

UPDATED OCTOBER 2023

CREATIVE ENTREPRENEUR ACCELERATOR *Grant Program*



GREATER PITTSBURGH
ARTS COUNCIL
Arts loud and clear



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COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Overview

As part of their new community-centered strategic plan, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA) launched the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator grant program to help creative entrepreneurs grow their businesses and revenue.

This program advances the PCA's values of diversity, equity, and inclusion by prioritizing investment in socially or economically disadvantaged creative entrepreneurs and those who are located in, and whose work benefits low-income communities. **Fifty-one percent of the funds available for distribution in this program will be reserved for Black, Indigenous, or persons of color (BIPOC), or economically disadvantaged creative entrepreneurs and those who are located in and whose work benefits low-income communities.** Low-income communities will be identified using the Small Business Administration's low-income communities map. Nonprofit businesses will not be able to receive support through the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator grant.

For a text-only or Spanish version of this document, please visit PittsburghArtsCouncil.org

Performers in art installation by Andrea Peña, resident artist at the Mattress Factory Museum.



Why Creative Entrepreneurs?

Creative entrepreneurs are invaluable assets to communities. As a creative entrepreneur, you 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 our rapidly changing economic environment. Providing a pathway for creative entrepreneurs to grow their businesses strategically helps foster thriving Pennsylvania communities that are great places to work and live.

Works from Colorism: Looking Outside the Brown Paper Bag by Ashley A. Jones.



Purpose

The purpose of this program is to support Pennsylvania's creative entrepreneurs as they grow their business, audience, and revenue. This program will invest in socially or economically disadvantaged creative entrepreneurs. By doing so, the program will advance the PCA's priorities of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The Arts Council is administering this grant on behalf of the PA Council on the Arts for Allegheny, Beaver, Greene, and Washington counties.

All grants will be in the amount of \$2,000.

Eligibility

Creative entrepreneurs are eligible to apply for the Creative Entrepreneurs Accelerator grant program once every three years. Applicants must:



Be at least 18 years of age and a current resident of Pennsylvania for at least one year.



Manage a business with gross revenue of less than \$200,000 or intend to form or operate a business in Allegheny, Beaver, Greene, and Washington counties.



Operate in one or more of the following creative industry areas:

- **Marketing** – Advertising and marketing agencies and professionals
- **Architecture** – Architecture firms and architects
- **Visual Arts & Crafts** – Galleries, artists, artisans, and makers
- **Design** – Product, interior, graphic, and fashion design firms and designers
- **Film & Media** – Film, video, animation, television, and radio businesses
- **Digital Games** – Companies, programmers, and individuals producing games
- **Music & Entertainment** – Producers, venues, musicians, and performers
- **Publishing** – Print or electronic businesses and content creators, editors, and writers

Sculpture made of folded metal by Dan Droz.

Applications will open on January 1, 2024, and will be due on February 16, 2024.



Guidelines

How the Program Works

This program will provide access to qualified small business consulting services and critical financial resources for creative entrepreneurs who aspire to start their own business or who operate an existing micro-business (i.e., a very small company that has few employees and little to no turnover).

Before applying to the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator program, creative entrepreneurs receive consultation services and a 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 prospective applicants. Contact information for Referral Coordinators is available on page 9 in this document.

The Referral Coordinators can help with the details, first steps, and general obstacles of starting a business including the development of a sound business plan and business growth and sustainability strategies. Referral Coordinator services are available on an ongoing basis.

Guidelines, continued

Once a Referral Coordinator has reviewed a creative entrepreneur's business plan and determined eligibility, the Referral Coordinators will refer the creative entrepreneur to their regional PPA partner, which is the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council for applicants in Allegheny, Beaver, Greene, and Washington counties.

Upon receiving a completed referral from a designated Referral Coordinator, applicants may submit application materials through the Arts Council website. Applying is simple, and includes the creative entrepreneur's request for financial support and intended purpose and use of grant funds.

Upon receipt of an eligible and complete application, the Arts Council will enter into a grant award agreement with the creative entrepreneur and process the grant payment.

The Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator grant is first come, first serve. Funds will be replenished by the PA Council on the Arts on a to-be-determined cycle.





Funds must support business formation or development. Nonprofit businesses are not eligible for support under this program.

Eligible Use of Funds






- Professional fees for workshops, consultants, and career coaching
- Participation in events, trade shows, and festivals that could support audience and revenue generation
- Fees for relevant courses or seminars on business development
- Marketing and promotion
- Development or upgrades to technology related to business practices
- Studio, rehearsal, or retail space rentals
- Reasonable fees for supporting or collaborating with artists
- Research and development
- Purchase of supplies and equipment



Ineligible Use of Funds

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

Submission Process

-  Review guidelines and eligibility criteria for the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator (CEA) grant as listed on the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council website.
-  Download the referral form for the CEA grant.
-  Arrange a meeting with one of the designated Referral Coordinators on page 9 for business plan review.
-  Return to the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council website to submit application.
-  Once you have a signed and approved referral form, click the “apply now” link on the Arts Council's CEA grant page. Upload your completed and signed referral form, your business plan, and other important submission documents.

