pennsylvania
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

PCA Creative Communities
Letter of Interest Coversheet

Lead Applicant Information

Organization: Philadelphia Latino Film Festival of CultureTrust Greater Philadelphia

Address: 1315 Walnut St Suite 320

City: Philadelphia **Zip Code:** 19107

Municipality: Philadelphia **County:** Philadelphia County

Phone: (267) 909-6132

Website: www.phlaff.org

FEIN: 463109411

Contact Name: Marangeli Mejia-Rabell

Contact Title: Festival Director, Philadelphia Latino Film Festival

Contact Phone: (267) 909-6132

Contact Email: marangelimejiarabell@gmail.com

Organization Type: 501(c)3

☑ **By checking the box, you are indicating 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. (See full application guidelines for more information on this requirement.)**

Letter of Interest (LOI) Submission Instructions: LOI deadline, Friday, June 28, 2019. LOIs 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 visitors bureau (CVB), business improvment district (BID), chamber of commerce, local arts organization, etc.).

“Sharing Immigrant Stories through Film and Music in Southeast Philadelphia” is a collaborative project led by the Philadelphia Latino Film Festival. The partners are: Philadelphia Asian Film and Filmmakers, AfroTaino Productions, Intercultural Journeys, and the Fleisher Art Memorial.

Brief Community Description

In this project, our team will work with Southeast Asian and Latinx communities in Southeast Philadelphia, particularly in the 19148 zip code. From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, this area became a hub for refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia. More recently, many Bhutanese, Burmese, Chin, Shan and Karen refugees have resettled in this area. The 19148 zip code is also home to many Mexicans and Guatemalan immigrants.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2017 American Community Survey, the median household income in the 19148 zip code was $49,469 (compared to $59,195 for Pennaylvania as a whole). Moreover, 21.2% of the zip code’s population lived below the poverty line, and 23.5% of households received food stamps/SNAP benefits. As a result of economic challenges, cultural expectations and language barriers, the area’s Southeast Asian and Latinx communities are often underserved in terms of information, health care, social services, and education.

Description of Any Existing Cultural Plans and/or experience implementing arts-based development strategies.

All partner organizations for this proposal have extensive experience using film or music to build community. The Philadelphia Latino Film Festival (PHLAFF) was established in 2012 and has become the Greater Philadelphia region’s only festival with the mission to showcase and nurture established and emerging creative Latinx filmmakers; to promote and celebrate the richness and diversity of Latinx cultures and experiences, and to foster cross-cultural understanding and dialogue. Our work is centered on community and capacity building and film as a tool for social change in our communities. Each year, the Festival includes screenings of groundbreaking works from all genres. Festival programs attract a diverse audience, developing a new space in the Philadelphia region where filmmakers, actors, and producers can meet with other artists, engage with audiences and present and discuss innovative work. Programmatic offerings also include our Youth Salon, Emergence Panels, Filmmaker Workshops, Community Screenings and collaborations with other cultural producers, community organizations and institutions.

Founded in 2008, Philadelphia Asian American Film and FIlmmakers (PAAFF) is a nonprofit film festival with a mission to celebrate and elevate the Asian American and Pacific Islander experience through cinema. We seek to dispel negative stereotypes and harmful misconceptions about our community and create safe(r) spaces for artistic expression representative of our collective experiences. To serve the Southeast Philadelphia Asian communities, PAAFF has regularly held community screenings in Southeast Asian community spaces and at Fleisher Art Memorial. We have also partnered with PhillyCAM and the Al-Aqsa Islamic Academy to host two summer media workshops for youths in South Philadelphia.

Intercultural Journeys (IJ) prioritizes community-driven engagement programming that deepens our interactions with multiple communities within Philadelphia. In March 2018, IJ hosted Indonesian cross-gender dancer Didik Nini Thowok, partnered with local Indonesian dance company Modero and Co, and asked for input on programming that would be significant to Philadelphia’s Indonesian community. Members of Modero and Co and the Indonesian community identified two meaningful programs: a master dance class featuring Thowok, and a community potluck featuring local chefs and home cooks to welcome Thowok and have a chance to speak with the renowned artist. This type of engagement—authentic, meaningful, and

positive for the community—was also highly successful in attendance, in quality, and in building audience learning.

AfroTaino Productions curates and produces diverse programming and collaborations including community festivals, residencies, showcase series as well as develops and executes community engagement and audience development efforts in the Philadelphia region.

