pennsylvania
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

PCA Creative Communities
Letter of Interest Coversheet

Lead Applicant Information

Organization: Philadelphia Association of CDCs

Address: 1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1600

City: Philadelphia **Zip Code:** 19107

Municipality: Philadelphia **County:** Philadelphia

Phone: 215/732-5829

Website: www.pacdc.org

FEIN: 23-2707112

Contact Name: Rick Sauer

Contact Title: Executive Director

Contact Phone: 215/732-5829

Contact Email: rsauer@pacdc.org

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.).

PACDC
PHILADELPHIA ASSOCIATION
OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

June 28, 2019

Ms. Sarah Merritt
Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities Initiative
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
216 Finance Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: PCA Creative Communities 2019 LOI

Dear Ms. Merritt:

The Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDC) and its arts partner Just Act, in collaboration with the National Alliance of Community and Economic Development Associations, requests the opportunity to apply for a grant to support the next stage of Art-Powered Places (APP), a grassroots training and technical assistance project designed to assist the community engagement arms of community development corporations (CDCs) with asset mapping, community organizing and cohesion building in addressing critical neighborhood issues using art-based approaches to problem solving.

A pilot phase of this project launched in 2017 with National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) support had encouraging results across four neighborhoods and a base of solid evaluation and documentation of impact. In phase II, we will build on this success by: 1) assisting APP cohort members from the pilot phase with art project implementation; 2) refine curriculum to develop teaching tools to be shared locally and nationally; and 3) initiate services for a new cohort of APP neighborhoods.

Who We Are
As a membership association, PACDC foster's strong community development corporations (CDCs) and non-profit community organizations by building their skills and advocating for resources and policies to create a just and inclusive Philadelphia. In collaboration with our members and a host of community and institutional partners, PACDC has helped to create vital streams of funding for the sector, including the Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund and the Philadelphia CDC Tax Credit Program. Over the course of the last four years, our advocacy with our partners has won more than $353 million in new local funding. In addition to our advocacy efforts, through our Community Development Leadership Institute, we provided training and technical assistance to more than 400 professionals and community leaders in the region, and deepened our work in the vital connections between community development and health by playing a lead role in Southeastern Pennsylvania's first joint Community Health Needs Assessment.

Our Community
Our targeted community and key beneficiaries are CDCs and CDC-like organizations that work with local residents at the neighborhood level in complex and changing communities where creative placemaking is not typically seen. These are not dog park or cappuccino neighborhoods, and yet they have embedded in each rich troves of artistry and creativity that can be harnessed to address neighborhood issues. We use the vehicle of community engagement arms of CDCs—called locally Neighborhood Advisory Committees—to help give the project a solid underpinning of operational support and help test

curriculum efficacy. But it is not critical that community groups have a formal engagement arm to do the work. In fact, we believe that thoughtful implementation of the project can actually work to grow powerful networks of action and support using creativity as the catalytic agent for change. This is perhaps the most exciting component of our project and the reason we are working to build out the curriculum of planning strategy for others.

Existing Plans and Track Record

A vital component of effective revitalization includes arts as a pathway for strengthening communities. Since 2007, we have convened practitioners and artists together to learn from each other through workshops and trainings. In 2015, we expanded these efforts with a demonstration project funded by the NEA entitled, Third Space Initiative, focusing on nurturing community through the built environment in partnership with CDCs, artists and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 2017, we partnered with Just Act, with support from the NEA via the National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations, to pilot a technical assistance program using art approaches for planning and organizing, entitled Art-Powered Places. In 2018, we released A Guidebook for Arts & Community Development in PACDC Magazine, *Art, Equity + Place: Creating Neighborhood Health, Happiness, and Well-Being with Art*, reflective of our early learnings to initiate a system of on-going learning for the sector.

In 2019, we will build on this body of work to continue to test and grow our model while sharing our findings with local and national networks. Assisting us in this work will be our national information sharing collaborator, the National Alliance of Community and Economic Development Associations (NACEDA).

Description of Partnerships

As a membership association, PACDC's method of practice is predicated on partnership and coalition building to identify issues and programming relevant to effectively support the vitality of Philadelphia's neighborhoods. We do this work in conjunction with our 135 member organizations, and a growing array of local, regional and national partners. These partnerships include collaborations with advocacy and policy agencies such as the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, Regional Housing Legal Services, and NACEDA; governmental, research, and programming partners such as the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, City of Philadelphia, Jefferson University and Health Systems, and Temple University; and training and technical assistance partners such as NeighborWorks America.

For this project, our arts partner is Just Act, a Philadelphia-based theater arts group who will implement the lead artistic role by overseeing the project's on the ground efforts in partnership with PACDC, and providing overall project oversight, outreach and coordination. Just Act will design and co-facilitate the arts-based activities for the duration of the project. Additionally, Just Act will work closely with our project evaluator to refine data tools and analysis of project insights to develop a teaching tool that practitioners in the community development and arts sectors can utilize. Just Act will also continue to share insights on the project's development broadly through articles, as well as at conferences and issue convenings.

Our Challenge and Opportunity

The complex work of neighborhood revitalization needs all hands-on deck to advance lasting change—residents, community developers, and artists. But there are myriad challenges for these actors in working together, including limited financing; lack of awareness of how to identify and engage with local artists, and maintain these relationships over time; how to leverage artistic approaches to neighborhood problem solving and grow more engaged communities; lack of understanding of the complexities of implementing high quality, civically-focused arts programming; and how community developers and artists communicate their goals to each other.

