pennsylvania
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

PCA Creative Communities
Letter of Interest Coversheet

Lead Applicant Information

Organization: HACE

Address: 167 W Allegheny Ave

City: Philadelphia **Zip Code:** 19140

Municipality: Philadelphia **County:** Philadelphia

Phone: 215-426-8025

Website: www.hacecdc.org

FEIN: 23-2142317

Contact Name: Maria Gonzalez

Contact Title: Executive Director

Contact Phone: 215-426-8025-3002

Contact Email: mgonzalez@hacecdc.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.).

HACE

June 28, 2019

Sarah Merritt
Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
216 Finance Building
Commonwealth & North Streets
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Ms. Merritt,

HACE, also known as Hispanic Association of Contractors and Enterprises, is so grateful that the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts is launching the Pennsylvania Creative Communities Initiative because we also believe in the importance of community-driven artistic and cultural endeavors for our neighborhoods. Since 1982, HACE has been engaging in commercial corridor revitalization through art and culture, primarily in El Centro de Oro (The Golden Center) corridor. HACE's work along El Centro de Oro has gained regional and national attention for its management of the Main Street Program, which supports local small businesses, and the streetscape improvements that were implemented, which feature metal palm trees on some corners and golden waves paved into the sidewalk. The metal palm trees and golden waves that sparkle in the sun represent the local population of Caribbean islanders and help remind them and visitors of Caribbean culture. These artistic streetscape improvements won an award from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Pennsylvania for HACE's engineering designs. HACE's corridor revitalization efforts also include working with Mural Arts Philadelphia to complete large murals along our commercial corridors to highlight the local Latino culture.

The two neighborhoods that HACE focuses on serving, Fairhill and St. Hugh, are diverse communities that are generally recognized as the traditional center of Latino commerce as well as cultural and social activity in Philadelphia. These neighborhoods are located in Eastern North Philadelphia and combined they represent the heart of Philadelphia's Latino community. The total population of this target area is approximately 19,346 people. Fairhill (census tracks 176.01 and 176.02) and St. Hugh (census track 195.01 and 195.02) include some of Philadelphia's most distressed areas, exhibiting high poverty rates alongside some of the lowest income levels in the city. HACE's target neighborhoods do not have large institutional employers that contribute to the economic health of the community. For this reason, HACE has been providing support to our commercial corridors, which contribute to economic vitality by providing jobs in retail and service industries to residents of both the St. Hugh and Fairhill neighborhoods. Through the Main Street Program, HACE has been supporting small business owners in El Centro de Oro commercial corridor, which runs along North 5th Street from West Huntingdon Street

hacecdc.org
167 W. Allegheny Ave. ▪ Suite 200 ▪ Philadelphia, PA 19140
F 215 426-9122 ▪ T 215 426-8025
A Non-Profit 501 (c) (3) Community Economic Development Corporation
Equal Housing Opportunity

to West Clearfield Street and on Lehigh Avenue from 6th Street to 4th Street, and the Front & Allegheny corridor, which runs along North Front Street from West Indiana Street to West Westmoreland Street and on West Allegheny Avenue from Howard Street to Lee Street. El Centro de Oro is known for Taller Puertorriqueño, a non-profit organization that preserves and develops Puerto Rican arts and culture, as well as Centro Musical, a small business which has been family owned for three generations and which promotes Latino culture through the sale of Latino music, musical instruments, and items from the Caribbean. You know you are in El Centro de Oro when you visit the intersection of 5th Street and Lehigh Avenue and you hear Latino music welcoming you from Centro Musical. The Front & Allegheny commercial corridor is known for its variety of Latino restaurants and retail stores. Fredy and Tony's two locations in the corridor are known for their authentic Puerto Rican cuisine that attracts residents and visitors from other parts of the city. Jerry's Ladies Fashions also attracts many visitors to the corridor with their wide selection of clothing, including quinceañera dresses.

Although Fairhill and St. Hugh are known for their rich Latino culture, these neighborhoods have been deemed part of the Philadelphia Badlands, which is an area in North Philadelphia that is known for recreational drug sales and drug-related violence. HACE has been working to combat this stigma and bring more positive attention to the neighborhoods. Through funds from the Creative Communities Initiative, HACE will implement summer programming that will mark the communities as vibrant cultural destinations instead of Badlands. With a better reputation, we hope that our neighborhoods will attract more visitors to foster needed economic development. We plan to host a Night Market in partnership with The Food Trust and Siempre Salsa to begin the programming. This event will take place directly on El Centro de Oro, so a few blocks on North 5th Street will be closed to allow food trucks to line the street. Along with tasty treats from the food trucks, residents and visitors will enjoy live Latino music from local artists. Summer programming will continue in partnership with Siempre Salsa with monthly Salsa Nights that will also feature local musical artists as well as salsa dancing, which is an integral component of Latino culture.

