

FY27 CAMD Creative Catalyst Seed Grant Guidelines (Phase 1 & 2)

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027

	Phase 1	Phase 2
Call for proposals opens	September 15, 2026	December 1, 2026
Applications to serve as reviewer due	--	December 15, 2026 Apply to review
Proposals due	October 21, 2026 Phase 1 Application	February 1, 2027 Phase 2 Application
Award notifications	Mid-November 2026	Mid-April 2027
Period of performance	December 2026 – June 2027	July 2027 – June 2028
Funding amount	Up to \$5000	Up to \$30,000

Overview

The goal of this program is to support new projects that bridge disciplines and push the boundaries of traditional research paradigms. The program aims to catalyze research and creative work that will make substantial creative contributions and to advance socially beneficial outcomes, demonstrating CAMD's capacity for transformative leadership in research and creative practice. Funding for the Creative Catalyst Seed Grant program is provided by donor contributions. We invite innovative proposals aligned with CAMD strategic research priorities, including, but not limited to, humanistic AI, health and wellbeing, embodied technology, and sustainability and resilience. We encourage partnerships with other colleges and with CAMD's three Centers (Center for the Arts, Center for Design, Center for Transformative Media), for example organizing workshops and public-facing events in coordination with a CAMD Center, as well as partnerships that leverage Northeastern's global campus network. We are particularly interested in funding research ideas that lead to successful external funding and partnerships, and creative ideas that engage broad and diverse constituencies.

Special Focus for FY27: AI & Performance

Proposals focusing on any theme or topic are welcome. This year we especially encourage proposals that explore the intersection of artificial intelligence and performance, broadly defined. This includes theatre, music, dance, media art, performance design, and other embodied and time-based practices, as well as performance in team dynamics and collaboration, live teaching and learning, and engagement in healthcare and clinical settings. We are interested in work that examines how AI systems can extend, disrupt, or collaborate in performance across these settings, whether through generative tools for composition and choreography, machine learning applied to gesture and motion, AI-driven responsive environments that use architectural and spatial sensor data to shape a space in real time, human-AI co-performance, AI-mediated support in classrooms or care settings, or critical and historical inquiry into what AI means for performers, practitioners, and audiences.

Program Phases

The Creative Catalyst Seed Grant program will proceed in two phases that support a pathway from initial collaboration and exploration to robust proof-of-concept development, preparing exceptional projects for major external funding opportunities.

Phase 1 Planning and Pilot grants support interdisciplinary team formation, foundation building, and pilot investigation activities with funding of up to \$5,000 to be spent by the end of FY27. Budget requests smaller than \$5,000 are encouraged.

Phase 2 Proof of Concept grants fund work that is to be completed in FY28 (July 2027 – June 2028). Phase 1 funding is not required for Phase 2 eligibility. Phase 2 Creative Catalyst Seed Grant applicants may request up to \$30,000.

Eligibility

All full-time faculty with appointments in CAMD are eligible. Fixed term (visiting appointment) faculty are eligible provided they will be appointed for the grant's full period of performance. Additional collaborators from CAMD and other colleges at Northeastern are encouraged, as are collaborators from other institutions, including community-based organizations. Proposals led by faculty who have not previously received internal funding will be prioritized.

Phase 1 Proposal Format

Phase 1 proposals should include all section headings required for Phase 2 proposals (see below) but are limited to 4 single-spaced pages (12pt font).

Phase 2 Proposal Format

Phase 2 proposals may be up to 7 single-spaced pages (12pt font) and should include the following sections:

1. Vision for Impact

Describe the research questions, overarching societal needs and/or knowledge gaps that this proposal addresses. Explain how the proposed work is innovative, including how it represents a novel synthesis of expertise or research approaches from different CAMD disciplines.

2. Team Composition

Identify the members of the team and describe how their respective areas of expertise will contribute to the project.

3. Approach

Describe the proposed research methodology or creative approach, including each team member's role in the project. It may be beneficial to include a list of key activities or milestones for the team. If applicable, discuss Phase 1 Creative Catalyst seed grant activities completed and in progress thus far.

4. Expected Outcomes

What are the expected outcomes of this project? How will the project contribute to new scientific knowledge, creative output, and/or societal benefits? Outline a specific plan for pursuing follow-on funding from external sponsors.

5. Analysis of Competition

Describe how this project builds on the expertise of the research team. How will this project be distinctive from other similar work happening at different institutions? Why is this research team well suited to advance scientific understanding and/or societal contributions in this area? How will this project establish CAMD as a leader in interdisciplinary research?

6. Budget and Budget Justification

Provide a simple budget table and brief (~1 sentence) description of each line item to justify the requested expenses.

Budget Guidelines

Phase 2 applicants may request up to \$30,000 funding support to be used for equipment, travel, workshops, research subject payments, participant support costs, CAMD student research assistants, and summer salary support for CAMD faculty. Indirect costs should not be included. Fringe rates for any employees' time on the project should be included. We encourage Phase 2 applicants to work with CAMD's research administration team to prepare their proposal budget.

Deliverables

In addition to delivering the outcomes described in the proposal, awardees should prepare to share research findings, creative outcomes, and work completed and in progress at the end of the grant cycle and for 3 years following the award. Portions of these reports will be shared with CAMD donors and will be used in internal and external CAMD communications. The CAMD Dean's Office expects that all

teams supported with Phase 2 grants will pursue external funding opportunities to support continuing collaboration and research impacts.

Review Criteria

Phase 1 applications will be reviewed by CAMD Dean's Office Staff, Assistant and Associate Deans, and leadership of CAMD's Centers. Phase 2 applications will be reviewed by an assembled committee of faculty members from all CAMD departments in addition to Staff and Assistant and Associate Deans, who will make a recommendation to the Dean using the following three criteria:

1. **Approach: Innovation and Feasibility (40%):** Originality of approach and potential for breakthrough insights; realistic timeline and approach; budget is consistent with project aims and activities
2. **Interdisciplinary Team Composition (30%):** Genuine synthesis of different fields, with emphasis on new and novel collaborations; Complementary expertise and demonstrated commitment to collaboration; cross-network and community-based collaboration is a plus
3. **Creative Leadership Potential (30%):** Evidence of capacity CAMD-led innovation with high probability of distinction and/or competitive advantage in external funding competitions

Call for Creative Catalyst Phase 2 Peer Reviewers

The CAMD Dean's Office invites faculty at any career stage to serve as reviewers for the Phase 2 Creative Catalyst seed grant program. We are interested in assembling a large review panel with representation from the CAMD Centers as well as all six of CAMD's academic units to ensure that all proposals are reviewed by disciplinary experts. This is an opportunity to contribute your expertise and directly inform decisions about which innovative proposals receive support, helping to advance cutting-edge interdisciplinary work and strengthen CAMD's research profile. Reviewers will gain deeper knowledge of colleagues' work and play an important role in ensuring a rigorous and transparent merit-based review process to catalyze new partnerships and develop creative ideas. In February 2027, reviewers should prepare to devote 7- 10 hours to review colleagues' proposals and commit to attending one 1-hour review panel meeting. We encourage Creative Catalyst seed grant applicants to also serve as reviewers and will arrange review panels to avoid any direct conflicts of interest. Please apply to serve as a reviewer by **Friday, December 15, 2026**. [Apply here](#).