Description of Successful Community Partnerships

PHLAFF engages the region's diverse communities through the universal language of film creating critical connections to shared experiences and cross cultural understanding at the regional, national and international levels. Partnership efforts to date include the Philadelphia Premiere of We Like It Like That and concert by Joe Bataan as part of the Latin Roots Live Series with WXPN and AfroTaino Productions, a screening and cooking demo at the Reading Terminal Market through a collaboration with PAAFF, our Resist & Release Summer Solstice Event at ICA in collaboration with AfroTaino Productions, supporting visiting filmmakers in the promotion and audience development efforts for their events and industry panels in collaboration with the GPFO team and local festivals. PHLAFF is also a community partner of the International Puerto Rican Heritage Film Festival in New York City supporting curatorial and promotional efforts. This alignment has supported our team to network with industry resources. Last year, PHLAFF collaborated with the Extension or Communication: Puerto Rico team for the inclusion of a pop up in PHLAFF's Lobby. This activation included a participatory filmmaking project by Puerto Rican youth from the town of Loiza after Hurricane Maria. The pop up served as a place for audiences to connect to efforts supporting those who have relocated to the region as well as to some supporting Puerto Rico based efforts. PHLAFF also collaborates every year with community groups including Esperanza, Casa de Venezuela, Dominicanos in the Delaware Valley, PhillyCam and others. The PHLAFF and PAAFF teams have been collaborating for the past five years in the areas of cross promotion, collaborative programming and strategic alignment, Co presented films in our festivals including Nikkei in PHLAFF 2016, three films at PHLAFF 2018 (Futbolistas 4 Life, Havana Divas and Pecado Original) as well as co hosting a Filmmaker Mixer and co presenting Jose as part our 2019 Festival Weekend and more recently on the All Fest Short Film Program presented at Cherry Street Pier.

PAAFF works closely with other Pan-Asian American organizations (e.g., Asian Arts Initiative, Greater Philadelphia Asian Studies Consortium, Music of Asian America Research Center) and with ethnic-specific nonprofits (e.g., Pacific Islanders in Communications, Japanese American Citizens League, VietLead, Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, South Asian American Digital Archive) to ensure that our screenings, live performances and other events are both culturally appropriate and accessible to Philadelphians of all Asian ethnicities. To reach other racial minorities, PAAFF has collaborated with numerous area nonprofits and co-hosted screenings at the African American Museum in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Latino Film Festival, and at the All Fest Short Film Program at Cherry Street Pier.

IJ is nearing the culminating events of a two-year programmatic and performative arc, *Modupue | Ibaye: The Philadelphia Yoruba Performance Project*. The intention behind this project is to investigate, discover, and spotlight the remembered history and contemporary expressions in Philadelphia of Yoruba performance practice—dance, song, drumming, and storytelling. We have been implementing a research process that engages intimately with community historians, local masters, spiritual and cultural practitioners. IJ is using performative strategies, including

story circles and artist-led exploratory workshops, to investigate diverse histories embedded in memories and stories, and trace the current contours of Yoruba-rooted performance practice in Philadelphia.

Description of community opportunity or challenge the organization would like to address through this initiative

Through sharing community stories, grassroots interracial and cross-ethnic cultural programs can help to build community through sharing information, aiding individuals and communities heal from trauma, promoting inter-generational understanding, and jumpstarting efforts to fight for equity. These programs can also help participants nurture their creativity, and build skills in communication, teamwork, and leadership.

Here is an outline of our four-year plan:
Year 1: Our first year will focus on relationship building through co-designing and co-managing programmatic offerings. Our team will work with key stakeholders in Southeast Philadelphia to set up screenings, performances, open mics, and other events. We will work with ethnic organizations—Juntos, VietLead, Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia, and Weaving a Karen Future—as well as local branches of the Free Library of Philadelphia. Some of the films shown and music heard at these events would offer models of what community arts can achieve.

Year 2: Our second year will center on an oral history project for young adults to interview elders in the community. This project will include 8-10 training sessions in oral history and storytelling, and the purchase of some A/V equipment that will remain accessible to the community at the conclusion of this project. Participants will then have two months to do background research, to prepare for the interview with a coach, and to conduct the interview. In order to share this collaborative process and the intergenerational exchanges captured through the interviews with the Southeast Philadelphia community, we will schedule a series of storytelling events at community spaces. Additionally, we will set up a website to showcase the oral histories and to share reflections, poems and other creative activities by interviewers and website visitors. This page will also enable us to capture key milestones and elements of our collaborative process that can be shared with other communities and practitioners. Community screening will also continue.

