

GUIDELINES:

PA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

DUE DATE: Friday, December 1, 2023, at 5 p.m. EST
PLEASE NOTE THAT NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GRANTED

CALL FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

Creative Communities Initiative – 2024 Round

The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA), a state agency, supports the role of the creative sector 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 or placekeeping, the funded projects will have a demonstrated, positive impact on their respective communities.

Creative Communities Program Goals:

- Strengthen Pennsylvania communities through the arts;
- Ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Support work in marginalized and disinvested communities to empower grassroots leaders and residents to address community challenges;
- Advance community recovery and resilience;
- Cultivate deep community engagement for innovative, community-driven projects;
- Promote the unique identities of PA's communities as places people want to live, visit, work, and play;
- Support authentic, inclusive, and strong community partnerships;
- Promote inclusion of artists and culture bearers in community projects
- Support local leadership and develop future leaders;
- Foster development and implementation of sustainable programs and projects;
- Invest in creative industries projects;
- Leverage additional sources of funding (local government, private sector, foundation);
- Support projects that have a demonstrated, positive impact; and
- 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;
- 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; and/or
- Competitions.

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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.

Selection Process

1. Letter of Interest (LOI)
2. LOI review and site visits with selected communities
3. Application **(by invitation only)**
4. Selection by panel review of application.

Instructions and Steps

LOIs must be submitted via email to RA-OAcreativepa@pa.gov no later than Friday, December 1, 2023, at 5 p.m. EST. Letters submitted after the deadline will not be accepted (Please note: PCA staff cannot make exceptions).

1. LOI submission must include:

- 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 Initiative Program.
- B. Narrative Content (three (3) pages max.)
 - Brief description of the community in which the project will take place.
 - Description of successful collaborations between partners for proposed project.
 - Description of past and planned inclusive community engagement activities.
 - Description of how artists and culture bearers will be included in the project.
 - Description of the community opportunities and/or challenges the partners would like to address through the project.
- C. Three (3) Letters of Support (local government, planning, convention and visitors' bureau (CVB), business improvement district (BID), chamber of commerce, local arts organization, etc.).

2. LOI Review and Virtual Community Site Visit Selection Process

- A. 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 and panelists will review virtual site visit findings and select communities for invitation to complete an application.
- D. Recommended applications (estimated to be two to four communities total) will be presented for approval at PCA's July 2024 Council meeting.

For questions and advice regarding this process:

Contact Sarah Merritt, Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities & the Creative Economy at skmerritt@pa.gov.