



Creative Administration Research Program Frequently Asked Questions

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Creative Administration Research Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Creative Administration Research (CAR) program?

Challenging the dance ecosystem to think beyond the boundaries of known, traditional business models, CAR is a national think tank of 18 dance Artist Teams designed to investigate alternative administrative practices in support of their discrete artistic visions. NCCAkron believes there isn't one way of making dances, so there should not be one way of doing arts administration either. The program invites Artists and a curated [Thought Partner](#) to develop and research administrative experiments that support the Artist's own artistic point of view, rather than accept or reinforce the one size fits all approach that best practices imply.

2. How are CAR Artists selected?

Up until the Open Application opportunity, CAR Artists were curated based on having an already established relationship with NCCAkron and/or geographic thinking. NCCAkron develops all programming with the following curatorial values in mind:

NATIONAL IMPRINT

- Reach geographically
- Identify and cultivate artists with significant promise
- Advocate for dance and the creative process as a more central part of U.S. culture
- Operate from abundance instead of scarcity

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

- Foster dialogue
- Provide opportunities of proximity for dance stakeholders
- Disrupt systems and processes
- Aggregate resources
- Invest longitudinally
- Experiment

The Open Application invites dance Artists to submit for review by the Artist Selection Committee made up of current CAR Artists and Thought Partners.

Eligible artists are based in the United States. Artists operating under a variety of tax models such as 501c3 incorporation, fiscal sponsorship, LLC, etc are all welcome to apply.

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3. What activities are required to participate in if I am selected for the CAR program?

***Required participation.** [For additional details on sponsored travel and activities, jump to this question.](#)

- Virtual Orientation with Akron cohort of arts leaders (May 2022)
- In-person Summit Convening in Akron (June 2-4, 2022)
- Virtual Investigative Retreat (est 6 hours, Summer 2022)*
- In-person Investigative Retreat in Akron (est 4-5 days, Winter/Spring 2023)*
- In-person Summit Convening in Akron (June 2023)*
- 4 accountability meetings with curated Thought Partner throughout the year at mutually agreed upon dates/times*

4. What am I expected to produce as part of this program?

NCCAkron envisions this work to be the sort of thinking and activities that administrative leaders do as part of ongoing general operation. Since most artists operate on a project-basis and haven't had access to gen op funds, this is one way to begin incorporating those practices. While there is no product expected to be developed from this work, Artists are encouraged to employ short and long-term administrative experiments as well as developing more traditional tools such as a Strategic Plan at their own discretion. Artists are expected to complete all paperwork and survey requests in a timely manner to fulfill think tank participation.

5. Am I able to invite others to participate in these activities?

Artists are encouraged to include other stakeholders - board, advisors, dancers, contractors - from their administrative operations in this work. If available NCCAkron grant funds cannot subsidize travel for all, we will work with the Artist to engage others virtually and/or with the Artist to leverage NCCAkron's commitment to raise additional professional development and capacity building funds.

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6. Am I being compensated for my CAR activities and travel?

CAR Artist stipends are budgeted at \$7,000 and will be made in two parts during FY23 (July-June). Separate funds have been set aside to compensate your Thought Partner. These funds should be considered general operating support. You may use them to pay yourself for time spent in CAR activities, other individuals under your employ/contract, or for operating expenses as part of your work (e.g. pay an additional \$1K to each of your contract team; contract a new addition to your operation, use funds to pay themselves for administrative activities; and/or purchase a computer or similar software/equipment for operational purposes).

For travel and hospitality expenses related to CAR activities requiring in-person participation, NCCAkron will also arrange and cover Akron housing expenses directly with vendors on behalf of the Artist. The Artist will directly receive funds to cover transportation and per diem costs.