Please note: The deadline to reach out to Referral Coordinators to ensure that they will be able to review your business plan prior to the application deadline is February 1, 2024. We cannot guarantee that any requests made to meet with the Referral Coordinators after this date will be able to occur prior to the application deadline.

Not sure which Referral Coordinator you should reach out to?

If you already have a solid business plan, we encourage you to reach out to Allison Howard at Duquesne University. If you do not have or are looking for assistance in building a better business plan, please reach out to either Michelle Price at Chatham University or Meghan Hillegas at the University of Pittsburgh.



Duquesne University
Allison Howard
 Business Consultant
 howarda5@duq.edu
 412-396-1632



Chatham University
Michelle Price
 Community & Membership
 Engagement Coordinator
 m.price@chatham.edu
 412-365-1384



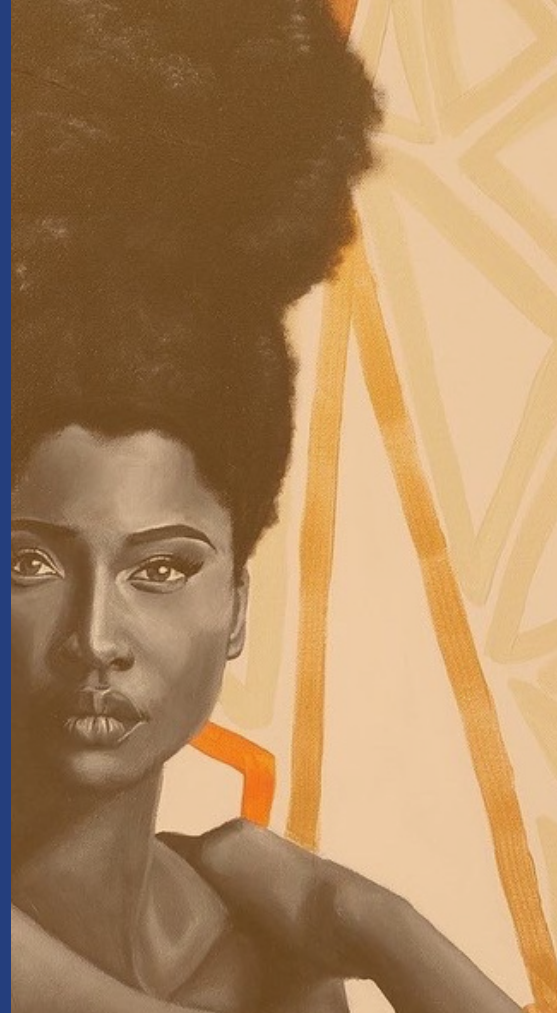
University of Pittsburgh
Meghan Hillegas
 Management Consultant
 mhillegas@innovation.pitt.edu
 412-624-0119

Important Note:

- Eligible entrepreneurs must engage an Arts Council designated Referral Coordinator in at least one consultation regarding a business formation or development activity.
- Referral Coordinators must determine the appropriateness of a referral to the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator grant program using the referral criteria.
- Referral of a creative entrepreneur to the Arts Council does not guarantee that a grant will be made; the Arts Council will make determinations of eligibility and availability of funds.
- If you would like to speak with a Spanish-speaking Referral Coordinator, please reach out to either the University of Pittsburgh or Duquesne University.

Criteria for Referral Approval

- Entrepreneur intends to form a creative business or operates a creative business within the specified creative industry areas in Pennsylvania.
- Entrepreneur has a viable business plan or plan that demonstrates knowledge of the following:
 - Understanding of product or services
 - Understanding of target consumer or audience
 - Plan to reach target audience or consumer
 - Clear budget for one year of operation using the funds
 - Goals, benchmarks, and metrics to evaluate success
- Grant-supported activities have strong potential to grow audiences and revenues for the entrepreneur.
- The proposed budget and use of funds is appropriate for business goals.



Top image: The guitarist of Baba Commandant & The Mandingo Band plays at Bottle Rocket Social Hall.
Middle image: A Black woman is the focus of a painting by Ashanté Josey, part of her series Free Mind.
Bottom image: María Nuñez, a dancer with Alba Flamenca, performs in an Uptown studio apartment.



On the left: Jeffrey Smith holds a piece of his handcrafted beaded embroidery.
On the right: a shelf of decorative and functional ceramic pieces by Andrew J. Collins.

