

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.

Grant Amounts

Grant 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 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 or upgrades to technology related to business practices.
- Studio/rehearsal/retail space rent.
- Reasonable fees for supporting/collaborating artists.

- Purchase of supplies and equipment.

Grants funds cannot be used for the following:

- Activities outside the grant 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.
- Referral coordinator must determine appropriateness of a referral to the Program using the referral criteria.
- Referral of a creative entrepreneur to a PPA Partner does not guarantee a grant will be made; the PPA Partner will make determinations of eligibility and availability of funds.

Referral Criteria

- Entrepreneur intends to form a business or operates a business within the specified creative industry areas in Pennsylvania (refer to list of eligible creative industry areas).
- Entrepreneur has a viable business plan (see below).
- Potential for the proposed grant-supported activities to grow audiences and revenues for the entrepreneur (entrepreneur can use the Program funds to further the business plan).
- Appropriateness of proposed budget and use of funds (refer to Program guidelines that detail the grant amount range and eligible and ineligible uses of grant 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