SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND IMPORTANT NOTES

HOW ARE PANELISTS SELECTED?

Panelists are individually selected by Chicago Dancemakers Forum’s Executive Director and Programs & Communications Director, with an aim to represent a variety of identities, networks, geographies, and artistic backgrounds.

PANELIST RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be intimately acquainted with selection criteria (see “CRITERIA”).
- Review all necessary applications within the review window (see “PANEL CALENDAR”).
- Attend designated Panel Day(s) (see “PANEL CALENDAR”).
- Commit to confidentiality with regards to applications and selection process (see “ETHICS”).
- Be honest about potential conflicts of interest (see “ETHICS”).
- Bear in mind potential biases while reviewing applications, whether they center around identity or personal tastes (see “ETHICS”).

PANEL CALENDAR

Receive Applications: Tuesday, August 2, 2022
Review Period: August 2 – 14, 2022
Scores and Notes Due: Sunday, August 14 at 5pm CT

- Materials to review:
  - Checkboxes to help provide context for the applicant and their dancemaking
  - Artist Resume or Brief Description of recent artistic practice
  - Artist Story/Statement (written narrative or video format answering the three following prompts)
    - How do you describe the dance you make and/or your processes for making dance?
    - How has the work you’ve done thus far impacted your development or current momentum as a dancemaker?
    - What do you want to do during your 2023 Lab Year with tailored support and $25K? How will you spend your time? What do you need in order to grow, experiment, and deepen your practice as a dancemaker?
o Proposed Budget for the Lab year (with all activities that are in the proposal accounted for as expenses, prioritizing paying the applicant and other artists a fair rate. Examples of expenses might include rent or other living expenses, mentorship, stipends for dancers, collaborator fees, research activities in the studio and elsewhere, daily practice, networking, travel, workshops, rehearsals, planning, studio/venue costs, designing props or costumes, insurance and healthcare, and other expenses that support the applicant while continuing their creative practice or making a new dance work.)

o Work Sample(s); up to 10 minutes, 3 files total
o Information and description of work sample(s)

• Supplemental Materials (optional)

• Expected # of applications: ~60-80

Panel Review & decisions: **Tuesday, August 16, 2022**, 9:00am CT via Zoom, aiming to finish by 3:30pm CT.

**ETHICS**

Chicago Dancemakers Forum is committed to making the local dance ecosystem a more ethical, accessible, and transparent place. Panelists are asked to please bear the following notes in mind as they review proposals for the 2023 Lab Artists Program.

**Conflicts of interest:**
A conflict of interest occurs when a panelist or their affiliate organization is in position to financially benefit from an applicant’s involvement in the festival. If any of the panelists know there to be any conflicts of interest, they must recuse themselves and step outside the (Zoom) room before the discussion of those candidate(s) in question.

Panelists should also self-identify a conflict of interest if they feel they are unable to maintain objectivity in discussing the application due to a close personal or working relationship with any applicant.

**Confidentiality:**
Panelists will be privy to applicants’ personal information and intellectual property. They will also be sharing thoughts and opinions about applications among one another. To ensure personal safety and artistic integrity, this is a closed process. Panelists must not share any of the following with those outside of the panel or on social media:

• Identifying information, non-public work samples, or other application materials
• Names of applicants
• Names of other panelists
• Details of the selection process (was X's application found lackluster, will ___ be advancing to the next round, etc.)

If a panelist prints or downloads application material, they must delete all files after the selection process. In addition, panelists should not contact any applicant directly. If an artist contacts a panelist about an application, they should be referred to Chicago Dancemakers Forum staff.
Panelists’ scores and comments throughout the review process will be kept anonymous but will be used to provide feedback to the applicants, if requested. Scores and typed notes in Submittable will be seen by the staff but not by the applicants; note that the scores may be shared among the panelists prior to the discussion.

Panelists’ names will be listed on ChicagoDancemakers.org and in the media release announcing the 8-10 Finalists for the 2023 Lab Artists Program (expected September 2022).

Understanding Bias:
Bias is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as, “a tendency, inclination, or leaning towards a particular characteristic, behavior, etc.” Though it is impossible to remove all bias from a selection process, panelists should be aware of these two types of bias while participating in the panel. Art is subjective, but the aim is to be as objective as possible when selecting grantees.

