

About this Sample Application

This sample application is **entirely fictional**. The artist, project, and supporting materials were created solely for educational purposes and do **not** represent a real applicant, funded project, or actual review outcome.

The purpose of this sample is to help applicants understand **what a strong Career Development Grant application looks like** under the current guidelines. It is designed to illustrate how responses can be clearly written, well-aligned with program goals, and effectively connected across sections of the application.

Applicants should use this example as a **guide—not a template**. There is no single “correct” way to apply, and panelists do not expect applications to follow a specific style, format, or artistic discipline.

Why This Sample Scores Highly

This example demonstrates:

- A **clear artistic identity** and strong alignment between career stage and proposed activities
- **Specific, realistic goals** appropriate for a Career Development Grant
- A **strong connection** between work samples, narratives, and artistic goals
- A **feasible plan** that clearly supports artistic and professional growth

Together, these elements model what panelists look for when reviewing **high-quality Career Development Grant applications**.

Artist Overview

Overview Instructions

All applicants must answer the narrative questions. You may either write your answers in the form (recommended length: 1,000–1,500 characters per question) or upload one document, no more than one page, that responds to all the same prompts. Be sure to stay within the character limits.

Overview Questions

Artist Bio (limit 1,500 characters)

Provide a brief biography describing your background, influences, and major achievements or experiences as an artist.

Jesse “JD” Danner is a musician and songwriter based in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Raised in eastern South Dakota, JD developed an early connection to music shaped by long drives, small towns, and the rhythms of rural life. He earned a B.A. in Music from the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities, where he spent a decade performing in punk and DIY bands throughout the region.

After returning to South Dakota in 2015, JD founded Undercurrent of Animosity, a four-piece band that blends punk roots with modern rockabilly energy. His songwriting draws from lived experience—capturing humor, grit, and storytelling rooted in place. Over the past fifteen years, JD has written, performed, and recorded original music across South Dakota and the Upper Midwest, appearing at community festivals, regional showcases, and local venues.

In addition to performing, JD is committed to strengthening South Dakota’s independent music scene through mentorship, collaboration, and community-based performances that make original music accessible and relevant to local audiences.

Artist Statement (limit 2,000 characters)

Describe your artistic practice—what you create, why you create it, and how your work reflects your personal or cultural perspective. Panelists evaluate clarity of artistic identity and connection between your ideas and your work.

My work begins with place. Growing up in eastern South Dakota taught me to listen closely—to the quiet, the repetition, and the small details that make everyday life meaningful. That sense of rhythm carries through my songwriting, where I focus on stories that feel familiar but often go unspoken.

I came up playing punk music because it valued honesty over polish. Over time, that raw energy evolved into a sound rooted in rockabilly—still fast and loud, but more narrative and reflective. My songs pull from real moments: conversations overheard at a bar, the tension between staying and leaving, and the humor that keeps people grounded through long winters and hard years.

My creative process is collaborative and community-driven. I write and perform with musicians who understand this place and its pace, often working in informal spaces like garages, basements, and local bars. Those environments shape the sound as much as the lyrics do.

I create music because I believe songs help people recognize themselves and their communities. My goal is to continue building work that feels rooted in South Dakota while reaching audiences beyond it—music that proves meaningful, high-quality art can come from anywhere.

Proposal Narrative

Narrative Instructions

Your answers should match the type of grant you chose. If you need a reminder, look at the box you checked on page one of the application.

Answer the following narrative questions with concise, clear responses or upload one document, no more than one page, that addresses the same prompts. You may either write your answers in the form or upload one document, no more than one page, that responds to all the same prompts. Be sure to stay within the character limits.

Panelists evaluate how clearly you connect your proposal to your artistic goals and demonstrate commitment to your practice.

Narrative Questions

Artist Career Development (limit 2,500 characters (≈ 375–400 words)):

Describe how this grant will support your artistic growth. What specific goals or activities will you pursue? How will this opportunity advance your creative work or career development?

This Career Development Grant will support my growth as a recording artist by funding the professional recording and release of a short EP that reflects the current sound and direction of Undercurrent of Animosity. While the band and I have built a strong regional presence through live performance, we have not yet had the opportunity to invest in high-quality studio production that accurately represents our work.

Grant support will allow me to work with a local recording engineer to record, mix, and master three to four original songs. This process will strengthen my technical skills in studio recording and production, deepen my understanding of arrangement and sound design, and provide experience collaborating in a professional recording environment. The completed EP will serve as a critical professional tool—supporting future bookings, festival applications, and regional touring opportunities.

