

GUIDELINES:

PA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

2025 CREATIVE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

DUE DATE: Friday, November 22, 2024, at 5 p.m. EST
PLEASE NOTE THAT NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GRANTED

CALL FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA), a state agency, supports the role of the creative sector as vital to vibrant, livable communities.

PCA'S Mission

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

PCA's 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.

Creative Communities Program Purpose

The purpose of the Creative Communities program is to provide multi-year funding to community-driven, arts-based projects that serve as catalysts for livability, economic development, and community connectedness. Also called creative placemaking or placekeeping, the funded projects will have a demonstrated, positive impact on their respective communities.

Creative Communities Program Goals:

- Strengthen communities through the arts and encourage creative expression and engagement to enhance community well-being.
- Promote and support a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Empower communities that have experienced disinvestment and support grassroots leaders and residents in addressing local challenges.
- Advance community revitalization and resilience and foster sustainable growth and adaptability.
- Cultivate deep community engagement and encourage active participation in community projects.
- Celebrate unique community identities that highlight what makes each community special.
- Build authentic partnerships through collaboration with local government and organizations, and artists and culture bearers.
- Invest in the creative sector through support of artists, creative small businesses, and cultural initiatives.
- Address community challenges positively by leveraging community assets to tackle pressing issues.

Funding Amount: Up to \$25,000 per year for up to four years.

Funding Restrictions:

In general, the PCA does not fund the following:

- Activities for which academic credit is given;
- Activities that have already been completed;
- Activities that have a religious purpose;
- Performances and exhibitions not available to the general public;
- Performances and exhibitions outside Pennsylvania;
- Cash prizes and awards;
- Benefit activities;
- Payments to lobbyists; and/or
- Competitions.

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Eligibility

- Project must be place-based.
- Required partnership of at least two organizations, one of which will serve as the lead applicant.
- Lead applicant must be a unit of government, nonprofit (501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) organization.
- Lead applicant organization must be located in the Pennsylvania community or county where the project will take place.

Please note: this funding opportunity is NOT designed to support established programs or ongoing operations and is not to be used as an annual source of funds.

Selection Process

1. Letter of Interest (LOI)
2. LOI review and site visits with selected communities
3. **Application, by invitation only**
4. Funding selection made through panel review of applications. PCA's governing council maintains final authority regarding selection of and award amounts for all Creative Communities projects.

LOI Submission Instructions

LOIs must be submitted via email to RA-OAcreativepa@pa.gov no later than Friday, November 22, 2024, at 5 p.m. EST.

(Please note: LOIs will not be accepted after the deadline. PCA staff cannot make exceptions.)

1. LOI submission must include:

- 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 Initiative program.
- B. Narrative Content (3 pages max.)
 - Brief description of the community in which the project will take place.
 - Description of the community opportunities and/or challenges the partners would like to address through the project.
 - Description of successful collaborations between partners for proposed project.
 - Description of past and planned inclusive community engagement activities to inform the proposed project.
 - Description of how artists and culture bearers will be included in the project from planning through implementation.
- C. 3 Letters of Support (e.g. local government, planning, convention and visitors' bureau (CVB), business improvement district (BID), chamber of commerce, local arts organization, etc.).

2. LOI Review and Virtual Community Site Visit Selection Process

- A. Review of LOIs -Letters will be assessed for viability and program alignment.
- B. PCA staff will contact communities selected for site visits.
- C. PCA staff and panelists will review site visit findings and select communities for invitation to complete an application.
- D. Applications reviewed by panelists and recommendations for approval of two-to-four presented to PCA's Council at July 2025 meeting.

For questions and advice regarding this process:

Contact Sarah Merritt, Director of Pennsylvania Creative Communities & the Creative Economy at skmerritt@pa.gov.