7. What is a Thought Partner?

The Artist and Thought Partner relationship is envisioned to be reciprocal in nature, sharing information and learning. As Artists explore their creative administration practices, Thought Partners aim to meet Artists “where they are.” As an accountability buddy, Thought Partners participate in Investigative Retreat and Summit Convening activities, carrying those shared experiences forward as well as introducing and challenging the Artist’s thinking. Thought Partners are additional sounding boards to employ administrative experiments and continuous reflection on the Artist’s business practices. Current Thought Partners include arts administrators, artists, funders, presenters, and others who work inside as well as outside the dance field.

8. How are Thought Partners selected?

Thought Partners are identified through participation in NCCAkron’s CAR Work-in-Process Series of discussions to reflect and imagine a 21st century dance ecosystem. Artists are asked to recommend Thought Partners who are then invited to participate in the CAR WiP process. NCCAkron curates a selection of potential

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Thought Partners from the pool of participants for possible pairings relative to choreographers stated interests and desires. Artists make final selections from that short list of 3 - 4 names and bios. The paired Thought Partner provides additional accountability and acts as a sounding board in between Investigative Retreats. [Revisit "What is a Thought Partner?"](#) for more information about the role in this program, if need be.

If you are interested in becoming a Thought Partner or would like to nominate someone, sign up to receive more information about the upcoming CAR WiP Series here: <https://forms.gle/n5Skgc87r8unjbPE9>.

9. What is an Investigative Retreat?

Investigative Retreats provide time and space to:

- Reflect on the Artist's body of work and project long-term artistic goals;
- Examine critical pain points across operations;
- Reconsider current habits and practices; and
- Identify possible administrative experiments.

10. Because of COVID, will the Investigative Retreat or Summit Convening be virtual?

In May 2022, selected Artists will be invited to participate in an optional Virtual Orientation. In June 2022, selected Artists will be invited to participate in an optional in-person Summit Convening with all of the current CAR Artist Teams. The first required activity will be a virtual Investigative Retreat in the Summer of 2022. The next required activity is an in-person Investigative Retreat in Akron in Winter/Spring 2023 and the final in-person Summit Convening with all current CAR Artist Teams in June 2023.

In-person activities at NCCAkron spaces on The University of Akron campus require a signed COVID liability waiver by each participating individual with proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test 24-hours prior to arrival. We are closely monitoring COVID and making adaptations or employing additional strategies to

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make it a safe environment for all participants and increasing virtual offerings where possible.

11. What does NCCAkron envision as the expected outcome for the CAR program?

NCCAkron will document and share discoveries from this work through a publishing partnership with The University of Akron Press. Named a series editor by the UA Press in 2020, NCCAkron plans to develop and publish a book of case studies highlighting the labor and leadership of choreographers and dance organizations working today, to serve as a dance and arts administration textbook of tomorrow. Tonya Lockyer has been named as the Editor of this book. Invited Artists and Contributors are selected and paid separately for this work.

12. What experience or criteria would the Artist Selection committee like to see in an application?

CAR Artists show an openness to information sharing, learning, and challenging models. NCCAkron values the following in both Artists and Thought Partners:

- Present, open minded, and exploratory spirit
- Ongoing introspection, questioning and research
- Generosity, openness to shifting norms
- Challenge with the hope of sparking new ideas
- Thoughtful listening and responsiveness
- Hyperagency (the creation of new standards and resources benefitting the individual and the field-at-large)

13. Where can I learn more about the CAR program?

For more information, visit nccakron.org/creativeadminresearch.

For additional questions, sign up for an info session with Programs Manager, Kat Wentz, here: calendly.com/kat-wentz/office-hours.

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Additionally, you can learn more about CAR from the following resources:

NCCAkron Press Releases

[The National Center for Choreography at The University of Akron Receives \\$750,000 from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for Creative Administration Research: Exploring More Creative Practices in the Business of Dance](#)

Outside Media Coverage

[Let's Ditch "Best Practices" - Dance Magazine, September 2021](#)

[Olympic Dance, "Black Swan" at 10, and Christy Bolingbroke - The Dance Edit](#)

[Are Arts Administration "Best Practices" Really Working? - Dance Business Weekly](#)