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**Colorado Creative Industries Creative District Certification and Recertification Application**

All users are required to log into the portal and complete the online application for [Colorado Creative District](https://oedit.colorado.gov/colorado-creative-districts) Certification and Recertification. All support materials are uploaded into the online [Colorado Creative Industries Grants Portal](https://co-cci.smapply.org). New users will need to register for an account on the portal.

No hard copies or emailed copies of the application or support materials will be accepted. We recommend that applicants register in the portal and review the online grant system with plenty of time before the deadline to allow staff proper time to assist with any questions or issues.

Applicants seeking assistance are advised to contact Colorado Creative Industries staff well in advance of the application deadline. Prior to contacting a staff member, applicants should read the guidelines thoroughly.

Overview of this document:

* [How to create an account in the application portal](#_dxjegvrk9r5y)
* [Purpose of Creative District application](#_ohpfcjdsrvt)
* [Application questions](#_o0uvdug8hh6k)
* [Resources for application](#_2gvghqdv66h8)
* [Staff contact information](#_lj3p7anpfthh)

### [How to create an account in the application portal](#_dxjegvrk9r5y)

Each organization should have **only one organization** account assigned to a Primary Administrator. This administrator can add members to the organization and give access to applications. If registering for an account in the grant portal for the first time, there are 3 steps to complete:

1. Register as an individual or organization.
2. Verify your email address.
3. Complete the eligibility quiz.

Each time a user logs into the portal, the system defaults to the individual account. If you are trying to access organization applications, you will need to switch to the organization account by selecting your name in the upper left corner.

For more support setting your account, please review these additional [Colorado Creative Industries Grant Portal Instructions](https://oedit.colorado.gov/sites/coedit/files/2020-10/navigating_the_cci_grant_portal.pdf).

To successfully submit your application, all tasks must be completed and then the submit button will be available. A confirmation email will be sent upon a successful submission.

### [Purpose of Creative Districts application](#_ohpfcjdsrvt)

Colorado Creative Industries believes that a healthy community is one in which social as well as economic capital is built- meaning that community members benefit from increased economic opportunity, as well as stronger networks and social bonds that bridge and benefit from diverse experience and knowledge. For this to happen, any property or business owner, resident or tenant should have a voice in the planning and execution of their creative district. Because building social capital implies that the district must demonstrate a commitment to cultural equity and preserving the shared heritage of a place, we will seek evidence of this throughout your application as it is relevant to creative district information, district characteristics and community buy-in.

Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—are represented in the development of arts policy; the support of artists; the nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression; and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources.

### [Application questions](#_o0uvdug8hh6k)

The application is broken into these sections:

* Narrative questions
* District characteristics
* Community buy-in
* Financial information

Each question in the online application allows for 350 words. To fill out the application, you will need to:

1. Prepare answers to the narrative questions in a word processing or notepad document.
2. Check the word count for each question.
3. Cut-and-paste each response into the online application in the [Colorado Creative Industries Grants Portal](https://co-cci.smapply.org).

We recommend filling in your answers in this document and saving your progress.

#### Narrative questions

1. What is the name of the Creative District? (This is how the district is commonly known in the community and in marketing efforts; it does not have to match the legal managing entity name.)
2. Please upload a map of (or provide a link to a map) of the Creative District. (Attachment)
3. What is the Creative District's organizational and governance structure e.g. 501(c)(3), 501(c)(6), partnership with local government, Business Improvement District, Registered Neighborhood Organization, other?
4. Who provides oversight of the Creative District (i.e. a working group, a board of directors)? Please upload a list of the names and affiliations of those involved in the oversight group named above, as well as the length of time each has served. (Attachment)
5. Describe the Creative District organizational structure including the paid staff and role of the volunteers. How many, what are their roles, and how long have they been involved? What is the budget for staff salaries and/or consultants? If the Creative District has in place any policies or practices designed to promote diversity, equity, or inclusion in the hiring of employees or for the recruitment of board members or other leadership positions, please describe.
6. How has the Creative District engaged stakeholders and invited business owners, residents, artists, and others to participate in planning and decision making?
7. What is the Creative District’s budget? How is the District funded and what are the sources of funds? Do you have a plan for financial sustainability?
8. Does the Creative District have a membership structure? If so, how many members are in the Creative District and what is the membership dues structure?
9. Upload the Creative District strategic planning document. Make sure that the plan addresses the building of social capital, as well as economic outcomes. How will or does your Creative District promote both economic development, as well as a stronger and more inclusive community? How will your Creative District reflect the history and heritage of the place; as well as the people, both present and past, who live, work, and play there?
10. Please provide a working definition of "equitable economic development" as it relates to your district and describe the district’s equitable economic development goals and strategies. (See Policy Link’s article [“Creating Change Through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy Practice Primer”](https://www.policylink.org/resources-tools/arts-culture-equitable-development) for case studies and an examination of this topic)
11. Please provide the top 3 short-term and top 3 long-term goals you have for your Creative District.
12. What do you see as your district’s biggest challenges, and how do you anticipate overcoming them? Make sure that you address challenges of social capital- building and addressing inequities (for example, demographic groups that may not have been involved in the planning for the District to date)
13. How do you see certification as a Creative District advancing your district and your community?
14. Upload job description(s) for paid staff (Attachment)
15. Upload a sample promotional tool (e.g. brochure, guide, advertisement, poster, etc.) (Attachment)
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18. For re-certification only, please describe 2-3 successes, challenges or lessons learned during the initial certification period (optional).

