pennsylvania
COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

PCA Creative Communities
Letter of Interest Coversheet

Lead Applicant Information

Organization: Spiral Q

Address: 4100 Haverford Ave

City: Philadelphia **Zip Code:** 19104

Municipality: Philadelphia **County:** Philadelphia

Phone: 215-222-6979

Website: www.spiralq.org

FEIN: 23-2890559

Contact Name: Jennifer Turnbull

Contact Title: Co-director, programs & finance

Contact Phone: 215-222-6979

Contact Email: jennifer@spiralq.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.).

Spiral Q
Letter of Interest for the PA Council on the Arts Creative Communities Pilot Initiative

Brief community description

Since 2014, through its PLACE initiative, Spiral Q's has targeted much of its work within its home community which encompasses the Powelton, West Powelton, Millcreek, Belmont and Mantua neighborhoods in West Philadelphia. It is situated in the federally designated Mantua Promise Zone which has a median household income of $18,499 and 39.1% of the residents live below the poverty level, as compared to $36,669 and 24.2% citywide (Lower Lancaster Revitalization Plan). While culturally rich in tradition, heritage and strong social bonds; it has been disenfranchised by high levels of poverty, characterized by underfunded schools with limited or no budgets for art.

The Promise Zone initiative is a 10-year federal designation created to address the challenges present in high poverty areas. Promise Zones accomplish this by bringing community stakeholders together to implement plans that reflect community priorities in the areas of economic development, education, public safety, affordable housing, and health services. The West Philadelphia Promise Zone spans approximately two square miles and is bounded by the Schuylkill River to the east, Girard Avenue to the north, 48th Street to the west, and Sansom Street to the south. The population of the West Philadelphia Promise Zone area is about 35,315 and the overall poverty rate is over 50 percent. While the neighborhoods in the designated area have significant needs, they also have many assets, including well-organized civic groups, access to public transportation, Lancaster Avenue's growing commercial corridor, and proximity to some of the region's largest employers.

Existing cultural plans in the PLACE neighborhoods include:

Several existing neighborhood plans addressing neighborhoods in the PLACE community include arts-based development strategies:

***Make Your Mark* – The Lower Lancaster Revitalization Plan (2012)**, is a resident-driven plan focused on communities surrounding Lancaster Avenue between 37th & 48th streets. It focuses on "improving our quality of life and planting the seeds for a broader transformation." Plan recommendations are targeted toward protecting and enhancing local identity with an emphasis on the arts, entrepreneurship and expressing Lower Lancaster's historic legacy.

We are Mantua! Key Neighborhoods Initiative: (Mantua Transformation Plan) (2012)
Identified several key neighborhood priorities: improvements in education and recreation opportunities for youth, increased economic opportunities, community safety, healthy lifestyles, expansion of housing opportunities, and improved access to retail and services as well as revitalization of the physical Environment and improved capacity for civic engagement.

The West District Plan (2018), a component of the City Planning Commission's Philadelphia 2035 Plan includes Belmont, Mantua and Millcreek among the 12 neighborhoods addressed in the plan.

The Mantua Greenway plan was driven by a vision to create a safe and beautiful corridor that reflects the culture and the people that live in the Mantua neighborhood. The proposed greenway links to the existing West Bank Greenway to improve residents' access to the Schuylkill River Trail, Fairmount Park, the Art Museum, and the Zoo. A public art component will beautify the greenway.

In addition, the research report: **A Fragile Ecosystem: The Role of Arts & Culture in Philadelphia's Mantua, Powelton Village, and West Powelton Neighborhoods** summarizes research on arts participation in Mantua, Powelton Village, and West Powelton conducted by a team of faculty and students from Drexel University. Through focus groups and interviews with both residents and representatives of cultural and civic organizations they assessed the cultural ecosystem of the target neighborhoods, identified many arts, cultural and creative assets and recommended connecting the neighborhoods' cultural assets to the area's civic agenda and its collaborative opportunities and inclusion of the cultural assets in community planning efforts.

Experience implementing arts-based development strategies:

Spiral Q's PLACE initiative has focused the majority of its education, neighborhood and advocacy projects toward cultivating intentional connections within our home community. This includes building relationships with residents, neighborhood leaders and associations, artists, businesses, and a diverse array of community organizations. These relationships have resulted in exciting and impactful projects and partnerships and invitations to do more.

