

# Development Fund Guidelines

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# Part 1: Key Information

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- **Application Deadline:**  
Rolling, please apply 60 days prior to activities
- **Eligibility:**  
For Artists who have received an NPN Creation Fund after May 1, 2021 and have not previously received Development Fund support for their Creation Fund Project.
- **Online Application Link:**  
<https://npnetwork.smartsimple.com>

Please review [Part 3: Application Guide](#) before beginning the online application.

## Vision & Purpose

NPN envisions a world in which artists have greater agency and resources for self-determined, meaningful, sustainable careers. Building upon the Creation Fund, the Development Fund supports the development of new Creation Fund work by providing resources such as time, space, and funding to artists and co-commissioning organizations. The Development Fund:

- provides holistic support for diverse artistic development processes
- increases the quality and life of a work
- expands the capacities for cultural organizations to develop work
- deepens relationships between artists and co-commissioners
- expands relationships with communities

## Funder Credits



The NPN Development Fund is supported by the Doris Duke Foundation, the Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

## Part 2: Guidelines

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## How funds can be used

Funds can offset a variety of needs when developing a work for public engagement. Guidelines are flexible to meet the unique needs of each project. Funds can be accessed before, during, or after the work's premiere and may support activities including—but not limited to:

- managerial, artistic, and technical costs for the development of the work
- live or virtual developmental or technical residencies
- planning, building, or deepening community engagement before, during, or after the 'presentation' of the work
- relationship building with community organizations, collaborators, co-commissioners, or artists
- writing, reflection, or promotion that helps artists to tell their own stories
- documentation and evaluation
- adapting the work to be presented virtually
- scaling up or down, or reimagining the work
- fees for artists, technicians, and collaborators and/or staff time

## Who can access the Development Fund?

**NPN guarantees Development Funds to every Creation Fund project.** The Development Fund is artist-led—artists *apply directly* on behalf of each project.

**Artists can access The Development Fund for *three years*** following their Creation Fund Award. Artists will keep receiving Development Fund Application reminders until funds are used.

## Rolling Deadline

To accommodate projects' timelines, **the NPN Development Fund has a rolling deadline.** Artists may apply for funds at any time during the creation and development of the work, however, they are only eligible for one Development Fund per Creation Fund project.

## Award Amount: Two Approaches to Funding

NPN's approach to artistic support is built on the notion of partnership and long-term relationship building. NPN actively strives to expand the capacities and connectivity of its constituents. The Development Fund is structured to maximize these goals. When

applying for Development Funds, artists may choose between two approaches of support:

- a) **Team-based:** The artist may apply for co-located funds **up to \$10,000** on behalf of the artist and a co-commissioner of the artist's choosing. Funds are split between the co-commissioner and the artist. Recognizing that co-commissioners often contribute much of their own organizational resources—whether these be staff time, rehearsal space, access to designers, or community work—the team-based approach compensates co-commissioners for their contributions. Projects may apply for up to \$5,000 for the artist's developmental needs and up to \$5,000 for the co-commissioner's developmental needs.
- b) **Artist Only:** The artist or company applies for **up to \$5,000** in support. This approach is for artists whose projects do not need additional developmental support from their co-commissioner(s).

It is up to the artist to determine which approach is best for the work. If applying using the team-based approach, artists should select a co-commissioner who will provide resources that best serve the development of the work as needed.

For recent project examples, see Fall 2023 Development Fund awards:

<https://npnweb.org/announcing-the-fall-2023-development-fund-awardees/>

## Criteria & Limitations

- Development Fund projects are driven by the artist, not co-commissioners.
- If an artist is applying for funds using the team-based approach, the artist is encouraged to complete the application in collaboration with the co-commissioner. However, the artist should always be the lead and have full agency over the application process.
- Funds can support a variety of artist, technician, and collaborator fees for the development of the work. **Funds cannot, however, support artists' fees for the presentation of a work—fees for the presentation of the work are a separate responsibility of the co-commissioners as stated in the Creation Fund Letter of Agreement.** Funds can be used for work-in-progress showings, rehearsals, community development, and additional artistic/technical staff as needed.
- Funds can support development activity before, during, or after the first presentation of the work.
- Funds can support activity happening before, during, or after the Development Application, but please try to apply at least 60 days in advance of activities when possible.
- Only projects that have completed the Creation Fund Orientation Call are eligible to apply.

