

Call for 2025–2027 Graduate Public Scholars Program Applications

Program Description

The Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy at Vanderbilt University aims to elevate art as a mode of inquiry, a way of understanding, and a celebration of the human spirit. **As part of this mission, the Curb Center’s Public Scholars Program supports graduate students to enact arts-based projects on campus and in the wider community by providing funding, professional development, and a creative and scholarly community of practice.** The Curb Center seeks applications from graduate students interested in becoming part of the 2025–2027 Public Scholars cohort.

The Curb Public Scholars program provides mentorship, resources, and support for graduate students to realize public-facing creative and/or arts-based projects. The Curb Center is particularly interested in projects that include creative ways to implement research findings, transform academic work into publicly available resources, or engage members of the Vanderbilt or Nashville community in artistic inquiry and action. Public Scholars receive a two-year grant of \$2,500; access to Curb Center materials, facilities, and equipment; workshops with artists, scholars, and community leaders to support the completion of their project; and a stipend of \$1,500 for their participation (\$750 disbursed in April 2026 upon successful completion of the first year, and \$750 disbursed in April 2027 upon successful completion of their project). Public Scholars will also receive support to present their work at a conference in the second year of their program.

For projects that involve community partners, The Curb Center seeks to equip Public Scholars with tools for ethical arts-based engagement that is mutually beneficial rather than extractive. Thus, Public Scholars will receive training on topics including asset-based community development frameworks, relationship-building techniques, program planning and evaluation, and community-based artmaking methodologies.

Program Eligibility

The Public Scholars Program is open to Vanderbilt graduate students across disciplines who:

- Have completed at least one year of their degree and have at least two years remaining
- Have their advisor’s and DGS’s approval to participate in the program
- Can plan, execute, and evaluate their project by April 2027

- Are available to actively participate in approximately three two-hour group meetings and two one-hour individual meetings per semester in the first year of the program, some of which will require preparation and/or assigned readings. Meetings will be scheduled according to the selected Scholars' mutual availability. Some meetings will be optional in the second year of the program.

Program Application

Applications are due on **September 12, 2025**. Applicants will be notified of their status on September 19, 2024. **To apply, please submit the following materials in a single PDF to Rachel Thompson, Curb Center program manager, by 5:00 pm on September 12:**

1. A cover letter (max. 1 page, single-spaced) that includes details about your degree program and professional goals that addresses how participation in the Curb Public Scholars Program aligns with your academic, career, and/or service trajectory
2. A project proposal that includes the following components:
 - a. A 500-word project description that provides background for your project, details about what the project will encompass, information about your audience, potential community partner(s), an explanation of how the project aligns with your academic work, and ideas for evaluating the impact of your project. If applicable, please describe the nature of your relationship with the community partner(s) with whom you plan to collaborate.
 - b. A preliminary budget for your project. Allowable expenses can include the purchase of materials and supplies, space rental fees, catering for project events, and, in some cases, professional services and honoraria. There will be opportunities during the program for scholars to revise and refine their budget.
 - c. A preliminary project timeline. Projects will need to be completed with all expenses reconciled by April 2027.
3. CV
4. Completed information form with advisor's signature (see last page) and scheduling table

Your project details, timeline, and budget do not have to be fully conceived for the application, but you should demonstrate a general understanding of what deliverables and resources will be needed to realize your project goals. All Curb Public Scholars will have access to project management support and mentorship meetings as needed to support a successful project outcome across the full appointment period.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated according to the rubric below by the Curb Center’s leadership team. Applicants will receive final decisions on September 20, 2024. The Curb Center intends to select 4–5 applicants for the 2024–2026 cohort.

<i>Does the project proposal...</i>	Clearly	Adequately	Somewhat	Not at all
Articulate a vision for a public-facing project?				
Leverage, adapt, extend, and/or draw upon the applicant’s research and/or academic work?				
Outline a preliminary budget, not to exceed \$2500, and timeline, not to extend beyond April 2026?				
Demonstrate capacity for ethical, non-extractive collaboration with community partners, participants, and/or members of the public?				
Include a creative and/or artistic component as a tool for addressing a community issue or challenge?				

Questions?

Please email [Rachel Thompson](mailto:Rachel.Thompson@curbcenter.org), Curb Center program manager, for any questions or to schedule a virtual or in-person meeting.

2025-2027 Curb Public Scholars Program Information Form

Please complete and include this form in your application.

NAME: _____

VUID: _____

EMAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

GRADUATE PROGRAM: _____

ADVISOR NAME: _____

ADVISOR SIGNATURE: _____

DGS NAME: _____

DGS SIGNATURE: _____

APPLICANT SIGNATURE: _____

Availability

Please indicate your general weekly availability below by **shading in the times that you ARE NOT AVAILABLE**. Leave times that you **ARE AVAILABLE** blank. Meetings will be held in two-hour blocks at the Curb Center; meals will be provided if meetings are during lunch/dinner hours.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-10					
10-11					
11-12					
12-1					
1-2					
2-3					
3-4					
4-5					
5-6					