- Through the **SPARQQ (in Schools West)** initiative, for the past five years Spiral Q has established meaningful connections with school leadership, teachers, students and families at three neighborhood public schools. Spiral Q artists engage students in project-based residencies that culminate in school-wide neighborhood parades.
- Through the **Spirit of the People** performance series, Spiral Q coordinated and facilitated a series of performances in collaboration with the Mantua Interfaith Community Collaborative, simultaneously bringing together various faith communities and highlighting neighborhood musical talent through public, secular performances.
- **Art Action: Community Creating Safety and Awareness** was an Art Place America Project that Spiral Q coordinated with the People's Emergency Center to bring together the Community Education Center, Tiny WPA, LA21, Traction Company, New Africa Center, and the 16th Police District to artistically engage residents around community safety.
- **Crank It Up West Philly** was a collaborative community effort commissioned by the City's Office of Arts Culture & Creative Economy. In partnership with multiple city agencies (including the neighborhood library and recreation center), Spiral Q artists gathered stories and memories from long-time residents toward the creation of *We Remain: Our Light, Our Legacy*, a performance and giant illustrated scroll that lifts up neighborhood identity and history in resistance to gentrification. It has been performed in a park on Lancaster Avenue Day, at the West Philadelphia planning meeting, and at multiple West Philadelphia public schools.
- **"The Bottom Branding a Bustling Ave"** is an art project designed by Spiral Q with LA21 Business Association and the People's Emergency Center to boost community and economic development along the Lancaster Avenue corridor. Three neighborhood elder artists worked with Spiral Q and the public to design 4 posters representing businesses along the corridor and producing visual branding that reflects the existing, predominantly African American, culture in the face of neighborhood change. Posters were distributed to businesses and screen printing days in public spaces engage community members in hands on art-making and ownership of artwork.
- Spiral Q appeared in and supported the planning of the annual **Lancaster Avenue Parade** in partnership with the Lancaster Avenue 21 business association.

- **Martin Luther King Day Walk for Peace** (January 2018) saw Spiral Q facilitating an allyship between multiple neighborhood entities that had previously held separate MLK Day events. Spiral Q worked with a neighborhood Reverend, Mantua Civic Association, New Africa Center and the 16th Police District through event planning, providing arts programming to 75 youth plus participating residents at a local recreation center the day of, and supported a direct action to preserve an important historical marker.

Relevant successes outside of West Philadelphia include:

- **Chinatown Connections Project** - Creation of neighborhood parade used as visibility and base building process (focusing on the participation of elders and children/families) toward safer streets for local pedestrians galvanized community power and led to relevant legislation in city council.
- **Norris Square Parade Project** - Spiral Q organized a collaborative three-year neighborhood parade tradition that led to a grassroots community mobilization in the streets against drugs and violence in a 4th year, with leaders crediting their parade experience as the reason they were able to mobilize.

Community opportunity or challenge the organization would like to address:

With funds from the PCA, Spiral Q would like to collaborate with community members to address threats to their neighborhoods' cultural legacy and history and residents' shared desire for a "vibrant arts and culture corridor" as articulated in the Lower Lancaster Avenue Plan and other planning processes. For years, development and gentrification have encroached on these long-standing West Philadelphia neighborhoods, pushing many of the residents out and threatening neighborhood cultural identity.

Spiral Q has a long history of bringing communities together and engaging residents of all ages in shared visioning and planning. Using similar strategies, Spiral Q artists will tap into the talents of the number of arts organizations, non-profit organizations and community and business associations and other community groups with a vested interest in equity, community stability and vitality.

Spiral Q sees an opportunity to advance its mission of building strong and equitable communities by leveraging its community engagement expertise and demonstrated track record for facilitating the design and creation of artwork that captures the fears, hopes and dreams of residents and amplifies their voices. We've used our arts engagement strategies to connect those less likely to be able to participate due to disenfranchisement and the enormous responsibilities they carry, with those who are driving community planning processes.