Identity-based bias:
Identity-based bias as defined here would be an opinion of someone or their work based on:

- Race
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Veteran status
- Age
- Education
- Political affiliation
- Sexuality
- Gender identity
- Marital/parental status
- Disability
- Appearance
- Residency status
- Class

These kinds of biases have historically put minority groups at a disadvantage not only within the artistic community, but in American society at large. By having a say in who will receive funding and opportunities, panelists have the power to either perpetuate or break down harmful structures created by such identity-based bias. The following tools may help panelists understand where they currently stand on personal biases.

- Project Implicit offers free implicit bias tests including (but not limited to) biases of race, religion, appearance, gender, and sexuality.
- Eight tactics to identify and reduce your implicit biases
- 6 Ways to Overcome Your Biases for Good
- The different types of unconscious bias: examples, effects, and solutions
Artistic bias:
Panelists will be coming to the table with different aesthetic sensibilities, interests, and preferences. These personal tastes are likely to influence decisions but panelists should try to put them aside and be as objective as possible when reviewing. Panelists are asked to try to recognize where they may have a bias for and against different disciplines of dance.

It is extremely important to be aware of how artistic and identity-based bias may overlap. A standard of Eurocentrism, heteronormativity, and ability has been pervasive in the art world, especially in dance. Panelists can ask themselves if/why they hold certain preferences: are certain aesthetics or virtuosity genuinely preferred, or has society perpetuated the notion that certain artistic elements are “better”? We all benefit when we take the time to self-reflect and examine our biases.

SECTION 2: ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artists Program is the most substantial source of support for individual dancemakers working in Chicago with an open call process. In 2023, four Chicago-based dancemakers will each receive a cash grant of $25K USD along with a year of tailored support to aid in their research, development, and potential presentation of new dance work. This 20th anniversary year of the program is open to all eligible dancemakers but will prioritize artists that we recognize have historically been underrepresented in the program – Indigenous, Immigrant, Trans/Non-Binary, Parent/Caregiver, and/or Disabled Artists, or those with a creative practice that directly benefits these communities.

Past Chicago Dancemakers Forum Lab Artists are diverse in age, gender, race, local geography, and dance discipline, working in Tap, Bharatanatyam, Chicago Footwork, dance for the camera, Voguing, contemporary, modern dance, and more. Many of these artists have built national audiences and international recognition since receiving support from Chicago Dancemakers Forum and, collectively, represent the distinct character and power of dance made in Chicago.

The Lab Artists Program is tailored to each participant and fosters growth and artistic fulfillment while also building relationships among dancemakers, presenters, audiences, and supporters. During the Lab Year (January to December 2023), the $25K grant can be spent fully at the discretion of each grantee, with funds covering rent or other living expenses, mentorship, research, collaborator fees, and other expenses that support the artist while continuing their creative practice or making new dance work. For the 2023 Lab Artists Program, the grant amount has been increased to help cover support services such as childcare, translation, personal assistant or caregiver, audio description, ASL interpretation, captioning, specialized equipment, therapy, etc. throughout the Lab year.

Please become familiar with the following eligibility items for applicants:
• The majority of my dancemaking practice happens in the Chicago Metropolitan Area (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, or Will County).
• I have developed a distinctive trajectory in my dancemaking and am ready to take my practice to the next level, making work of greater depth or scale.
• I can manage a budget of $25K to support my dancemaking and to work with collaborators in an environment of fairness, transparency, consent, and open communication.
• I am able to effectively make use of my time for artistic research, experimentation, and development.
• I have the capacity and the time to benefit from, and contribute to, an environment of artistic interchange with a cohort of Lab Artists, and I am in position to make this a priority in 2023.

RESTRICTIONS

• Lab Artists must reside in the Chicago Metropolitan Area (Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, or Will County) during the duration of the calendar year of 2023. Applicants with dual-residency will not be considered.
• Students enrolled in degree programs at the time of application are not eligible for the program.
• Artists previously funded through the Lab Artists Program are not eligible to apply.
• Staff/contractors who have received >$5,000 from Chicago Dancemakers Forum in the 12 months prior to application are not eligible to apply.

Applicants confirm their eligibility through a self-identifying process; if you question an applicant's eligibility and honesty, please voice that directly with staff.