- Creation Fund artists can only access Development Funds once per Creation Fund project.
- Artists can access Development Funds for three years following the Creation Fund award date.
- Matches are not required
- In alignment with NPN's commitment to creating an arts sector rooted in justice, we are committed to ensuring workspaces free of racism, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, misogyny, classism, or other bias. Participants in NPN-funded activity are expected to honor this ethic.

## Application Tips

- NPN is flexible and committed to funding projects regardless of timeline shifts that may occur.
- **Keep it clear and simple!** We don't judge applications on grantsmanship, so use plain language and don't feel the need to fill up all the spaces.
- **The application should be approached like a plan instead of a competitive application.** This is a tool for you to use as you are planning the next phase of your project.
- When completing the plan, **focus the request—narrative, timeline, and budget—on the development phase of the project.** These funds are meant to build on Creation Funds.
- Review [Part 3: Application Guide](#) to plan and gather materials for the online application.
- If working with a co-commissioner using the team-based approach, be sure to **give yourself enough time** to build the project, timeline, and budget together, as well as **invite the co-commissioner to collaborate** on the application through NPN's online grantmaking system.
- Applicants may upload a project budget and timeline using the template provided or use their own. If you are applying as a team-based project and using your own project budget and timeline, please differentiate between artists and co-commissioner's activities, costs, and contributions.

## Selection Criteria

NPN staff will review applications for fit, using the criteria below. If the application does not fit the following criteria, staff will reach out to artists to reconfigure the project.

- **Appropriateness:** The project described is supporting the development phase of the work. Funding expands support provided by the Creation Fund. Funding does not cover final presentation costs. Fees paid to artists and/or community collaborators are equitable.
- **Potential Impact:** The project has the potential to deepen relationships, create pathways to new opportunities, or strengthen the overall success of the work.
- **Feasibility:** The artist (and co-commissioners in the case of team-based applications) has the existing relationships and/or a plan to cultivate new relationships, the capacity, and a clear plan (and budget) to carry out the project.

## Technical Support

NPN Staff are available and at your service to field any questions or eligibility concerns. Please feel free to contact Stanlyn Brevé, National Programs Director, to set up a call to brainstorm possible ideas, discuss which approach might best fit your project, or anything else!

**Stanlyn Brevé** (she/her), Director of National Programs  
 general inquiries, eligibility, and brainstorming  
 Email: [stanlyn@nnpweb.org](mailto:stanlyn@nnpweb.org)  
 Phone: 504.595.8008 x704

**Alec De León** (he/him), National Programs Senior Specialist  
 application tech, agreement processing, and payments  
 Email: [alec@nnpweb.org](mailto:alec@nnpweb.org)  
 Phone: 504.595.8008 x709

**Nick Hüster** (he/him), National Programs Manager  
 application tech, agreement processing, and payments  
 Email: [nick@nnpweb.org](mailto:nick@nnpweb.org)  
 Phone: 317.437.3713

**National Performance Network (NPN)**  
 P.O. Box 56698  
 New Orleans, LA 70156-6698  
 Phone: 504.595.8008 ext. 704  
 Time zone: Central  
<http://www.nnpweb.org>

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“The Development Fund gave us time. With a project as ambitious as ALAXSXA | ALASKA—in its sprawling geography, intensive cross-cultural collaboration, rich and layered content, and interdisciplinary nature—the opportunity to develop this project with a developmental residency with (co-commissioner) Bunnell Street Arts Center was vital. We were able to communicate with our trusted colleague co-commissioners for feedback and ongoing development of the work we were developing.”

—Artist Bruce Allardice of Ping Chong & Company

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## Part 3: Application Guide

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- **Online Application Link:**  
<https://npnetwork.smartsimple.com>

### Section 1: Artist Instructions

The Artist **must begin the application.**

If you have selected the “Team-based” project approach, the Artist will invite the Co-Commissioner to participate in the application once the draft application has been created. Instructions for Co-Commissioners are in [Section 2: Co-Commissioner Instructions](#).