Spiral Q will utilize its network of partnerships within the neighborhoods comprising its PLACE initiative and leverage partnerships citywide, to support community members in developing and implementing an arts and cultural preservation plan. We will convene and organize as many community partners as possible to develop a theory of change and a strategy to achieve strong and equitable community development in the face of rising housing costs. We will examine existing plans and figure out how to leverage our practices and networks for the good of our community with a clear focus on preserving and celebrating the existing cultural legacy of the Lancaster Ave. corridor and surrounding neighborhoods. We expect that the relationships built and strengthened through the project will extend beyond the project and will be leveraged to address other community issues.

LA21CDC
LANCASTER AVENUE
21ST CENTURY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
(A Community Development Corporation)

Engage Educate Inspire

3500 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19104
◈Visit us: **www.la21philly.org** ◈ **T. 267.241.9199** ◈ **E. la21info@la21philly.org**
◈**Facebook – lancasterave21st** ◈**Twitter - @lancasterave21** ◈ **Instagram - @lancaster21**

June 25, 2019

Sarah Merritt
Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities
216 Finance Building
Harrisburg, PA 19120

Dear Ms. Merritt,

Lancaster Avenue 21st Century Business Association Community Development Corporation (LA21CDC) lends its full support to Spiral Q's application to PCA's Creative Communities Pilot Initiative. As a proponent of the West Philadelphia arts scene and a local leader in community development, LA21CDC enthusiastically supports this project and is excited about its potential impact.

LA21CDC's West Philadelphia communities continue to face a wide variety of issues related to decades of neglect and limited access to information and resources. With numerous investments being made in parts of our target area and the subsequent neighborhood changes brought on by the expansion of local colleges and institutions, our community is at a tipping point between affordability and gentrification. Through creative placemaking we seek to help chart a fair and equitable future for our community - one which preserves and enhances our unique identity through dialogues around race and culture and the promotion of local culture and heritage.

As main arts partner in this work, Spiral Q has helped lead the way in facilitating community discussions around equity and inclusion. Through our recent ArtPlace America grant LA21CDC partnered with Spiral Q and others on a series of workshops, public performances, and design-build events along the Lancaster Avenue commercial corridor in an effort to foster dialogue around public safety and cultural identity. Partnering with Philadelphia Police Department's 16th District, this arts-centric approach to community organizing has helped address issues related to public safety through arts programming and creative placemaking. Goals achieved include improved police and community relations, an increased sense of public safety, and the promotion of an inclusive and accessible community in which all residents can feel safe and can thrive in place.

Prior to collaborating on our ArtPlace grant, LA21CDC and Spiral Q have collaborated for three years during Lancaster Avenue Day festivals (LA DAY). Spiral Q has and continues to be instrumental during LA DAY parades highlighting the visual branding of Lancaster Avenue. Spiral Q through its Lancaster Avenue poster design project is helping LA21CDC reach business owners on our commercial corridor, ensuring the importance of using arts and culture to identify, grow and improve customer base. Through this process LA21CDC and our business members and stakeholders all saw a significand increase in the brand awareness of Lancaster Avenue. Furthermore, using art through our partnership with

LA21CDC
LANCASTER AVENUE
21ST CENTURY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
(A Community Development Corporation)

Engage Educate Inspire

3500 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19104
Visit us: **www.la21philly.org** **T. 267.241.9199** **E. la21info@la21philly.org**
Facebook – lancasterave21st **Twitter - @lancasterave21** **Instagram - @lancaster21**

Spiral Q will continue to identify key issues of great importance to our community such as racial tension, equity, and displacement here in West Philadelphia.

We see the Creative Communities Pilot Initiative as an opportunity to allow our organizations to continue this important work in West Philly – promoting equity and inclusion while at the same time increasing the volume on the local arts scene. We are thrilled that Spiral Q is taking the lead on this effort, and wholeheartedly support their request to the PCA for support.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kwaku Boateng

Kwaku Boateng
Executive Director
267-242-9199
Kboateng@la21philly.org
Lancaster Avenue 21st Century Community Development Corporation (LA21CDC)

LIVE + EAT + SHOP = Lancaster Avenue

We strive to make Lancaster Avenue a desirable destination to shop, eat and locate a business through maintenance and beautification projects and the promotion of a positive identify for our members and stakeholders. With a positive sense of community we will achieve this through advertising, PR, events, sponsorship, festivals and the preservation of the historic and architectural character of Lancaster Avenue.