#### District characteristics

1. Describe the demographics of your district: population, age groups, median household income level, relative populations of groups of varying cultural backgrounds, relative makeup of commercial and residential property, % of properties owned by absentee owners. Which groups have been there the longest and who are the most recent?
2. Please define the unique cultural heritage story of your district. In particular, share how your district’s history relates to its present story and future plans. See the cultural assessment self-study forms under resources.
3. How has your district established a unique physical sense of place? Do you have district wayfinding and signage? Streetscape? Art?
4. What does cultural diversity mean in your community/district? Do you have businesses or organizations that attract or showcase certain groups or cultural heritage?
5. What is the one thing that sets your district apart from other Creative Districts? In other words, what is your unique niche and what are your key differentiators?
6. Please provide the number of creative establishments and/or the number of creative workers within the Creative District currently. Describe the data source, collection method and the definition of the types of establishments and/or workers.
7. Please provide the number of creative sector jobs in the Creative District. Describe the data source, collection method and the definition of jobs counted.
8. Please provide the number of children and youth directly benefiting through Creative District activities (Including students, participants & audience members). Please describe the activities through which they are receiving benefit.
9. Estimated number of visitors to your Creative District annually and reason for these visits (i.e. is it primarily event driven, venue driven, other)
10. What is the mix of other businesses and uses within your district? I.e. is your district primarily retail/commercial, residential, industrial, etc.?
11. Please provide other meaningful data you have collected for your Creative District (e.g. Property value trends, sales tax data, occupancy rates, rental rates, crime statistics, etc.)
12. If appropriate, please upload a document with photos showing the unique sense of place described above. (Attachment)
13. Does your district have any signature events? What other ways does your district engage with the community? (Attachment)
14. Upload a document with up to 3 images that capture the essence of the district. (Attachment)
15. Upload a short community profile based on section 4 of the Cultural Assessment self- study (Attachment)

#### Community buy-In

1. Upload a local government ordinance or planning documents that provide evidence of local government endorsement of the Creative District. (Attachment)
2. Upload a letter of recommendation from your mayor, city manager or director of planning, community/economic development or cultural affairs supporting your efforts to apply for Creative District certification. (Attachment)
3. Upload a letter of recommendation from your CVB, Chamber of Commerce or Tourism Association supporting efforts for Creative District certification. (Attachment)
4. Upload a letter of recommendation from a creative entrepreneur such as an artist or business owner who works and/or lives in the District. (Attachment)
5. Upload short letters of recommendation, consolidated into a single pdf, from property owners, business owners, residents (including tenants), and other stakeholders supporting Creative District certification. Letters of recommendation should represent the diversity of stakeholders residing and doing business within the district and help reviewers to understand the full breadth of benefits that the district provides/will provide.

#### Financial information

1. Upload a simple line-item budget showing cash and in-kind revenue and expenses separately. Budget does not need to adhere to a specific format. (Attachment)

### [Resources for your application](#_2gvghqdv66h8)

* [Call Yourself Creative](http://callyourselfcreative.org)
* Webinar: [Cultural identity, Creating a Competitive Position for your Creative District](https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/2933630424094697474)
* [Cultural Self-Assessment](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tWFiRP4M_T5BDUNWAfzCq-dpvWncXljR/view?usp=sharing) tool
* Policy Link article from 2018: [Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer](https://www.policylink.org/resources-tools/arts-%20culture-equitable-development)
* [Dare to Reimagine](https://www.daretoreimagine.org/)

### [Staff contacts](#_lj3p7anpfthh)

Applicants seeking assistance are advised to contact CCI staff well in advance of the application deadline. Prior to contacting a staff member, applicants should read the guidelines thoroughly.

For questions regarding the Colorado Creative Districts program, email Christy Costello.

For questions regarding the application portal, email Sami Wells.