pennsylvania
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

PCA Creative Communities
Letter of Interest Coversheet

Lead Applicant Information

Organization: Historic Germantown

Address: 5501 Germantown Ave

City: Philadelphia **Zip Code:** 19144

Municipality: _____ **County:** _____

Phone: 215-844-1683

Website: www.freedomsbackyard.com

FEIN: 23-2459670

Contact Name: Tuomi Joshua Forrest

Contact Title: Executive Directo

Contact Phone: 215-844-1683 x101

Contact Email: director@freedomsbackyard.com

Organization Type: ~~Select Organization Type~~ 501c3

[✓] **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.).

HISTORIC GERMANTOWN
Freedom's Backyard

5501 GERMANTOWN AVENUE · PHILADELPHIA · PA · 19144

Historic Germantown (HG) is a consortium of 18 (eighteen) culturally significant historic houses, destinations, and museums in Northwest Philadelphia that have joined together to protect, preserve, and share some of Philadelphia's prized historical assets, as well as provide a range of artistic and educational programming to local residents and visitor to Northwest Philadelphia. One very successful recent example of such programming occurred in on May 19 this year; in partnership with one of our local radio stations (WURD) and a Germantown based management consulting firm (Sally Blagg, LLC) (SB), we opened up two of our historic sites for arts programming in honor of the life and legacy of classically trained pianist Nina Simone; paying homage to her connection to the artist community in Philadelphia in general and in Germantown specifically. In presenting the day-long event (*Sing Nina: A Cultural Festival & Conference*) we were able to bring 300+ neighbors, many who were previously unfamiliar with HG sites and work, into two of HG spaces for an afternoon of food, music and neighborly fellowship.

The May 19, 2019 VIP Garden Party in the green-space at the rear of Historic Germantown (HG).

We are submitting this letter of Interest as a request for support in our efforts to continue this type of multi-genre, multi-venue theme-based programming over the next four years. The 2019 festival was curated by Sally Blagg, LLC; the firm has submitted a letter of support outlining their continued interest in partnering with HG to continue to activate HG sites in a manner that engages the adjacent community and provides excellent arts programming. HG and SB are committed to matching fiscal as well as in-kind support.

Sally Blagg, LLC (SB) is a Germantown based creative consulting firm with a focus on community engagement, event management and public relations. SB is housed at the historic Vernon-Wister home just northwest of the heart of Germantown's commercial district, the second largest commercial district in the region, located at the intersections of Germantown and Chelten Avenues. Since its arrival in 2016, SB has developed deep relationships with institutions, neighborhood residents and area merchants in terms of adding value to their core missions. In the winter of 2019 SB worked with Historic Germantown on plans to open up the sites to music and community each spring. This concept

aligned with the direction that we are moving in as an organization and we worked together towards the successful production of a multi-venue festival and conference.

Rootstock Republic, a seven-piece string ensemble that performing classical compositions of Ms. Nina Simone's work, at Rittenhouse Soundworks.

In our organizational debrief, following this first year of arts based programming at HG sites, we discussed the community as well as institutional impact; the response to "Singing Nina" affirmed that the Germantown community appreciates this type and quality of arts programming. The community was particularly intrigued by the use of Philadelphia based talent, pulling from the neighborhood when possible, in the curation of our springtime event. This neighborhood is made up of artists of all ages, retired homeowners, home-school families, budding entrepreneurs and a range of established professionals. Yet, often one must travel to center city Philadelphia or the surrounding suburbs for this type of arts and entertainment experience.

Sound engineer Brendan McGeehan (l) working with home school student Thai Devereoux (r) in pre production before the Singing Nina event.

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Historic Germantown will utilize the availability of one or more of the eighteen (18) member sites, as venues and partners for the annual artistic program, working with SB on the production of the event. Through this partnership with SB we worked this year with WURD, Philadelphia Jazz Project, Rittenhouse Soundworks, Brendan McGeehan, Germantown United CDC, and a number of local merchant as well as resident sponsors. The existing opportunity is to maintain a high level of consistency in annual springtime arts programming. With Pennsylvania Council for the Arts Creative Communities Pilot Initiative funding we will be able to continue our work engaging our diverse community of artists by giving them the space to perform or display their art in a manner that opens our venues up beyond our house tours and colonial-era reenactments.