Community Education Center
3500 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19104-4916
www.cecarts.org • cec@cecarts.org

June 28, 2019

Sarah Merritt
Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities
216 Finance Building
Harrisburg, PA 19120

Dear Ms. Merritt:

The Community Education Center (CEC) is pleased to support Spiral Q's application to PCA's Creative Communities Pilot Initiative. As one of the city's oldest and most accessible public art spaces, we enthusiastically support this project and look forward partnering with Spiral Q and others on this important work. We know that if funded the project has the potential to make a significant impact on our West Philadelphia communities.

The CEC has been involved in community development through arts engagement for many years. In the early 2000 we along with other arts organization on the Lancaster Avenue, where the center has served as an anchor institution since its founding in 1973, founded 2nd Fridays on Lancaster Avenue. We sought to change the negative image of the Avenue and the surrounding area with the event meant to bring people out to shop after the usual business hours by offering performance and art exhibits. 2nd Fridays on Lancaster has continued to today. This is one of several opportunities the Center has had to collaborate with Spiral Q. The CEC is also on the board of the Lancaster Avenue Business Association CEC and is the lead organization in the planning and implementation of the associations project, the Lancaster Avenue Corridor Festival, another initiative that uses the arts and businesses to spur community development and that Sprial Q is a collaborator on.

The CEC was fortunate to be a partner on the People's Emergency Center CDC's recent ArtPlace America grant with several organization including Spiral Q. Though not the lead organization, they were very important to the process and the success of the creative placemaking project using their skills as community organizers to facilitating community discussions around equity and inclusion.

Our West Philadelphia community has changed a lot since the early 2000 when we sought to change the negative image of our community and uplift it through arts and business community engagement. But the community still has a long way to go to become the positive empowered community that it can and should be. We believe that the arts have an important role to play in uplifting our community. This is a critical time for the community due to the rapid changes brought on by gentrification, there is a critical need for us to come together and work to secure a fair and equitable future. We believe the creative placemaking project that will be developed and lead by Spiral Q and with its collaborators will be a positive force for change in our community.

The Creative Communities Pilot Initiative will provide an opportunity for our organizations to continue this important work in our community. We know that Spiral Q is the right organization to lead on this effort and we are ready to get to work!

Sincerely,
Theresa Shockley
Theresa Shockley
Community Education Center (CEC) Executive Director
cec@cecarts.org 215-387-1911

Philadelphia Contemporary
1112 N. Bodine St.
Philadelphia, PA 19123
philadelphiacontemporary.org

June 27, 2019

Sarah Merritt
Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities
216 Finance Building | Harrisburg, PA 17120
Phone: 717.787.1521
Email: skmerritt@pa.gov

Dear Sarah Merritt,

Philadelphia Contemporary proudly supports Spiral Q's request for funding to create an arts and cultural preservation plan in action, and advance their existing creative placemaking efforts. We believe their request is valuable because it will strengthen connections between organizations (art and non-art) and businesses, as well as artists and individuals in the Mantua, Powelton Village and West Powelton neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

The Creative Communities Pilot Initiative grant will allow Spiral Q to take the work they do to the next level by creating a tightly networked arts and cultural plan for our neighborhood. It will create and bolster bonds between organizations with similar goals and ideas for connecting with the local community and furthering their agendas. This will help to eliminate siloed arts work that often duplicates itself and does not work with the local community to create something new.

This initiative is highly relevant to the increasingly community-focused work that we do at Philadelphia Contemporary, as we are in the midst of our capital campaign to build a new art space just blocks away. Although we are not a direct collaborator for this project, we foresee numerous opportunities to work with Spiral Q in creating their arts and cultural preservation plan in action, in addition to our own upcoming programs.

We highly recommend Spiral Q's plan to create an arts and cultural preservation plan in action, and advance their existing creative placemaking efforts, and look forward to hearing about its success. We appreciate your efforts in giving this proposal your full attention. Please let us know if we can be helpful in providing any additional information. We can be contacted at sunanda@philadelphiacontemporary.org.

Sincerely,

Sunanda Ghosh, Director of External Relations, Annie Chiu, Development and Operations Manager & Nicole Pollard, Program Coordinator