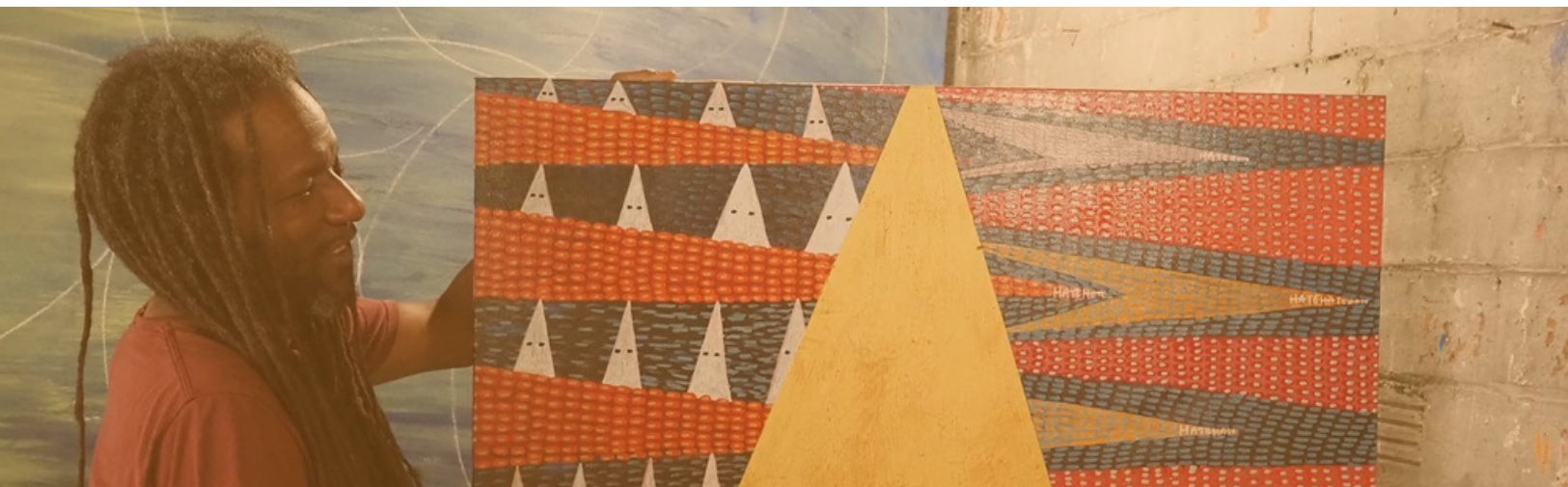
Business Plan Submission

We understand that there are a number of different ways to write and express a business plan. You can write your business plan in the way that best suits your business' needs. However, every business plan must demonstrate an understanding of the following:

- *Understanding of product or services*
- *Understanding of target consumer or audience*
- *Plan to reach target audience or consumer*
- *Clear budget for one year of operation using the funds*
- *Goals, benchmarks, and metrics to evaluate success*

If you do not have a business plan, please feel free to use the business plan template provided below. The use of this template is completely optional, however, submission of a business plan is mandatory.

Ulric Joseph holds his painting which features repetitive mark making.



Business Plan Template

Summary

Please briefly describe the proposed business. You will want to make sure to answer the following:

- What is the mission and vision of this business?
- How will you do this work?
- Who is your target audience?
- Where will you do this work?
- Who leads, or will lead, this business?

Identity and Objectives

Describe the nature of your business.

- Is your business a product, service, or process?
- What activities will take place to execute your business during the proposed funding period?
- Create a timeline for your major goals in the operating year and the primary tasks necessary to reach them.

Management

- Who are the individuals responsible for executing this work?
- Who leads this business?
- What are their respective skill sets, education, and experiences?
- What are each individual's responsibilities?



Finance

Please briefly describe the proposed business. You will want to make sure to answer the following:

- What is the total cost for the first year of operation?
- List all expenses for the operating year. This may include marketing, hiring contractors, renting space, operating utilities, equipment, product or art supplies, and more.
- What is the total amount of money you plan to earn in this operating year?
- List all income you expect to earn during the operating year. This may include grants you expect to receive, donations you plan to receive, and loans you plan to take.



Marketing

Demonstrate an understanding of your target audience and articulate how you will reach them.

Who is your target audience? Be as specific as possible. You may use the following demographics and psychographics, or use your own:

- Place of residence
- Income level
- Age
- Cultural Background
- Religious Background
- Race and Ethnicity
- Hobbies and Interests
- Access to Technology, Transportation, Etc.



Marketing, continued

How will you reach this target audience? Describe your strategy. You may reference this list of marketing platforms if it is helpful:

- **Traditional Marketing**
 - **Television**
 - **Print Advertisements (Newspapers)**
 - **Radio**
- **New Media Marketing**
 - **Social media**
 - **Email**
 - **Phone**
- **Organic Marketing**
 - **Word of mouth**
 - **Referrals**

What are your plans to reach the general public, or audiences beyond your target audience? This question is not mandatory.

A visitor at James Gallery contemplates a painting by Catherine Fichtner.

About the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

Founded in 2005 after the merger of ProArts and the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Alliance, the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council is the Local Arts Agency serving Southwestern Pennsylvania, with a primary presence in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh.

To the benefit of the community, the Arts Council supports the time, talent, and work of artists, culture bearers, art educators, art workers, and arts organizations — reinforcing an environment so that ambitions, imagination, innovation, and risk taking can thrive in the Greater Pittsburgh Region.

Our four primary pillars of service are:

- **Developing and Strengthening the Arts Ecosystem**
- **Framing and Guiding Cultural Investment and Action**
- **Grantmaking**
- **Facilitating Community Connections**

Have questions? Please reach out to the Arts Council's grantmaking team.

Phone Number

412.391.2060 x222

Email Address

grants@pittsburghartscouncil.org

Website

PittsburghArtsCouncil.org



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