At this stage in my career, the next step is elevating how my work is documented and shared. A professionally produced recording will help bridge the gap between strong live performance and broader visibility. It will also position me to contribute more effectively to South Dakota's music ecosystem by representing local independent music at a higher professional standard.

Purpose, Process, and Impact

Narrative Instructions

All applicants must upload a Record of Work (1–2 pages).

All applicants must answer the narrative questions. You may either write your answers in the form (recommended length: 1,000–1,500 characters per question) or upload one document, no more than one page, that responds to the same prompts.

Record of Work (required)

Upload a 1–2-page document that shows your artistic experience. This can be a résumé, a CV, or another format that clearly lists your work, training, or accomplishments.

(SEE PAGES 9 – 10: Record of work)

Why This Résumé Works

This résumé is effective because it clearly supports the goals of a **Career Development Grant**. It helps panelists quickly understand the artist's **career stage, experience, and readiness for growth**, while staying concise and easy to scan.

Strong elements include:

- A **clear summary** that situates the artist's background and current focus
- Experience that shows **consistent artistic activity and follow-through**
- Evidence of **community engagement and contribution**, not just personal achievement
- Direct alignment between past work and the **next steps described in the application narrative**

Applicants should note that a strong résumé does not need to be long or exhaustive—its purpose is to reinforce the story told elsewhere in the application and demonstrate readiness for the opportunity.

Narrative Questions

Why Your Art Matters

Explain the broader purpose or impact of your work. How does your art engage, reflect, or contribute to your community or artistic field?

Panelists consider the alignment between your artistic purpose and your proposed activities, as well as your potential impact on the arts in South Dakota.

My work is rooted in the stories, rhythms, and people of eastern South Dakota. Much of my songwriting focuses on everyday experiences—work, community, humor, and survival—that reflect the realities of life in small towns and regional cities. Performing in local venues and festivals allows me to connect directly with audiences who may not often see their own lives reflected in contemporary music.

Through Undercurrent of Animosity, I've helped create spaces where original music brings people together. I frequently perform alongside emerging musicians and volunteer as a mentor for younger artists, sharing knowledge about songwriting, performance, and navigating local music spaces. These connections strengthen South Dakota's independent music community and encourage continued creative participation.

This project will expand that impact by producing a recording that represents the strength and authenticity of South Dakota-made music. Sharing this work more widely helps elevate local voices and demonstrates that meaningful, high-quality art is being created here.

Your Artistic Process and Skills

Describe your artistic process and the quality of your creative output. What skills, techniques, or approaches distinguish your work? Highlight past achievements, exhibitions, performances, publications, or recognition that demonstrate excellence.

Panelists evaluate artistic ability, skill, and quality of work samples relative to your career stage.

My artistic process centers on storytelling and collaboration. Songs often begin with a lyric, a rhythm, or a specific local moment, which I then develop through rehearsal and performance with my band. Live shows play a critical role in shaping the work—allowing songs to evolve through audience response and repeated refinement.

Technically, I bring a disciplined approach to songwriting, arrangement, and performance developed through years of live experience and independent recording. I work closely with fellow musicians to balance energy, structure, and narrative clarity. Past performances at regional festivals and community events reflect my ability to engage audiences and deliver consistent, high-quality work.

This project represents a key opportunity to translate that live energy into a polished studio recording. Working with a professional engineer will allow me to refine my production skills, improve sound quality, and better articulate my artistic voice through recorded work.

Share My Work

Instructions

- All applicants must include examples of past work—either your own or the work of artists involved in the project.
- If you don't include materials, your application will not be reviewed.
- You may include **up to 20 total items** (links, files, documents, images, etc.).

How to Submit Materials:

Option 1: Share My Work

- Add direct links to your materials.
- Make sure links open easily (no passwords).
- You may also upload PDFs.

Option 2: Portfolio of My Work

- Upload files to the Media Library.
- Attach those files to your application to create a portfolio.

Panelists spend about 15 minutes on your materials, so choose wisely.

Preferred formats: website links, PDFs, JPEGs.

Links to videos or audio online are better than uploading large files.

What to Include (Suggestions)

- Recent work from the last 3–5 years (older work is okay with a quick explanation).
- Your strongest work first.
- Examples that show you can do the kind of project you're proposing.
- Examples of the type of work you plan to make for this project.
- Work showing you engaging with a community or audience.
- Press or articles about you or your work.
- Reviews or assessments of your work.
- Audience reactions—social posts, feedback, emails, or letters.
- Quotes or testimonials (such as survey comments).
- Photos or videos showing your process or your work in action (rehearsals, exhibits, events, etc.).