A Team-based application cannot be submitted without the Co-Commissioner's input, so please factor that into your submission timeframe. If you have selected the “Team-based” project approach, please share this application guide with the Co-Commissioner.

### Setting up an Account & Signing In

If you already have an account in our system, go to <https://npnetwork.smartsimple.com> in your web browser to login.

If you do not already have an account in our system, go to <https://npnetwork.smartsimple.com> in your web browser and click on the “Register” button to set up an account.

New to the System?

Register

As an artist, you will be asked to apply as a “Individual Artist” or a “Collaboration of multiple artists.” Click on each option to see which one is right for you. Then fill out and submit your information. Then, check your email account to login using the link provided. You will be prompted to create a password.

## Starting a Development Fund Application

Once you have set up your account or signed in you can click on the “Artist Home” link to return to the dashboard. Under “My Applications” select the “Funding Opportunities” button.

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### Funding Opportunities

You can begin the application and download the Guidelines and Sample Timeline & Budget forms here.

Apply Now

Program Guidelines

Sample Timeline & Budget

## Section 2: Co-Commissioner Instructions

### Co-Commissioner: Invitation to Collaborate

As a participant in this Development Fund project, you receive an email invitation to collaborate on the application. The application cannot be submitted without your participation. Please check your email to accept the invitation.

If you do not have an account with our grants management system, you will receive an email with steps to create a password.

If you already have an account with our grants management system, you can visit <https://npnetwork.smartsimple.com> in your web browser to login.



# Co-Commissioner: Collaborating on the Application

Once you have created your profile in the system, go to the Dashboard or “Grantee Home.” There you will click on “Draft Applications” to complete your portions of the Development Fund application.

## 1

### Draft Applications

Open the draft application that was begun by the artist and go to the **Project Information Tab**. There you will fill out the **Co-Commissioner’s Project Narrative** and collaborate on the **Project Timeline & Budget**.

- **Co-Commissioner’s Project Narrative** (*for team-based projects only*)

Please describe in detail how the funds will be used. How will the Co-commissioner contribute to the development phase of the work? How does the Co-commissioner demonstrate the commitment and resources (capacity, relationships, finances, etc.) to support the development of the work? How will the funds increase the Co-commissioner’s capacity to develop work? How will the project deepen relationships and impact the overall success of the work?

500-word limit

- **Project Timeline & Budget** – *to be completed in collaboration with the artist*

Upload a project timeline and budget. You may use the template provided or create your own. If you are using your own project budget, make sure to include all project expenses and income, indicate if income is pending or confirmed, and include this request (including co-commissioners matches). There is no minimum income—projects will not be judged on funds raised.


Once you have completed your information, press the Save Draft button. This will allow the Artist to have final review of the application and submit it when they are ready.



## Section 3: Application Walkthrough and Questions

Please review [Part 2: Guidelines](#) prior to beginning your application. When filling out the application, make sure to focus the plan—narrative, timeline, and budget—on the development phase of the project. These funds are meant to build on Creation Funds.

Keep it clear and simple! Remember, all applicants will receive an award. Approach this application like a planning tool. We don't judge applications on grantsmanship, so use plain language and don't feel the need to fill up all the spaces.

 Quick Tip: Always “Save Draft” before beginning your application.

Save Draft

✓ Submit

Withdraw

At any point, you can save your work and return to it later by finding it in the dashboard under the “Draft Applications” button.

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Draft Applications

### Tab One: Eligibility

#### Have you received a NPN Creation Fund Award in the past 3 years?

If not, you are ineligible for this award. If you are unsure, please contact [nick@npnweb.org](mailto:nick@npnweb.org) for clarification.

- Yes - You are eligible, please save draft & continue
- No - You are ineligible, please withdraw your application

### Tab Two: Applicant Information

#### Applicant Info

- Enter the name of the primary contact for this application.

- Enter the title of the primary contact for this application.
- Enter the email address of the primary contact for this application.

## **Tab Three: Artist/Company Information**

### **Artist/Company Information**

This information will auto-populate from the Artist who began the application.

