

Small Experiments Grant Program

Application Deadline: October 27, 2017 at 4:30pm MST

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Program Goal

The goal of this program is to provide support for those looking to take control of their own learning processes to develop new approaches to challenges and opportunities relevant to the work they do in the arts.

Program Description

This program invests in low-risk, high-learning experiments demonstrating a clearly identified issue that needs to be addressed, a hypothesis being tested, and a method for collecting information and learning from results.

Before You Start

Please keep in mind that this program is *only* about investing in a shift to new ways of thinking and learning, understanding that practicing experimentation is an effective way to become more adaptive and innovative.

It's not enough for you to propose something that is merely interesting, challenging or even important in and of itself—at the very least it should be something that represents a fundamental shift in the way you have been working previously.

Apply If:

- You are prepared to take a critical look at core assumptions around your work.
- More than funding you need an opportunity to learn and take real risks.
- This could transform the way you do your work.

Eligibility

You may apply to this program as one of the following:

- A professional artist or collective.
- An arts-based community group.
- A non-profit arts organization registered as a society in the province of Alberta.

Applicants must either be Calgary-based, or able to demonstrate that they consistently make significant contributions to the arts that are accessible to Calgary citizens.

Calgary Arts Development staff review all applications for eligibility. For applicants that also have non-arts-related programming or operate in areas outside of Calgary, Calgary Arts Development will determine eligibility through the applicant's commitment to the arts and the scope of its activities within Calgary's arts community.

What You Can Apply For

This program offers a **maximum of \$3,000** to cover expenses related to your experiment. The total amount of funding available through this program is **\$85,000** (increased from \$50,000).

These funds may go towards *any* expenses so long as you can show that they are necessary to effectively run your experiment and learn from it, including but not limited to:

- Professional fees or wages for labour related to the experiment
- Materials
- Equipment
- Travel
- Documentation

If you have questions about any other possible expenses, please contact staff.

How to Design Your Experiment

What is *important* to you?

A good experiment starts with an important question you would like to answer. For this program, this question will **challenge a fundamental assumption** related to your work in the arts *and* **address an important problem, a need, or an opportunity**, such as:

- How you create or share your work.
- The conditions that allow you to create work.
- How your work is understood or valued.

Many grant programs are about guaranteeing that whatever you propose will be successful—that's not the case here. We want to know what success means to you in very specific terms, but it is more important that your experiment be about taking a critical look at *how* you achieve success. What don't you know about that "how" that can be tested?

Design: Hypothesize, Test & Analyze

Once you know what you want to question, the next step is to figure out how to test it. You might find the following approach helpful:

1. State your goal, or what you want to change about your work.
2. Think about the assumptions that relate to you achieving that goal.
3. Choose one assumption, and one key aspect of that assumption.
4. Plan a small activity that significantly challenges the way you approach that key aspect.
5. Make an educated guess on what will happen, and how that will bring you closer to your goal.
6. Collect information in a way that tells you whether or not you were correct, and why.

Keep in mind that your educated guess (your *hypothesis*) does not have to be backed by absolute certainty or perfect, it just has to be good enough to give you something important to look for when you test.

Your experiment is about testing a new approach, observing what happens and then learning from it. It doesn't have to be something that no one has ever done before—what matters is that the approach is new to you.

Whatever your experiment is and it looks like, remember that in the context of this program researching existing literature or seeking existing expertise is not equal to an experiment. Research like that is about finding someone else's answer to your question, but **this small experiment is the process of finding your own adaptive response to a challenge or opportunity.**

Lastly, it is important to remember that this process is not about doing something once, perfectly. In the long run answering your question will probably require trying things many times, failing and then trying again. This program is just meant to give you a start.

For that reason, we are looking to encourage experiments that can happen on a **small scale in the near future.** To summarize, here are qualities of an effective small experiment:

- Small scale
- Low-risk, high-learning
- Safe-fail, not fail-safe

The deadline for your final report will be June 29, 2018, meaning your experiment should take place some time between now and next spring so you have time to analyze your results. See the Final Report section below for more details.

Assessment Process

Applications will be assessed by an independent, arm's-length assessment committee made up of artistic peers and community members.

Community members are Calgarians with an appreciation for the arts (any discipline) who actively attend arts performances and presentations. Artistic peers are artists and arts professionals who possess professional experience and knowledge directly relevant to the arts sector.

All applications will be considered according to three criteria:

- The **importance to your work (40%)** of the question you are trying to answer. Overall, your application should create a context where it's clear how addressing this question could positively transform your work. How you define your practice/mandate and its goals will form the context for considering this.
- The **design (30%)** of your experiment and how effectively it might answer your question, including how you collect information and evaluate results.
- The **feasibility (30%)** of the project plan and budget.