Budget

Do not complete the Fiscal Year section. We do not need your operating income or expenses.

Eligible costs include:

artist fees, staff salaries, supplies, space rental, utilities, marketing, promotion, travel.

Ineligible costs include:

fundraising activities, meals/receptions/catering (except travel meals), construction, tuition, endowments, emergency relief.

Line C (Grant Request):

Enter your chosen request amount on line C under State Arts Agency Income. Choose ONE:

- \$2,000 – Career Development Grant
- \$6,000 – Collaboration Grant
- \$5,000 – Fellowship

Awards are based on the artistic strength of your work and proposal. You will either receive the full amount you request or not receive a grant.

Need help completing your budget? Use this cheat sheet to see exactly what belongs in each income and expense category. It's designed to guide you and help you avoid common mistakes.

Sources of Project Cash Income

- A. Earned Income: Kickstarter Campaign: \$1,000
- B. Contributed Income: \$0
- C. State Arts Agency Income: Grant Amount: \$2,000
- D. Local Government Income: \$0
- E. Other Income: Applicant Cash (my own money): \$600
- F. Total Project Income: \$3,600

Sources of Project Cash Expenses – Actual Cash Expenses

- A. Artist Fees: Musician stipends: \$400
- B. Production Costs: Mixing and mastering: \$500
- C. Space Rental: Studio recording time: \$600
- D. Marketing:
 - a. Graphic design and photography: \$250
 - b. Marketing and distribution: \$250
- E. Other Expenses: Overnight stay and travel (studio): \$1,600
- F. Total Project Cash Expense: \$3,600

Jesse "JD" Danner

Musician / Songwriter

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

 jddanner.music@email.com |  instagram.com/undercurrentofanimosity |  soundcloud.com/jddanner

Professional Summary

South Dakota-based musician and songwriter blending punk roots with modern rockabilly energy. Founder and lead vocalist of *Undercurrent of Animosity*, a four-piece band known for storytelling, grit, and strong connections to place. Fifteen years of experience performing, writing, and recording across the Upper Midwest, currently focused on elevating independent studio recording and expanding regional visibility. Dedicated to strengthening South Dakota's independent music scene through mentorship and collaboration.

Education & Training

B.A. in Music, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities

Focus: Music Composition and Performance | 2008

Workshops & Independent Study - Recording & Production Techniques (with local engineers), Sioux Falls, SD | 2022-present

- Songwriting and Stagecraft Masterclass with Charlie Parr, Sioux Falls, SD | 2021

- Artist Development Intensive, South Dakota Songwriters' Collective | 2020

Artistic Experience

Lead Vocalist / Songwriter, *Undercurrent of Animosity*

Sioux Falls, SD | 2015-present - Write and perform original songs rooted in South Dakota storytelling and community life. - Lead band in regional performances across South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa. - Coordinate independent regional tours and produce self-released recordings in local studios, building a consistent local and regional audience. - Mentor emerging musicians through informal workshops, shared performances, and peer support.

Performer / Collaborator, Twin Cities Punk Scene

Minneapolis, MN | 2005-2015 - Performed in multiple DIY and independent punk bands (including *The Breakdowns* and *Concrete Hearts*). - Organized small-venue tours throughout the Midwest; booked and promoted live shows. - Developed foundational skills in performance, arrangement, collaboration, and audience engagement.

Community Involvement

- Mentor, *High School Garage Band Revival* program, Sioux Falls, SD | 2022-present
- Volunteer sound technician and performer, *Sioux Empire Arts Showcase* | 2021-2023
- Organizer, *Local Bands for Local Needs* benefit concert series, Sioux Falls, SD | 2020-present

Selected Performances & Appearances

- Downtown Riverfest, Sioux Falls, SD | 2024
- Brookings Summer Arts Festival, Brookings, SD | 2023
- Levitt at the Falls – Local Music Series, Sioux Falls, SD | 2022
- Wild Prairie Jamboree, Vermillion, SD | 2022
- The District Bar & Venue, Sioux Falls, SD | 2021
- The Nomad World Pub, Minneapolis, MN | 2013-2015

Recordings & Media

- *Small Town Static* – EP (in production, 2025; supported by proposed Career Development activities)
- *Southbound Noise* – Self-released EP | 2020
- Featured artist, *Dakota Sounds Live* Radio Showcase (SDPB) | 2023

Skills & Strengths

- Songwriting & Arrangement
- Live Performance & Stage Presence
- Studio Recording & Production Collaboration
- Project Coordination & Promotion
- Mentorship & Community Engagement