Through our placemaking demonstration project, Third Space Initiative, and trainings through our Community Development Leadership Institute, innovations across the intersection of arts and community development are teasing out new insights, but more tools are needed. A critical learning from these efforts is that one-off events and installations have limited impact for lasting change.

For placemaking to be sustained, significant investment in community engagement, organizing and training needs to drive design, implementation, and continual follow-through. Armed with this knowledge, we sought to test a more robust placemaking model that could inform, nurture and train others at the neighborhood scale.

With NACEDA and NEA support, we launched a pilot phase of Art-Powered Places, designed to assist the community engagement arms of CDCs with asset mapping, community organizing and cohesion building. The project had encouraging results—stronger cohesion and a deeper understanding of the rich local networks of creative resources available to tackle problems across four neighborhoods and solid documentation of impact. In phase II, we will build on these results by: 1) assisting phase I cohort members to complete their targeted art projects; 2) refine curriculum into a teaching tool; and 3) initiate a new round of APP neighborhoods.

We ask PCA's support through the Creative Communities Initiative to help advance this effort.

Sincerely,

Rick Sauer
Executive Director

Attachment: Letters of Support from Just Act, HACE and City of Philadelphia

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

OFFICE OF HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
1234 Market Street
17th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107

June 25, 2019

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
216 Finance Building
Commonwealth & North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Council:

We are pleased to provide the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts this letter of support for the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporation (PACDC)'s letter of Intent for its ArtsPowered Places initiative as an important resource for Neighborhood Advisory Committees (NACs) operating in the City of Philadelphia. The Division of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) believes that the training and technical assistance that will be provided, along with community planning practices, can play a major role in helping some of our city's poorest neighborhoods develop resident driven solutions to issues that impact people where they live.

DHCD have a contractual relationship with PACDC to provide technical assistance and training to Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC). NACs lead and engage residents in eligible neighborhoods in activities that support the City's core objectives, including:

- Promoting neighborhood sustainability through programs addressing homelessness prevention, energy conservation education, housing preservation, neighborhood safety, and health and wellness
- Ensuring resident participation in City planning and development initiatives

PACDC's dedication to advocacy, housing policy and technical assistance for community development corporations and other organizations is essential to rebuilding communities and revitalizing neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

PACDC is a professional organization that cares about Philadelphia's residents. We look forward to working with the NACs, community members, and PACDC to help see this work flourish.

Thank you in advance for considering PACDC for its ArtsPowered Places initiative.

Sincerely,

Elhadji Ndiaye,
Neighborhood Program Coordination Unit Supervisor

HACE

June 25, 2019

Rick Saur
Executive Director
Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations
1315 Walnut Street, Suite 1600
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Mr. Saur

HACE enthusiastically supports the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations (PACDC) as they seek funding to develop and implement Art-Powered Places Phase 2 in collaboration with Just Act! and the National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations.

Our Neighborhood Advisory Committee members who collaborated with PACDC on the initial Art-Powered Places work were very energized by the process and results, which enabled them to build stronger networks across our constituency. Consequently, we look forward to the prospect of building on our collaboration to showcase the outstanding artists and creativity here in North Philadelphia and to using that to build on HACE's overall efforts to revitalize our disinvested neighborhoods.

We thank the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts for the opportunity to express our thanks and our support for PACDC's application to continue this work.

Sincerely,

Maria Gonzalez
President & CEO

Statement of Support
Art-Powered Places 2019-2021

On behalf of Just Act, I am writing in support of Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporation's (PACDC) proposal to the NEA for an Our Town grant to fund Art-Powered Places from 2019-2021. This project will utilize and cultivate awareness of the value of theatre and arts-based strategies to support resident-driven community growth. Just Act is committed to increase knowledge and awareness of local needs and assets as well as the barriers related to community health and well-being. Our organization is dedicated to relationship-building and cross-sector collaboration and lending support to the development of action steps to address these localized needs through the planning and implementation of resident-driven creative placemaking projects. Our experience in partnering with PACDC in 2017 was instrumental in helping Just Act recognize the value of cross-sector initiatives to support positive changes on a neighborhood level. I strongly support this grant application and its' focus on identifying and challenging social injustice and engaging neighborhood residents as partners and core creators of an arts-based change process integrally connected to the development of creative placemaking projects.

Just Act *activates* a local community's assets and hopes by *collaborating* with diverse groups and creatively facilitating communication amongst them to collectively generate *transformative* solutions. The result is the creation of public spaces that promote people's health, well-being and supporting leadership capacity that aligns with their core values. Our mission has guided Just Act to work with local communities and their diverse assets to facilitate dialogue and collectively generate solutions to local issues. Theatre and art-based strategies play a key role in both the process and outcome of Art-Powered Places. As a non-profit whose signature is the application of artistic techniques and methods to facilitate group engagement, Just Act's commitment to arts and asset-based resident-driven planning and placemaking is in perfect alignment with PACDC's project goals.

In 2017, we formed a genuine partnership with PACDC and the 4 Neighborhood Advisory Committees (NAC) with whom we piloted Art-Powered Places. Through this statement of support, Just Act acknowledges the roles and responsibilities we will fulfill for the implementation of Art-Powered Places in 2019-2021. Just Act will take responsibility leading the design and facilitation of the project from pre-planning with PACDC, to orientation sessions for the original cohort of 4 NACs as well as the newly recruited 4 NACs; from the design and facilitation of the actual on-site theatre and arts-based sessions with residents and local artists in the neighborhoods served by each NAC, to supporting artist and NAC implementation of their respective creative placemaking projects.

Lisa Jo Epstein, Ph.D.
Executive Director
lisajo@justact.org