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Projects in Sharon, Meadville, Lancaster and Philadelphia Selected for Statewide Creative Communities Initiative

Harrisburg, PA – Today, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) announced the four communities selected for the pilot phase of the agency's Creative Communities Initiative (CCI). The initiative supports community-driven, arts-based projects that serve as catalysts for livability, economic development, and community connectedness. Each of the four projects will annually receive \$25,000 for a period of four years.

"The PCA's Creative Communities Initiative is an exciting opportunity for community and economic development and creative industries across Pennsylvania to collaborate on work that will benefit the priorities and identities of our cities and towns," said Governor Wolf. "I look forward to seeing how these innovative projects create a lasting mark on their communities."

The goals of CCI include strengthening the commonwealth's communities through the arts; fostering livability; supporting authentic inclusive, and strong community partnerships; promoting development and implementation of sustainable programs and projects; and investment in Pennsylvania's creative industries. Additional information about CCI can be found [here](#).

"Arts-based community and economic development projects help foster community members' sense of belonging and deepen their connection to where they live," said Karl Blischke, executive director of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. "These projects nurture, support, and celebrate local artists and highlight their invaluable contributions to healthy, vibrant, livable communities."

One hundred five communities submitted letters of interest, from which 15 projects were then selected for site visits by CCI program staff. Ten of these sites were then selected for the application phase, from which the four communities were ultimately selected. The CCI selection committee was composed of community and economic development experts from the public and nonprofit sectors.

The four community projects selected for participation in the pilot phase of the PCA's Creative Communities Initiative include:

Project location: Sharon (Mercer County)

Lead applicant: Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce

Project description: Planning, implementation and programming of a community, arts-based, co-work, incubator, and workforce development space, with an emphasis on serving veterans and community members with physical and intellectual disabilities.

Project location: Meadville (Crawford County)

Lead applicant: The ARC of Crawford County

Project description: Transformation of a vacant lot, located in Meadville's historic business district, into an inclusive community greenspace. The greenspace will include community-designed public art, environmental interventions to address stormwater management, and community arts activities.

Project location: Lancaster City (Lancaster County)

Lead applicant: Spanish American Civic Association (SACA) and Millersville University

Project description: Community-based arts programming in the Southeast neighborhood of Lancaster City, which will employ a team of artists representative of the predominately Latinx, African American, and refugee residents, in order to engage the community in the planning and creation of public art projects, performing arts events, and community arts education projects.

Project location: Philadelphia's Mifflin Square Park/7th Street Corridor (Philadelphia County)

Lead applicant: Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition (SEAMAAC)

Project description: Build a stronger sense of place through community-led public art, cultural programming, and support for creative businesses reflecting the diverse populations in the neighborhood.

The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) is a state agency under the Office of the Governor. Governed by a Council of 15 citizen members appointed by the governor, and four legislative members, the mission of the PCA is to strengthen the cultural, educational and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts. By leveraging the immense potential of Pennsylvania's arts and cultural sector, the PCA supports jobs, builds community, motivates learning, promotes the commonwealth nationally and internationally, and sparks innovation.

For more information about the Creative Communities Initiative, contact Sarah Merritt at skmerritt@pa.gov or 717-787-1521.

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