Craft and Community Vitality Grants

Craft and Community Vitality Grants will support six artists, art collectives, or art organizations to engage craft in community projects with $2,200 each to fund community craft projects in Western North Carolina.

During the pilot year (2023) of this program the Center for Craft has partnered with the University of North Carolina Asheville's UNC Gillings Master of Public Health (MPH) program to explore the community health impacts of craft in Western North Carolina.

Each selected project will be paired with a UNC Asheville MPH student who will use methods they are learning in their coursework to co-explore and measure community vitality impacts of each artist’s project. The collected information will be shared with the Center for Craft community, craft professionals and centers, and those interested in craft and community vitality around the country.

Craft has the power to promote individual and community vitality. Making, experiencing, and learning about craft contributes to social, emotional, mental, physical, economic, and environmental well-being. There is an opportunity to better understand how craft acts as an indicator of and pathway to bring people together, build community, and foster a healthy, resilient future.

If you are interested in applying for a Craft and Community Vitality Grant follow this link.

GRANT GOALS

- Amplify the many relationships between craft and community vitality in Western North Carolina.
- Catalyze healthy, supportive communities by expanding and strengthening diverse craft networks.
- Build and maintain reciprocal relationships among regional craft ecosystems including makers, collectors, enthusiasts and knowledge bearers.

OVERVIEW
Grant Name: Craft and Community Vitality
Award Amount: $2,200
Grant Period: September 2023 - December 2023
TIMELINE
Open call for Letters of Interest: June 28, 2023
Information Session (virtual): July 7 (3pm EST)
Deadline for Letter of Interest: July 24, 2023
Interview notifications: August 15, 2023
Notification of Funding: September 5, 2023

ELIGIBILITY
Applicants must be:
- 21 years of age or older
- Eligible to receive taxable income in the U.S.
- Residing in Western North Carolina (counties include: Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania and Yancey and including the Qualla Boundary) for the last year and for the duration of the Fellowship period

Applicants can not be:
- Anyone with a conflict of interest with the Center for Craft including; substantial contributors to the Center for Craft, current employees, consultants, or board members of the Center for Craft, or immediate family members of such a person.
- Current recipient of any Center for Craft grant or fellowship.

REQUIREMENTS
- The first 70% of grant funds ($1,540) will be awarded upon mutual completion of the grant agreement and receipt of the recipient’s W9.
- The final 30% of grant funds ($660) will be awarded upon completion of research activities and exit interview conducted by the Center for Craft.
- Recipients will acknowledge support from “the Center for Craft” in any publications or presentations resulting from the grant, to include the Center for Craft’s logo.
- Proposed projects should occur between September - December of 2023 and engage the community in some way.
- Each grantee must be willing to be paired with a UNCA graduate student who will use methods they are learning through their coursework in UNC Asheville’s MPH program to explore and measure community health impacts of the artist’s project.
● Each grantee must be willing to engage in between 6 - 8 hours of one-with-one conversations, demonstrations, and community activities, as appropriate, with the UNCA graduate student, as part of the research activities.
● Each grantee must be willing to share the findings from the study.

REVIEW PROCESS
A selection panel of artists, community members, and Center for Craft staff will review each application and evaluate the applications based on the following criteria:
● Is the project timely? Does the project seem relevant and significant to complete at this time.
● How thoughtful and creative is the proposed project?
● How well does the applicant demonstrate a collaborative and equitable approach to working with the community members they plan to work with on the project.
● Feasibility, i.e. applicant has the experience and ability to carry out proposed project in the given timeframe.
● Demonstrates an understanding of and investment in craft practices.

Selection Considerations:
People who are Black, Indigenous, Native, People of Color, LGBTQIA2+, and/or people with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. The Center for Craft is committed to ensuring that all individuals, craftspeople, and communities are continually recognized and part of the conversation as we craft an equitable future together. We will ask the selection committee to compose a group of recipients whose projects compose a socioeconomically, racially/ethnically, experientially, and regionally diverse cohort of craft artists and organizations. Applying does not constitute a promise or guarantee of being awarded a grant.

