

Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program Guidelines

Program Purpose

The Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program (the “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 value of diversity, equity, and inclusion and prioritize 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](#).

Application Deadline

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis.

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 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 equipment.

Funds cannot be used for the following:

- 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.

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

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.

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