according to the guidelines listed above. We do our best to provide you with information about additional resources that might be better suited to your circumstances.

However, there are circumstances when reconsideration may be necessary.

You are welcome to submit an appeal within thirty(30) days of receiving the grant decision if you feel that your application was eligible for support.

We do not consider appeals if you are simply dissatisfied with the outcome of your application or if the submitted application was incomplete.

Process:

- Email CERF+ Grants and Programs Staff requesting an appeal.
 - Include additional information related to your application that would be helpful to support your appeal.
- CERF+ Grants and Programs Staff will re-review your application and may ask for additional documentation. Staff will consult the Executive Director and Grants Committee for additional review and guidance.
- CERF+ Grants and Programs Staff will notify you with the outcome of your appeal.
 - Outcome notification timing varies depending on the volume of applications, correspondence for follow up questions, and the time needed to complete the determination process.

All appealed decisions will be final.

Questions?

Check the [FAQs](#) page. If you believe you may be eligible for CERF+ Emergency Relief, please [Apply](#). If you have additional questions, please [contact us](#).