We know that our summer events will advance our objectives of re-branding the communities and advancing economic development because we have had successes with cultural and artistic events in the past. For the past 11 years, HACE has been hosting the well-attended Fiesta Caribeña, a festival that brings the community together to provide information about social services in the area as well as entertainment for the whole family. The event features live Latino music provided by either a local artist or other artists that are well-known in the communities as well as a variety of local dance groups. Additionally, the event offers adults and children opportunities for artistic expression through various creative activities in which they produce art to take home. HACE also partners with Taller Puertorriqueño, Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Raíces Culturales Latinoamericanas, and, this year, Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha to present to the community Feria del Barrio every year in September, during Hispanic Heritage Month. This year will mark the 35th year of Feria del Barrio, which celebrates Latino culture with live music and dance, Latino food, arts and crafts, and more. This event receives many visitors as well as media attention, promoting a positive image of our communities.

HACE also engages the community in art and culture through the gallery in the Business and Visitors Center and outdoor public art. The Business and Visitors Center is located in El Centro de Oro and it is visited by residents seeking community resources which are provided there as well as business owners seeking assistance. Visitors are also invited to view the art gallery in the back of the building, which

features rotating art collections by local artists. HACE hosts community events in the gallery so there is more exposure to the art. Currently, we are exhibiting art by Marta Sanchez. In addition to working on culturally appropriate and attractive murals with Mural Arts Philadelphia, HACE has also commissioned art works for Jose Manuel Collazo Playground and the parts of Gurney Street that run along the old Conrail train tracks. The Gurney Street art, which was installed in September 2018, along with HACE's cleaning efforts have beautified and reclaimed this area that used to be a homeless camp filled with drugs and litter. Art along Gurney Street includes bright metal structures containing art and writing. The art installation was designed by artist Marta Sanchez and it includes lines of poetry by David Acosta. The poetry reclaims the space and the community, stating "They call this the Badlands but this is where my memories live" and "Return love." These artistic endeavors have garnered media and community attention and we hope to build upon this positive attention with our summer programming.

It is our successful partnerships with local artists and organizations which have led to productive artistic and cultural programming. With funding from the Creative Communities Initiative, we will once again partner with The Food Trust and Siempre Salsa to provide the community with an annual Night Market and monthly Salsa Nights in the summers. The Food Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to making healthy, affordable food accessible to all. Siempre Salsa is an initiative with the goal of growing the audience for authentic salsa music in the Philadelphia region via educational and entertainment events. This year we had our first Night Market with The Food Trust on May 9, 2019. Many business owners and residents were happy to have the event in El Centro de Oro as it presented an opportunity to listen to Latino music, dance, eat a variety of foods, and meet new visitors. According to a poll conducted by The Food Trust, there were about 7,500 attendees, with about 45% of them being visitors who had never been in the neighborhood before. 85% of the attendees polled said that they would rate the event a four or a five out of five stars. HACE worked with Siempre Salsa to hire a local DJ and band for the event. Likewise, HACE is partnering with Siempre Salsa to host Salsa Nights the second Friday of June, July, and August for the first time this year. Our first Salsa Night was a hit as the community enjoyed listening to a local band and dancing together. To finance these events, HACE received private funds which may not be available to us in the coming years. $25,000 in funds per year from the Creative Communities Initiative will ensure that these events remain alive for the next few years.