SECTION 3: SELECTION PROCESS

2023 Program Application Timeline [Notice: Significant change from past years]

• August 1, 2022 at 8pm CT: Applications Due
• August/September 2022: Approximately 8-10 applicants will be selected as Finalists. Each will receive a cash stipend of $350 along with a personalized consultation session and the option of public recognition.
• September/October 2022: Four names will be drawn randomly from the pool of Finalists to be the 2023 Lab Artists.
• October 16, 2022: The four 2023 Lab Artists will be celebrated during the Elevate Chicago Dance festival.
• January 2023: Launch of the Lab Year

CRITERIA

The Lab Artists program supports individual dancemakers no matter the context in which they create dance (solo practice, partnerships, companies, collectives, crews, and other collaborations). Panelists will review applications based on these weighted criteria:

Body of Work (40%)
Applicant provides evidence of an established body of work as a dancemaker, as demonstrated in their resume/bio and work sample(s). The submitted video(s) and
optional supplemental files (such as articles, process materials, letters of recommendation, reviews) showcase the dancemaker’s strong demonstration of the use of dancemaking elements: time, space, and energy in concert with clear and distinct conceptual content. Improvised, communal, and choreographed dance forms are equally evaluated.

**Distinction (30%)**
Application demonstrates a clear artistic vision, distinctive artistic voice, and compelling area of artistic inquiry.

**Timing (30%)**
Artist demonstrates readiness for the program and shows that they are at an important juncture in their career and/or artistic trajectory, actively taking risks or experimenting, poised to invest in their artistic practice with greater depth or scale.

**ONLINE REVIEW PROCESS**

By August 14th, all panelists are expected to have reviewed each assigned application with both scores and notes, for all three criteria areas. Scoring system is based on choices of 10, 7, 4, 1 with the rubric provided directly in Submittable. Helpful notes may include:
- Rationale for the scores given in each criteria area.
- Prompts to help the artist think deeper about their work.
- Recommendations for books, other artists, projects, locations, and resources that may be of interest to the artist.
- Other opportunities, grants, or residencies that may fit the artist and their work.

For prioritization, please match the checkboxes on the artist’s application.

Here are step-by-step logistical instructions on how to review the applications:

1. Applications are collected via Submittable, so you will need a Submittable account before reviewing. You can easily make one [here](#).

2. Next, click on the tab that says “Submissions”.

![Submittable](image)
3. Go to the tab that says “Show Filters” (it says “Hide Filters” once clicked on). Toggle down from “Form” and select “2023 Lab Artists Program” from the list.

4. Select an application from the list.

5. On the screen, you will see the application to the left and a menu to the right. Click on the “Review” tab, and then click “My Review”.

6. Carefully scroll through the application, being sure to view all materials. On the right side of your screen, complete evaluations and comments for the application. When finished, hit “Finalize Review”.
7. And that’s it! You will be directed to a screen with the score you gave the applicant. From there you can click through other applications or go back to the main list with the buttons in the upper left.

PANEL DISCUSSION PROCESS

1. The Programs & Communications Director will propose an order of review based on the scoring collected prior to convening, and the panel will collectively agree on a review order and whether to revisit a work sample video through screen share, independently, or not at all. In addition, they will propose a method of timekeeping communication for the panel’s approval.

2. Accordingly, the Programs & Communications Director will announce the name of each candidate, and as panelists find their corresponding notes, will call on one of the readers to begin the discussion based on all three criteria.

3. At this time, a panelist should announce any potential conflict of interest and recuse themself by going into a breakout room (Zoom platform) before the discussion of the applicant(s) in question. A conflict of interest, for the purpose of the Lab Artists Program, is defined previously on Page 2 of this guide.

4. For each candidate, the panel may first revisit a work sample.

5. The panel will have a set amount of time to discuss each candidate based on all criteria. The Programs & Communications Director will be responsible for tracking the timing and keeping timing fair for all applicants.

6. After each application has been discussed, the panel will have an opportunity to edit their scores in Submittable.

7. The Programs & Communications Director will tally scores and announce the preliminary results.

8. Panelists will then discuss that preliminary tally and select 8-10 finalists for the 2023 Lab Artists Program. After consensus is reached and confirmed by the Executive Director, the panel adjourns.
THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF THE 2023 LAB ARTISTS PROGRAM PANEL!
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROCESS OR THIS GUIDE,
PLEASE REACH OUT TO CHICAGO DANCEMAKERS FORUM STAFF.

Guide created and designed by Merritt Stulits, August 2021.


POSSIBLE DISCUSSION ITEMS

Approach the conversation with a broad definition of dancemaker and a spectrum of modes for “presenting” or experiencing dance work.

What this program is NOT:
  • Lifetime Achievement Award
  • Award for Best Dance in Chicago

Disabled Artists and Dancemakers working in certain dance communities may not have had the same level of opportunities available to them leading up to this point.

What does it mean to make an investment in an individual’s process (such as in the Lab Artists Program) vs. a project grant?