



CREATIVE ENTREPRENEUR ACCELERATOR PROGRAM GUIDELINES

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program is designed to pair access to existing small business consulting services with financial resources for creative entrepreneurs who aspire to start their own for-profit business or who operate an existing for-profit micro business.

The Program's purpose is to help creative entrepreneurs to grow their business, audience, and revenue. The Program will advance the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' overarching values of diversity, equity, and inclusion by prioritizing investments to creative entrepreneurs who identify Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC) and those who are located in and whose work benefits low-income communities as defined by the [Small Business Administration](#).

WHY CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS?

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.

Providing a pathway for creative entrepreneurs to grow their businesses strategically helps **foster thriving Pennsylvania communities that are great places to work and live.**

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Funding decisions will be made four times throughout the year, as follows:

- December 1, 2021
- February 1, 2022
- May 2, 2022
- August 1, 2022

FUNDING AMOUNTS

Funding amounts range from \$500 to \$2,000.

ELIGIBILITY

Creative entrepreneurs are eligible to apply for the Creative Entrepreneurs Accelerator Program **once every three years.**

Applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Be a current resident of Pennsylvania for at least one year. To apply through the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, you must reside in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, or Philadelphia county.

- 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 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, TV and radio businesses and creators
 - **Digital Games** – Companies, programmers and individuals producing games
 - **Music & Entertainment** – Producers, venues, musicians & performers
 - **Publishing** – Print or electronic businesses and content creators, editors and writers

ELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

Funds must support business formation or development. Eligible uses of grant 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 of or upgrades to technology related to business practices
- Studio / rehearsal / retail space
- Reasonable fees for supporting / collaborating with artists
- Purchase of supplies and equipment

INELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

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

HOW TO APPLY

1. Go to www.philaculture.org/CEA and review guidelines and eligibility criteria.
2. Complete the client information form via Submittable at www.philaculture.submittable.com
 - a. If you are determined to be eligible, you will receive a message connecting you with one of the designated referral coordinators (listed below).
3. Meet with a referral coordinator either through a one-on-one consultation or by participating in a business planning workshop. The referral coordinator will share specific information about these options with you.
4. The referral coordinator will submit a referral form to the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance determining if you qualify for a full application.
5. Once an approved referral has been received, you will be sent the full application to complete online via Submittable.
6. A funding determination will be made based on eligibility and availability of funds.

REFERRAL COORDINATORS FOR GREATER PHILADELPHIA CULTURAL ALLIANCE

- Temple University SBDC (Philadelphia, Montgomery, and Bucks Counties)
- Widener University SBDC (Delaware and Philadelphia Counties)
- Kutztown University SBDC (Chester County)
- Lehigh University SBDC (Upper Bucks and Northern Montgomery Counties)
- The Enterprise Center (specifically for BIPOC entrepreneurs with existing businesses)

REFERRAL PROCESS

- Eligible entrepreneurs must engage a 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 (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 this 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

FOR QUESTIONS OR FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact Allison Vanyur at grants@philaculture.org.

The Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program is an initiative of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA), a state agency under the Office of the Governor. The mission of the PCA is to strengthen the cultural, educational, and economic vitality of Pennsylvania's communities through the arts.

arts.pa.gov