Funding Request: $25,000

Time: Annually for 4 years

Tel: 215-844-1683 . Fax: 215-844-2831 . Email: programs@freedomsbackyard.com

www.freedomsbackyard.com

WYCK

HISTORIC HOUSE | GARDEN | FARM

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Executive Director

Jennifer L. Carlson

June 28, 2019

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

Dear Ms. Merrit,

I am writing in support of the application from Historic Germantown to the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts in regards to the Creative Communities Pilot Initiative Grant. Wyck, a National Historic Landmark which tells the story of one Philadelphia family over nine generations (1690-1973). is one of the 18 member sites that make up the Historic Germantown consortium.

Beginning in the mid-2000s, Wyck has been developing innovative programs to reach new audiences with its historic landscape, namely its immediate Germantown neighbors. In May 2019, we hosted a portion of the very successful *Singing Nina: A Cultural Festival & Conference.* This event attracted over 200 people to Wyck, most of whom had never been to Wyck before attending the festival. The event enabled Wyck to make new connections in the Germantown community and beyond. Some of the attendees have been back to Wyck for additional programs, and some have started volunteering with our community-based Home Farm Club.

The *Singing Nina: A Cultural Festival & Conference,* which was produced by Sally Blagg, LLC, was successful in bringing relevant arts programming to the Germantown community and in connecting the cultural institutions to their local community members. Wyck would more than welcome more of this type of collaborative programming. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at jcarlson@wyck.org or at 215.848.1690.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Carlson
Executive Director

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Steven Taylor, owner of Steven Taylor Photography and soon to be proprietor of Ubuntu Fine Art: By Steven CW Taylor. I really believe in Historic Germantown, and how the arts can be an integral part of how all can experience these foundational American landmarks.

Steven Taylor Photography is a Germantown based full service photography company. We partner with local entities to help to show HG in a more robust light, so that the natives of this area can get a better understanding of its historical significance.

Coming late summer 2019, in partnership with Sally Blagg, LLC, we will be facilitating a group of 4 interns to "capture Germantown", during their 6-week internship. It will culminate in an art showcase called "Germantown in Black and White", in which we will display curated images from the intern's experience, and take place at one of the Historic Germantown buildings.

This grant will help bring much needed programming to HG that will help all that call Philadelphia home.

~ Steven C W Taylor

June 28, 2019

Sally Blagg, LLC
5800 Germantown Avenue
Germantown, Philadelphia, PA 19144

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

Ms. Merrit,

Our community collective that galvanized in the production of a 2019 production of *Singing Nina: A Cultural Festival and Conference*, in partnership with Historic Germantown (HG), is in full support of the application from HG to the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts regarding the Creative Communities Pilot Initiative grant. In our production we imagined a community partnership that was as deeply entrenched in the history of people-in-place as our creative agency was; Historic Germantown, with funding from this grant, allows for us to continue an artist driven conversation with community.

Historic Germantown has a commitment to preservation that is not wed exclusively to historic house tours and reenactments; in our domestic and international work we see this organizational quality, of community engagement in the process of meeting internal preservation goals, as unique and are excited to see potential investment in the arts in historic spaces. During our debrief from a successful *Singing Nina* event we gauged social, institutional and economic impact, finding that our community is eager to see us continue to strengthen community through the arts.

We remain committed to sponsoring an annual arts event with Historic Germantown well beyond the four-year grant period. I appreciate your consideration.

Yours in Partnership
David C. Rose,
Principal Curator, SBIHQ

To Whom It May Concern:

Through this letter, I would like to express my support for Historic Germantown to be invited to apply for the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Creative Communities grant.

Historic Germantown does an extraordinary job of preserving and celebrating the rich history of the neighborhood, but is also a very forward looking organization. When we worked with HG to present “Singing Nina,” a one day festival that celebrated the life and music of Nina Simone, the partnership was a natural fit. Our mission, through the festival, was to shine a light on an iconic musician, performer, and activist. Producing events at historic sites in Germantown merged the past and the present in an incredible way.

We presented this festival with extremely limited resources and people power, and yet the event created waves throughout the neighborhood and greater Philadelphia region. I still encounter strangers who introduce themselves and tell me how much they enjoyed our event.

The discovery of the Creative Communities grant presents an opportunity for us to build upon our proof of concept festival, produce meaningful events at beautiful historical sites in an underserved community, and to bring the neighborhood together on a larger and more consistent scale.

Sincerely,

Brendan McGeehan