Call for 2021-2023 Graduate Public Scholars Program Applications

As part of Curb Center’s mission to advance the standing of creative and cultural expression in generating innovative approaches to real-world problems, the Center is seeking proposals from graduate students interested in becoming part of the 2021-2023 Curb Public Scholars cohort.

The Curb Public Scholars Program supports graduate students from across the Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt University Medical Center campuses who have created innovative projects that apply their research studies in a community setting to achieve impact outside of an academic environment.

Successful applicants will propose projects that engage a public audience through some type of art-based or creative expression to explore an issue raised by the individual’s dissertation or other research findings. We are especially interested in initiatives that explore creative ways to implement research findings, develop evidence-based public policies, or transform academic work into publicly available resources for the good of our communities.

Public Scholars receive a two-year grant of up to $2,000 to facilitate their project goals. Public Scholars also enjoy access to all Curb meeting, studio and workshop spaces, equipment and supplies while participating in regular project management and mentorship meetings through the year. Scholars will also have numerous occasions throughout their appointment to interact with local and national arts and policy leaders while working to realize their project goals. There are opportunities for field trips to regional arts and activist communities and regional and national meetings that are designed to enhance the individual’s understanding of creative placemaking/placekeeping and public policy.

Because public policies reflect the values and aspirations of a city, community, or national culture, we must increase the availability of rigorous academic scholarship on the impact of arts and creativity.

The Curb Public Scholars Program mentors emerging arts and cultural leaders in a dialogue around specific issues to generate answers to questions that decision makers may utilize to affect local, regional, and national policies.
Is the Curb Public Scholars Program Right for You?

The Curb Center awards a broad array of projects from all disciplines in pursuit of our goal to grow local, regional, and national arts-driven public policy. Here are three examples from projects funded during the last two years:

- “A Look through the Viewfinder to Prioritize Disaster Policy and Maximize Resilience” – A view of the March 2020 Middle Tennessee tornado damage and recovery patterns using drone technology to direct emergency and recovery response resources using real-time data.

- “Language or to Feel at Home: Pandemic Poetry Workshops in Spanish with the Nashville Latinx Community” – A series of community writing workshops centered around identity and belonging, especially as it relates to healthcare in the time of a pandemic.

“Design Your Neighborhood: A Design-based Civics Curriculum for Metro Nashville Public Schools” – In conjunction with the Nashville Civic Design Center, this design-based curriculum was aimed at Nashville public school students aged 12-18, providing a space to learn about the structural forces that shape neighborhoods as a way of influencing local and equitable design for the future in a fast-evolving city.

When considering whether to submit your application, keep in mind the following:

- You should be a Vanderbilt graduate student
- You will need to have your advisor’s approval to participate
- Your proposal must include a creative and a social justice or public policy component
- Your project can be fully realized within a 12 to 24-month timeline
- You include a preliminary budget with your proposal
- You will actively participate in the mentoring, training, and guest seminars designed specifically for the Public Scholars Program.

Questions about the Curb Public Scholars Program and application process should be directed to Curb’s Associate Director of Public Policy, Alexandre Frenette, or Curb’s Administrative Manager, Kimberly Kane.
How Do You Apply to the 2021-2023 Curb Public Scholars Program?

To be considered for a 2021-2023 Curb Public Scholar award, the following materials should be submitted to the attention of Kimberly Kane by end of day on Thursday, September 2, 2021:

1. A Letter of Interest which includes details about your degree program, advisor, and anticipated graduation date and addresses how participation in the Curb Public Scholars Program will enhance your professional development

2. Curriculum Vitae

3. Completed Information Form with Advisor Signature (see next page)

4. A 500-word essay, 3-minute video, or 8-page PowerPoint presentation which provides background for your project, details what the project encompasses, addresses who your public is and how your project could impact this group, and details how the proposed project complements your thesis project work.

5. A preliminary deliverables timeline addressing the project goals and completion dates

6. A preliminary budget detailing how funds will be spent over the life of the project

Your project details, timeline, and budget do not have to be fully conceived for the application but should demonstrate a basic understanding of what will be required (in terms of deliverables and budget) to realize your project goals. All Curb Public Scholars will have access to frequent project management and mentorship meetings designed to support a successful project outcome across the full appointment period.
What Happens After Your Application Has Been Submitted?

All applications will be reviewed by the Curb Center leadership team, with final decisions communicated to all applicants by September 13, 2021.

Questions about the Curb Public Scholars Program and application process should be directed to Curb’s Associate Director of Public Policy, Alexandre Frenette, or Curb’s Administrative Manager, Kimberly Kane.

2021-2023 Curb Public Scholars Program Information Form

Complete and include this form in your application package

NAME

VUID

EMAIL

PHONE

GRADUATE PROGRAM

ADVISOR NAME

ADVISOR SIGNATURE

DGS NAME

DGCS SIGNATURE

APPLICANT SIGNATURE