



pennsylvania
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

CALL FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

Creative Communities Initiative

The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA), a state agency, supports sustainable, collaborative creative investments as vital to vibrant, livable communities.

PCA's Mission: To strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts.

PCA's Overarching Value - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Promote equitable access for all Pennsylvanians to participate fully in a creative life and in the diverse forms of arts and culture in the commonwealth.

Creative Communities Program Purpose: The purpose of the Creative Communities program is to provide multi-year funding to community-driven, arts-based projects that serve as catalysts for livability, economic development, and community connectedness. Also called creative placemaking, the funded projects will have a demonstrated, positive impact on their respective communities.

Creative Communities Program Goals:

- Strengthen Pennsylvania communities through the arts.
- Advance community recovery and resilience.
- Promote PA's communities as places people want to live, visit, work, and play.
- Support authentic, inclusive, and strong community partnerships.
- Ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Support local leadership and develop future leaders.
- Promote development and implementation of sustainable programs and projects.
- Invest in creative industries projects.
- Leverage additional sources of funding (local government, private sector, foundation).
- Cultivate innovative, community-driven projects.
- Promote the unique identities of PA's communities.
- Create and implement best practices for project evaluations.

Funding Amount: Up to \$25,000 per year for up to four years.

Funding Restrictions:

In general, the PCA does not fund the following:

- Activities for which academic credit is given.
- Hospitality expenses.
- Activities that have already been completed.
- Activities that have a religious purpose.
- Performances and exhibitions not available to the general public.
- Performances and exhibitions outside Pennsylvania.
- Cash prizes and awards.
- Benefit activities.
- Payments to lobbyists.
- Competitions.

Eligibility:

- Project must be place-based.
- Required partnership of at least two organizations, one of which will serve as the lead applicant.
- Lead applicant must be a unit of government, nonprofit (501(c)3 or 501(c)6) organization.
- Lead applicant organization must be located in the community.

***Please note: Creative Communities projects are currently underway in the following counties: Crawford, Indiana, Lancaster, Lehigh, Mercer, and Philadelphia. Counties without existing projects will receive priority.

Selection Process:

1. Letter of Interest (LOI)
2. LOI review and virtual site visits with selected communities
3. Application (by invitation)
4. Panel review of application and Creative Communities Pilot Communities selected

1. Letter of Interest (LOI) Submission Instructions: LOI deadline, Friday, March 19, 2021 at 5 p.m. must be submitted via email to RA-OAcreativepa@pa.gov.

- a. Completed [coversheet form](#) with acknowledgment of and intention to comply with the local government resolution requirement, if your community is selected to participate in the Creative Communities Pilot Program.
- b. Narrative (3 pages max.)
 - Brief community description.
 - Description of any existing cultural plans and/or experience implementing arts-based development strategies.
 - Description of successful community partnerships.
 - Description of community opportunity or challenge the organization would like to address through this program.
- c. 3 Letters of Support (local government, planning, convention and visitor's bureau (CVB), business improvement district (BID), chamber of commerce, local arts organization, etc.).

2. LOI Review and Community Virtual Site Visit Selection Process:

- a. Panel review of LOIs
 - Letters will be assessed for viability and program alignment.
- b. PCA staff will contact communities selected for virtual site visits.
- c. PCA staff will review virtual site visit findings and select communities for invitation to complete an application.

3. Application (by invitation only): Application deadline Friday, June 18, 2021 at 5p.m. Applications must be completed online at www.esa.dced.state.pa.us. First time users must register.

Application Requirements:

a. Narrative:

- Project description.
- Description of how the project will advance community recovery and resiliency after COVID-19.
- Description of intended impact on the community.
- Description of community engagement activities
- Description of the role of artists in the project.
- Description of project leadership structure and decision-making process.

b. Supporting Documents:

- Resumé of project manager.
- List of proposed Advisory Committee participants with organization and title.
- Project budget.
- Letter of Intent from each partner organization.
- Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to include mutually agreed upon roles and responsibilities of each partnering organization.

4. Panel Review and Selection:

- a. Applicant communities will be reviewed based on the strength and commitment to the following:
 - How the project advances community recovery and resiliency after COVID-19.
 - Potential impact of proposed project on the community.
 - Strength and history of community partnerships.
 - Roles of partnering organizations.
 - Intentional, inclusive community engagement throughout the project.
 - Understanding of community's existing creative assets.
 - Authentic role of artists in projects.
 - Clearly defined leadership.
 - Sustainability of proposed project.
 - Multi-year commitment.
 - Well-planned budget with clear plans for matching funds.
- b. PCA staff will notify communities of their award status.
- c. Creative Communities Pilot Communities Announced.
- d. Creative Communities award contract executed to include:
 - Negotiated scope of work to include mutually agreed upon deliverables.
 - Local government resolution supporting the project and pledging a minimum of 10% of matching funds.
 - Quarterly reimbursements (subject to satisfaction of deliverables).
 - Match of 1:1 (must be at least 50% cash and remainder may be in-kind).
 - Required quarterly reports submitted to PCA.

LOI & Application Process and Timeline:

The PCA seeks qualified communities to apply through a multi-phased process evaluated by a review panel.

February 16, 2021 – Letter of Interest (LOI) submission open to all communities

March 19, 2021 – LOI Deadline

April 9, 2021 – Panel Review, Semi-Finalists Selected

April – May 15, 2021 – Virtual Semi-Finalist Site Visits

May 22, 2021 – Finalists Announced and Invited to Submit a Full Application

June 18, 2021 – Full Application Deadline

June 30, 2021 – Finalist Panel Review

July 2021 – Creative Communities Anticipated Announcement

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