HACE is committed to its communities and the rich cultural and artistic potential within these communities. We hope that you will also see the possibilities in Fairhill and St. Hugh and fund our summer programming to bring the community together, showcase the vibrant Latino culture of North Philadelphia, and help spur economic development in the area. If you have any questions, please call me at 215-426-8025 or email me at mgonzalez@haceedc.org. We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Maria N. Gonzalez
President of HACE

The Food Trust

Ensuring That Everyone Has Access To Affordable, Nutritious Food

June 28, 2019

Maria N. Gonzalez
President
HACE
167 W. Allegheny Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19140

RE: HACE's Summer of Salsa

Dear Maria,

On behalf of The Food Trust, I am writing this letter of support for HACE's application to The Pennsylvania Council of the Arts Creative Community Pilot Initiative. HACE focuses on providing support to the residents and business located in the Fairhill and St. Hugh Neighborhood. For this grant opportunity, The Food Trust will partner with HACE on hosting a series of community festivals featuring Salsa Music. To kick off the program HACE will host a night market on "El Centro de Oro" business corridor followed by monthly salsa nights at Fairhill Square Park. "El Centro de Oro" corridor is at the heart of the Latino community in eastern north Philadelphia. HACE plans to increase social cohesion and efficacy as resident and business owners participate in the Salsa events.

The Food Trust is a non-profit organization, founded in Philadelphia over 25 years ago. Our mission is to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy decision. Working with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers, we have developed a comprehensive approach to improved food access that combines nutrition education and greater availability of affordable, healthy food.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with HACE and anticipate the positive community impact that this activity will continue to produce towards the transformation of the Fairhill and St. Hugh Neighborhood.

Sincerely,

Yael Lehmann
President & CEO
The Food Trust

One Penn Center 1617 John F. Kennedy Blvd. Suite 900 Philadelphia, PA 19103 www.TheFoodTrust.org Phone (215) 575-0444 Fax (215) 575-0466

SIEMPRE SALSA PHILLY
111-B Lombard Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

June 26, 2019

Maria N. Gonzalez, President
HACE
167 W. Allegheny Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19140

Re: HACE's Summer of Salsa

Dear Maria,

On behalf of Siempre Salsa Philly, I am pleased to support HACE's application to the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts' Creative Community Pilot Initiative. I support HACE's efforts to promote economic development and community through art and culture for the residents and businesses located in the Fairhill and St. Hugh neighborhoods. For this grant opportunity, Siempre Salsa Philly will partner with HACE to host a series of community festivals featuring salsa music. To kick-off the series, HACE will host a Night Market on "El Centro de Oro" business corridor followed by monthly Salsa Nights. "El Centro de Oro" corridor is at the heart of the Latino community in Eastern North Philadelphia and salsa music is an important component of Latin culture so, these events will highlight Latino culture and community. Our goals are to increase social cohesion and promote our Latino neighborhoods as residents and visitors participate in the Night Market and Salsa Nights.

Siempre Salsa Philly is a non-profit initiative created in 2015 by Jesse Bermudez, Rob Bernberg and Carlos Sanchez to preserve and foster the growth of salsa music throughout the Philadelphia region. Towards that end, Siempre Salsa Philly produces the City of Philadelphia's Annual Siempre Salsa Philly Week celebration in July, presents a variety of cross-cultural educational programs dealing with salsa music's history and promoting the many social, mental and physical benefits associated with salsa music and dance and produces salsa music concerts and dance events that create performance opportunities for local salsa musicians and dance instructors.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with HACE and anticipate that these activities will continue to produce a positive community impact that will contribute to the transformation of the Fairhill and St. Hugh neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Robert G. Bernberg
Siempre Salsa Philly

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
CITY COUNCIL

MARIA D. QUIÑONES SÁNCHEZ
ROOM 330, CITY HALL
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107
(215) 686-3448 or 3449
Fax No. (215) 686-1936

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June 25, 2019

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

Dear Council,

I am pleased to provide this letter of support to HACE as they seek funding from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts to implement the "Summer of Salsa in Fairhill" to promote and celebrate Latino culture.

HACE's community development approach focuses on using El Centro de Oro and the Front Street & Allegheny Avenue commercial corridors with their unique Latino cultural character as anchors to rebuild the surrounding core neighborhoods. The health of many of the neighborhoods in Philadelphia is linked to the economic viability of our commercial corridors that provide employment opportunities, goods and services to our residents.

HACE utilizes cultural events to showcase the positive aspects of the Fairhill Neighborhood that support the business activity along El Centro de Oro and to attract new investments to benefit residents of this community. In addition, art is a catalyst to help change the negative stigma that this community has suffered by being called the "badlands". Art is a great way to build communities and to celebrate the unique

Thank you for considering this proposal, and I look forward to this promising opportunity to bring this exciting and much needed programming to further empower the Fairhill community.

Respectfully,

Maria D. Quiñones Sánchez
City Council, 7th District