Year 3: Our third year will begin with two-week workshops in filmmaking and songwriting. Participation in these workshops are open to all youth in Southeast Philadelphia who are interested in telling Southeast Asian and Latinx stories. The goal of these workshops is to teach participants how to create short films, songs or music videos based on the collected oral histories and other stories. After the workshops, participants will work collaboratively with coaches to create these artistic products. We will also continue to organize community screenings, performances, storytelling events, and open mic nights.

Year 4: We will begin the year by showcasing the works-in-progress of the workshop participants at a community event. We will then hold another set of two-week workshops in filmmaking and songwriting for new participants. We will continue to organize community screenings, performances, storytelling events, and open mic nights. As the initial cohort finishes their projects, PHLAFF and PAAFF will schedule a session at their festivals during which the finished films will be screened, songs will be performed, and participants can speak with audience members about their work.

PAAFF
PHILADELPHIA ASIAN AMERICAN
FILM FESTIVAL

June 28, 2019

Sarah Merritt
Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities
216 Finance Building | Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Ms. Merritt,

With honor, Philadelphia Asian American Film and Filmmakers (dba The Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival) supports the Philadelphia Latino Film Festival (PHLAFF) in its application for the Creative Communities Initiative. PAAFF's staff has long admired PHLAFF's community-driven programming. To date, we have worked together to co-sponsor screenings at each other's festivals and at the All Fest Short Film Program at Cherry St. Pier a few weeks ago. We look forward to deepening our collaborations with PHLAFF through the proposed "Sharing Immigrant Stories through Film and Music in Southeast Philadelphia" project.

Although Asian Americans and Latinx populations often share neighborhoods in Philadelphia, there are often misunderstandings and mistrust between these groups. PHLAFF's proposal is designed to use stories, filmmaking and music-making to help build trust and solidarity between the two communities. And we are eager to help them in these efforts. In particular, PAAFF is happy to use its experience organizing youth media workshops and its network of Asian American community partners and organizers to help ensure both community input and participation in this project.

If you have any questions about PAAFF's role in "Sharing Immigrant Stories through Film and Music in Southeast Philadelphia," please contact me (contact information below) or grant writer Eric Hung (eric@phillyasianfilmfest.org; 609-668-9073.

Rob Buscher
Festival Director
Philadelphia Asian American Film & Filmmakers
rob@phillyasianfilmfest.org
203.449.6140

INTERCULTURAL JOURNEYS

Sarah Merritt

Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities

216 Finance Building | Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Ms. Merritt,

Intercultural Journeys is thrilled to submit a letter of support for Philadelphia Latino Film Festival (PHLAFF) in the application for the Creative Communities Initiative. As an organization focused on multicultural performing arts, Intercultural Journeys (IJ) focuses our programs and projects on the community connectedness rooted in performance traditions and practices. Celebrating and affirming our common humanity is essential to our work, and the work of the proposed project will uncover beautiful expressions of community-driven stories through multiple mediums – a strong match for Intercultural Journeys' strengths and program areas.

With this partnership, Intercultural Journeys will work with PHLAFF and the cohort organizations to create workshops centered on storytelling and music, and the content of these workshops will be determined by mutual partner needs and community-expressed desires.

As an institution, we have a long history of partnership, both with nonprofit organizations and community-driven groups, and we are eager to engage with Philadelphia Asian American Film and Filmmakers and the cohort of partners to undertake the multi-year work of the Creative Communities Initiative.

Thank you,

Carly Rapaport-Stein

Carly Rapaport-Stein

Executive Director, Intercultural Journeys

June 28, 2019

Sarah Merritt

Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities

216 Finance Building | Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Ms. Merritt,

This letter is to support the Philadelphia Latino Film Festival (PHLAFF) application for your Creative Communities Initiative. AfroTaino Productions is excited to have the opportunity to support this wonderful initiative that would enable the project collaborators to expand on efforts to date.

Our team will work with other organizations in the development and execution of programming and community/audience engagement strategies. Proposed project efforts would support communities at the individual, cohort and collective levels by showcasing the power of music, storytelling, film and most importantly the tremendous opportunity that working together offers to support social change in our communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need additional information.

Respectfully,

Rahsaan Lucas
Creative Partner
AfroTaino Productions