- Preferred Full Name
- Preferred Pronouns
- Professional Title
- Artist Website
- Phone
- Email
- Mailing Address

### **Artist/Company/Collective Name**

If awarded, this is how you will be listed/credited publicly. Please share your artist or company name as you would like it to be referred to. If you are applying as an artist who goes by a stage name or as part of a company or collective, input that name.

### **Collaborating Artists / Collectives / Ensembles**

Are you applying with collaborators, an ensemble, or a collective?

- Yes
- No

### **Collaborating Artists**

In the case of collaborations with more than one Primary Generative Artist, please click the button below to add their contact information.

- Organization Name
- Primary Contact
- Title/Role
- Phone

- Email
- Mailing Address

## Lead Artist Demographics

NPN collects demographic data about artist recipients of NPN funding to understand how our support aligns with [our mission](#) of advancing racial and cultural justice, the redistribution of wealth, and contributes to the diversity of the arts sector. Likewise, as a network and service organization, we are responsible for reporting data to our funders.

The categories and definitions below expand upon [Candid's Philanthropy Classification System](#). As a movement builder that advocates for systems change, we have adapted Candid's Classification system to better reflect NPN's constituents and our own needs.

While we recognize that some of this data may seem personal, we ask that you respond to the best of your ability. We also acknowledge that the terminology we use is imperfect and constantly evolving. We actively strive to update our demographic terminology as new information becomes available. If you have any questions, recommendations, or issues please contact Programs Manager Nick Hüster at [nick@nnpweb.org](mailto:nick@nnpweb.org).

### Race and Ethnicity

**Do you identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and/or Peoples of Color)?**

- Yes
- No

**Please indicate how you identify:**

You may select multiple options.

- Black, African-American, or African descent
- Asian-American, Pacific Islander, or Asian descent
- European descent
- Indigenous, Native, Native-American, or First Nations peoples
- Latinx/Latine, Latin-American, Central or South-American descent
- Southwest Asian or North African descent
- Multiracial peoples

**If you'd like to share more details about specific race, ethnic, national groups, and tribal/band affiliations with which you identify (for example: African American, Lakota/Dakota, Iranian and Azeri/Persian, Quechua, Mexican, Singaporean, Honduran and Garifuna, etc.), please do:**

- [empty text field for additional details]

## **Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation**

### **Gender Identity**

Do you identify as:

- Woman
- Man
- Gender non-conforming, non-binary or two-spirit
- Intersex
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe

### **Do you identify as transgender, nonbinary, or gender nonconforming?**

text for spacing

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe

### **If you would like to self-describe your gender identity, please do:**

text for spacing

- [empty text field for additional details]

### **Sexual Orientation**

Do you identify as LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, plus)?

- Yes
- No

- Prefer not to say

## **Disability and Access**

**Do you consider yourself a member of the disability and/or deaf community?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer Not to Say

**If you'd like to share more details, please do:**

- [empty text field for additional details]

**Do you have specific mobility or access requirements, or require assistance such as a signer, aide, or personal caregiver?**

This information helps us to plan for more funding towards engagements where additional mobility or access requirements are needed.

- [empty text field for additional details]

## **Geographic Demographics**

**Geographic Demographics - You live in an area that is:**

text for spacing

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Tribal
- Geographically Isolated

## **Collaborating Artists/Ensembles and Collective Members' Demographics**

Please input the number of each artist/company member/collaborator (including the lead artist) that identify as the following. Projects in early stages of development may not have this information.

**Number of artists / tech participating:**

The number of artists and techs working on this project.

(Development Fund Activity only. Should match the demographics below)

## **Race and Ethnicity**

**How many artists/company members/collaborators identify as the following?**

- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and/or Peoples of Color)
- Black, African-American, or African descent
- Asian-American, Pacific Islander, or Asian descent
- European descent
- Indigenous, Native, Native-American, or First Nations peoples
- Latinx/Latine, Latin-American, Central or South-American descent
- Southwest Asian or North African descent
- Multiracial peoples

**If you'd like to share more details about specific race, ethnic, national groups, and tribal/band affiliations (for example: African American, Lakota/Dakota, Iranian and Azeri/Persian, Quechua, Mexican, Singaporean, Honduran and Garifuna, etc.), please do:**

- [empty text field for additional details]

## **Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation**

**How many artists/company members/collaborators identify as the following?**

text for spacing

- Women
- Men
- Trans
- Gender non-conforming/non-binary
- Intersex
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe

**If they prefer to self-describe their gender identity, please do so here:**

- [empty field for description]

### **Sexual Orientation**

How many artists/company members/collaborators identify as the following?

- LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, plus)
- Heterosexual
- Prefer not to say

### **Disability & Access**

**How many artists/company members/collaborators consider themselves a member of the disability and/or deaf community?**

text for spacing

- [empty text field]

**If you'd like to share more details, please do:**

- [empty text field]

**Do any participants have specific mobility or access requirements, or require assistance such as a signer, aide, cognitive navigator, or personal care-partner?**

This information helps us to plan for more funding towards engagements where additional mobility or access requirements are needed.

### **Geographic Demographics**

**How many artists/company members/collaborators live in an area that is:**

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Tribal
- Geographically Isolated



💡 Quick Tip: Save your work! Whenever uploading attachments or entering large amounts of text, etc., always “Save Draft” afterwards.

Save Draft

✓ Submit

Withdraw

## Tab Four: Project Information

### Project Approach

#### Type of Approach

- **Team-based:** The artist may apply for co-located funds up to \$10,000 on behalf of the artist and a co-commissioner of the artist's choosing. Funds are split between the co-commissioner and the artist.
- **Artist only:** The artist or company applies for up to \$5,000 in support. This approach is for artists whose projects do not need additional developmental support from their co-commissioner(s).

### Project Information

#### Project Title

- [empty text field]

#### Creation Fund Award ID

Please enter the Award ID# of your Creation Fund Award. Tip: Please enter the Award ID# of your Creation Fund Award. This will either be C\*\*\*\* or \*\*\*\*-\*\*\*\* depending on your award cycle.

#### Project Start Date

Date of first activity that development funds will be used for

#### Project End Date

Date of last activity that development funds will be used for

#### Brief Project Summary

Tell us very briefly about the work. Keep it simple and concise, no more

than a couple sentences. If the project is awarded, we may use this summary to promote the project. Please make sure this is how you want the project represented.

- [empty text field]

Tell us very briefly about the development fund project. **Please do not provide a description of the Creation Fund work.**

- [empty text field]

## **Upload a recent photo that is representative of the Artist/Company**

The application will not be judged on this photo. If the project is awarded we may use this photo to promote the award in the press release and on the website. (Limit one upload. Allowed file types: jpg, png, tif, or gif. Maximum file size: 2 GB.)

### **Photo credit for attached photo**

Please include the names of people in the photo, the work's title (or activity), and photo credit to the photographer. Example:

*XYZ Dance Company performing "Project 123" at Green Cloud Theater in Marathon, TX (2024). Photo: Carlos Enpienne Photography.*

### **Image description/Alt text for attached photo**

Please include an image description of the photo which will be included with the credit for people with a vision impairment or low vision. Briefly describe what can be seen in the image, starting with the most prominent or important thing in it. If there's no easy place to begin, go left to right. Include text in "quotation marks," but don't repeat any info shared in the caption. Describe prominent physical features of people, including physical disabilities. Do not assume the gender of people in the photo, only use gendered pronouns if you know them. Skin tone should be described so as not to censor visual information—we recommend using emoji terms: light skinned, medium-light skinned, medium skinned, medium-dark skinned, dark skinned. When ethnicity is known, this can be included (e.g., Asian American, Black, Latine/o/a/x).

Example:

*A medium-skinned man mid-movement dancing. His feet graze the ground, arched in movement, arms thrown back over his head touching the ground, almost in a backbend. He is wearing simple pants and a crown and bracelets on both wrists made of green leaves.*

100-word limit

## **Project Narrative**

Please note that decisions will not be based on language, grammar, or writing. There are two options for responding to project narrative. You may respond via text by completing the following questions or paste a link with your audio and/or video responses (YouTube, Soundcloud, etc).

