

GUIDELINES FOR PA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS' Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program

DUE DATE: TBD by [the PA Partners in the Arts \(PPA\) partner organization for your region](#).

Please contact [your regional PPA partner organization](#) for the exact date.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Applications accepted on a rolling basis.

GRANT AMOUNT: Ranges from \$500 - \$2,000, in addition to business planning resources.

Agency Mission
To strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts.

Overarching Value: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Promote equitable access for all Pennsylvanians to participate fully in a creative life and in the diverse forms of arts and culture in the commonwealth.

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Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program Description and Purpose

This program is designed to pair access to existing small business consulting services with financial resources up to \$2,000 for creative entrepreneurs who aspire to start their own for-profit business or who operate an existing for-profit micro business. Creative entrepreneurs are invaluable assets to communities. They lead innovation, deliver creative products and services, generate economic opportunity, and build community identity. Assisting creative entrepreneurs is part of the pathway to recovery and increased opportunity within a rapidly changing economic environment.

Additionally, this program advances and prioritizes the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' overarching value of diversity, equity, and inclusion and prioritize investment in creative entrepreneurs who identify as Black, Indigenous, or persons of color (BIPOC) or those located in and whose work benefits low-income communities as defined under federal guidelines. For the purpose of the Program, low-income communities are those where the poverty rate is greater than or equal to 20% or the median family income is less than or equal to 80% of the area median income. (You may use [this tool](#) to help determine whether you are located in a community that is classified under federal guidelines as low-income.)

Download the [Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program info sheet \(PDF\)](#)

Eligibility and Additional Information

Applicants must:

- Have not received Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Funding in the past three years (Creative Entrepreneurs are eligible to apply for the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program once every three years).
- Be at least 18 years of age and a current resident of Pennsylvania for at least one year.
- Creative entrepreneur's business must have gross revenue less than \$200,000.
- Be a creative entrepreneur intending to form a business or operating a business in Pennsylvania within one or more of the following creative industry areas:
 - Marketing – Advertising and marketing agencies & professionals
 - Architecture – Architecture firms & architects
 - Visual Arts & Crafts – Galleries, artists, artisans & makers
 - Design – Product, interior, graphic, and fashion design firms and designers
 - Film & Media – Film, video, animation, TV & Radio businesses
 - Digital Games – Companies, programmers & individuals producing games.
 - Music & Entertainment – Producers, venues, musicians & performers
 - Publishing – Print or electronic businesses & content creators, editors & writers

Eligible Uses of Funds

Funds must support business formation or development. Eligible uses of funds include:

- Professional fees for workshops, consultants, and career coaching.
- Participation in events, trade shows, festivals, etc. that offer access to audience and revenue generation potential.
- Business development fees for courses or seminars for business skills.
- Research and development.
- Marketing and promotion.
- Development or upgrades to technology related to business practices.
- Studio/rehearsal/retail space rent.
- Reasonable fees for supporting/collaborating artists.
- Purchase of supplies and/or equipment.

Funds cannot be used for the following purposes:

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- Activities outside the funding period.
- Activities that have a religious purpose.
- Payments to lobbyists.
- Activities for which academic credit is given.
- Offsets to regular business operating costs, including regular salary or wages.
- Hospitality, food, or beverages.

Application Process

This program is administered regionally by the PCA's [Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts \(PPA\) Partners](#), in cooperation with a network of small business development organizations, including [the PA Small Business Development Centers](#). To learn more about the program in your county and participating referral coordinators, contact your regional [PPA partner](#).

- Creative entrepreneurs will first receive consultation services from and business plan review by a local small business development organization (known as "referral coordinators" for the purposes of this program). Business consultation services will be provided at no cost to interested creative entrepreneurs. (See "Referral Process" below.)
- Referral coordinators can guide entrepreneurs with the processes and methods for starting a business, development of a sound business plan, and business growth and sustainability strategies.
- Once a referral coordinator has reviewed a creative entrepreneur's business plan, they will refer the creative entrepreneur to the regional PPA partner organization.
- Upon receiving the referral, the PPA partner will send application materials to the creative entrepreneur.
- After receiving an eligible and complete application, the PPA partner will enter into an award agreement with the creative entrepreneur and process a grant up to \$2,000. (see "Referral Process" below).

Referral Process

- Eligible entrepreneurs must engage a PPA Partner designated Referral Coordinator in at least one consultation regarding a business formation or development activity.
- The Referral Coordinator will confirm that the client has demonstrated appropriate business planning as defined by the program guidelines (see below).
- The Referral Coordinator must submit a completed referral form to the PPA Partner.
- Referral of a creative entrepreneur to a PPA Partner does not guarantee funding will be made; the PPA Partner will make determinations of eligibility and availability of funds.

For the purposes of the Program, "viable business plan" means evidence of planning directed at forming a for-profit business or pursuing sustainable growth opportunities for an existing for-profit business. Evidence of planning may take a variety of forms and may be assessed by the Referral Coordinators' existing methods of working with clients.

Examples of appropriate planning include, but are not limited to:

- New business brief.
- Completed Business Model Canvases.
- Participation in business planning workshop.
- Streamlined pitch deck.
- Recorded business pitch presentation.
- Extensive business plan.

About the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA)

The PCA is a state agency under the Office of the Governor. The PCA's mission is to strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts. By leveraging the immense potential of Pennsylvania's arts and cultural sector, the PCA supports jobs, builds community, inspires lifelong learning, promotes the commonwealth nationally and internationally, and sparks innovation. For more information about the PCA, visit arts.pa.gov.

Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) Overview

Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts (PPA) is a partnership between local organizations and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA). Operating in all 67 Pennsylvania counties, [PPA partners](#) re-grant PCA funds to support a wide variety of local and community arts activities. PPA goals include:

- Expanding constituent access to the arts by (a) making arts programs available to communities that may have been underserved in the past by state arts funding, and (b) supporting a wide variety of arts activities in communities, developed in a variety of local settings.
- Encouraging and supporting local decision making in regranting of arts dollars.
- Increasing awareness of and advocacy for government support and funding for the arts at the local and state levels.
- Enabling the PCA to provide increased assistance to its broad constituency throughout the state.

How to apply

STEP 1 READ THIS DOCUMENT.

STEP 2 APPLY through the applicable [PPA partner organization](#).

Need help?

- Contact the applicable [PPA partner organization](#) for your region.
- For general questions about the CEA Program and/or the PCA's PPA partnership, contact [Amanda Lovell](#).

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