For more information on assessment criteria, please see the Assessment Committee Terms of Reference at calgaryartsdevelopment.com.

How to Apply

All applications must be submitted using the online granting interface found at grantinterface.com.

New users must set up an account to access the interface. For instructions on how to use the online grant interface, please refer to the Granting Interface Questions in our Investment Program FAQ on calgaryartsdevelopment.com.

If you are applying on behalf of an organization that already has an account and you would like access to it, please contact us at grants@calgaryartsdevelopment.com or 403.476.2031.

The application process will be available **October 3, 2017** through our online grant interface.

All applications must be submitted through the online granting interface by **October 27, 2017 at 4:30pm MST**.

If a deadline extension is required, Calgary Arts Development must receive a written request before this deadline. The full **Deadline Extension Policy** is available below.

Application Checklist

- Primary contact information** (address, phone number, email, alternate contact).
- Description of **artistic practice and goals**. Individuals/collectives should include relevant artist statements and CVs that include dates and descriptions for important line items, as well as any professional development or training. Collectives providing multiple CVs and statements may combine each into a single PDF as necessary. Community groups and organizations must include artistic mandates and the most recent available financial statements.
- In a few sentences state the question you are trying to answer. It should directly relate to the assumption about your work are you challenging.** (100 words max)
- Why is this an important assumption for you to challenge and how do you know?** Consider what you or others have tried before, include any necessary prior research, etc. (500 words max)
- Describe how you will test your question.** What exactly are you testing? How does the experiment work? What outcomes will you be looking for (i.e. your hypothesis)? How will you collect information and then evaluate it? (500 words max)

- In one sentence, describe how your test is different from how you have approached your assumption in the past.** (100 words max)
- Project timeline** for the experiment. Provide a timeline showing how you will execute your experiment. You may write this into the online application (200 words max) or upload a PDF (2MB max)
- Project budget.** List revenues and expenses for the overall experiment project plan. Upload the mandatory standard budget form available at calgaryartsdevelopment.com.
- Support materials.** This should include anything you feel will help you make your case, including text, digital images, audio or video. Limit your support material to a maximum review time of 10 minutes. You may include up to five attachments with a maximum of 2MB each. Provide short descriptions of each attachment in the fields provided. Acceptable file formats are PDF, JPG, DOC, DOCX, XLS and XLSX. For audio and video materials, please enter a YouTube or Vimeo link with specific instructions on which sections to view.

Notification of Results

Applicants will be notified of the results of their applications in writing by **December 4, 2017**. Successful applicants must return executed investment agreements no later than **December 13, 2017**. Please ensure that you contact staff if your contact information needs to be updated after the application deadline as **we cannot accept any agreements past that date**.

Final Report

Report Requirements

- Brief description of your question, hypothesis, experiment, and measurements.** Give a brief overview of your small experiment. (300 words)
- What was the outcome of the experiment?** What was the outcome of your experiment? Was your hypothesis correct? (500 words max)
- What did you learn?** What did you observe through your experiment? How do the results change your hypothesis, assumptions, or questions? What are the next steps? (500 words max)
- Updated budget.** Provide an updated project budget with actuals. (upload max 2MB)
- Updated timeline.** Provide an updated timeline. (upload max 2MB)
- Support material.** Upload any material that demonstrates the experiment, outcomes, measurements, and/or learnings. You may include up to three attachments with a maximum of 2MB each. Provide short descriptions of each attachment in the fields provided. Acceptable file formats are PDF, JPG, DOC, DOCX, XLS and XLSX. For audio and video materials, please enter a YouTube or Vimeo link with specific instructions on which sections to view.

Contact Information

Contact the Community Investment Team at grants@calgaryartsdevelopment.com or 403.476.2031 if you have any questions about the program.

Deadline Extension Policy

Calgary Arts Development intends its granting process to be open, fair and transparent.

Calgary Arts Development has a fiduciary responsibility to the citizens of Calgary to ensure the security and value of their investments.

- For clients who intend to submit applications but will miss the deadline, a written request for extension must be received by Calgary Arts Development before the deadline.
- Requests not received in time will result in ineligibility for that granting period. The request must state the reason(s) the application deadline cannot be met. Acceptable reasons may include:
 - Personal health or family crisis.
 - Birth or death of a family member.
 - Unforeseen organizational priority.
- Calgary Arts Development staff will review the request for extension. If in Calgary Arts Development's sole discretion the reason for the extension is compelling, a deadline extension will be granted. A written notice explaining Calgary Arts Development's decision will be sent to the applicant. Extensions will only be granted if doing so will not materially affect the planned assessment process.
- Notwithstanding the foregoing, Calgary Arts Development, in its sole discretion, may grant an extension in extenuating circumstances.