HOW TO APPLY
Letter of Interest:
Deadline for Letter of Interest: July 24, 2023

Submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) to ahelgeson@centerforcraft.org including the following (no more than 500 words):
● Name of applicant and name of lead artist (if different)
● Title of your project
● A brief description of your project idea
● A description of the community you plan to work with and your relationship with that community
● An explanation of how this project relates to craft
• 5 images, formatted as jpegs no larger than 72dpi, of your artwork

Interview:

All letters of interest will be reviewed by a selection committee and Center for Craft staff. The selection committee will select a group of finalists for interviews based on the above considerations. Interviews will take place between August 28-31, 2023.

Notification:

The e-mail address listed on the application form will be used to send out notifications. Please be sure that it is a valid account that you check regularly.

FAQ

If I receive funding, will I have to pay taxes on my award?
Yes, all cash prizes are taxable income. Please consult a tax expert for tax advice.

My project is already underway. Am I eligible to apply?
Yes, we encourage applications for projects that are already underway as well as new and burgeoning approaches, as well as projects that are ongoing.

What counties are part of Western North Carolina?
Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania and Yancey and including the Qualla Boundary.

May I mail a hard copy of my application materials to the Center for Craft?
All submissions must be digitally emailed to ahelgeson@centerforcraft.org. If submitting a digital application is not possible please call Anna at the Center for Craft (828) 785-1357 or email ahelgeson@centerforcraft.org to discuss alternatives.

Can organizations or collectives apply?
Yes, however if you are applying as a collective you must designate one individual or entity to receive the funds.

I have received funding from the Center for Craft in the past, am I eligible to apply?
Yes, as long as you are not currently in a fellowship or grant cycle with the Center for Craft you are welcome to apply.
Can you tell me more about the research portion of this grants program?
If you have questions about the research portion, please contact Dr. Ameena Batada, UNC Asheville, at abatada@unca.edu. She will be happy to answer any questions.

What is Craft?
The Center for Craft defines craft as a particular approach to making with a strong connection to materials, skill, and process. Artists, makers, scholars, and curators continue to grow the field, embracing new definitions, technologies, and ideas while honoring craft's history and relationship to the handmade.

Craft, in all its forms, demonstrates creativity, ingenuity, and practical intelligence. It contributes to the economic and social wellbeing of communities, connects us to our cultural histories, and is integral to building a sustainable future.

What is Community Vitality?
Community vitality is evident when individuals and groups feel connected, supported, inspired and cared for. Making, experiencing, and learning about craft contributes to social, emotional, mental, physical, economic, and environmental well-being and can be an indicator of and pathway to bring people together, build community, and foster a healthy, resilient future.

I have a question that wasn’t answered. How can I reach the Center for Craft?
If you have any further questions, please contact ahelgeson@centerforcraft.org.

About the Center for Craft
The Center for Craft is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit in Asheville, NC whose mission is to resource, catalyze, and amplify how and why craft matters. We advance access to and understanding of craft through national grantmaking in support of makers, teaching artists, and researchers, as well as through our free, public galleries which educate our audiences about the materials, processes, and skills that define craft. The Center has become a vital community resource, in 2022 serving an audience of 18K+ across our multifaceted program offerings, which include grant programs, exhibits, lectures, workshops, community and national partnerships, and other in-person and virtual programs.

About Dr. Ameena Batada
Ameena Batada, Dr.P.H., is a professor of health and wellness and co-director of the place-based UNC Asheville-UNC Gillings Master of Public Health program. Dr. Batada
engages in community-driven research to evaluate health programs, conduct research for policy advocacy, implement intervention studies, and better understand connections between the arts and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

About UNC Asheville–UNC Gillings Master of Public Health
The UNC Asheville-UNC Gillings Master of Public Health (MPH) is an MPH degree program offered jointly by both UNC Asheville and the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health on the campus of the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) in Asheville, N.C. The concentration in Place-Based Health centers people and their communities as the catalyst for transforming systems to promote wellbeing for all. The joint MPH program features small cohorts of up to 24 students, case and community-based activities, and instruction by interdisciplinary faculty and community practitioners who bring real-world experience to the classroom.