### **Project Narrative**

Please describe in detail how the funds will be used. What does the work need to be fully realized? How will development funds help meet these needs? How will the project deepen relationships, create pathways to new opportunities, and impact the overall success of the work? Why is this the right time in the life of the work for this project? If working with collaborators and/or community members, please describe your relationships and history with collaborators/community members.

500-word limit

### **Please describe your relationship with the co-commissioner *(for team-based projects only)***

- [empty text field]

### **Why did you choose to work with the Co-commissioner? What is your history with the co-commissioner?**

200-word limit

### **Co-Commissioners Project Narrative (for team-based projects only; to be completed by the Co-commissioner)**

Please describe in detail how the funds will be used. How will the Co-commissioner contribute to the development phase of the work? How does the Co-commissioner demonstrate the commitment and resources (capacity, relationships, finances, etc.) to support the development of the work? How will the funds increase the Co-commissioner's capacity to develop work? How will the project deepen relationships and impact the overall success of the work?

500-word limit

## **Project Timeline & Budget**

### **Timeline & Budget**

Upload a project timeline and budget. You may use the template provided

or create your own. If you are using your own project budget, make sure to include all project expenses and income, indicate if income is pending or confirmed, and include this request (including co-commissioners matches). There is no minimum income- projects will not be judged on funds raised. If applying as a “team” with a co-commissioner, the budget should also reflect co-commissioners costs.

Please Note: Must "Save Draft" before and after uploading Timeline & Budget.

### **Total Project Budget**

For development costs only, please do not include the entire project budget for creation, development and presentation costs. Should match the total in the uploaded budget.

### **Total Requested Amount:**


Up to \$10,000 for Team-based Projects, Up to \$5,000 for Artist Only Projects

### **Budget Narrative (Optional)**

If needed, use the space below to explain any discrepancies in the uploaded budget.

500-word limit

## **Tab 5: Co-Commissioner Information (Team-Based Applications Only)**

 Quick Tip: Please leave time in the process for this step! Do not wait until the day the application is due to invite the co-commissioner.

If you have selected the “Team-based” project approach you will see a tab called “Co-Commissioner Information.” A Team-based application cannot be submitted without the Co-Commissioner's input, so please factor that into your submission timeframe. The co-commissioner will be required to create a profile in the system, if they have not done so already.



Press the blue “plus” button to add the Co-Commissioner. When you enter the Co-Commissioner’s name, email address and role (“Co-Commissioner DevFund”), you may need to scroll down slightly to see the “Save” and “Invite” buttons. “Invite” the Co-Commissioner and they will get an email to participate in the application. It usually takes a few minutes for the system to send the invitation, so don’t worry if they don’t get the invitation immediately.

Please share **Section 5: Co-Commissioner Instructions** with your Co-Commissioner.

## Co-Commissioner Information

The Co-Commissioner information below will populate below if the Co-Commissioner accepts the invitation and creates a profile in the system.

- Organization:
- Primary Contact:
- Title:
- Phone:
- Email:
- Mailing Address:

## Tab 6: Other Information

### Website & Social Media

If available, you can share links to the website, Facebook page, Instagram and other social media handles for the artist, project, or organization. The application will not be judged on these links. These may be used to help share the news if your application is awarded.

Please input full URLs including "https://". For example:

- <https://www.facebook.com/ArtistFacebook>
- <https://www.instagram.com/ArtistInstagram>

- **Website**
- **Facebook**
- **Instagram**
- **Twitter**
- **Other Social Media**

## Would you like to share anything else with NPN?

- [empty text field]

## Submitting Your Application

It is up to the Artist to review and submit the application. Simply press the Submit button to submit your application. If any of the required information has not been provided, you will see a red error message that will list which information or item is missing.

 Submission failed due to the following:

You will also see specific error messages for each item that is missing.


 Brief Project Summary cannot be empty. 

Once all the information is complete press the Submit button. You will receive an email with a PDF of your submitted application. That's it! You're done!

Save Draft

 Submit

Withdraw

 **Quick Tip:** If you make a mistake before applying and want to start fresh, you can always select the “Withdraw” button to delete your draft application. However, this will delete all of your draft information and you will no longer have access to it!