



## Pennsylvania Creative Industries

Powered by Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

### 5-Year Action Plan Overview

Each Creative District will develop a 5-year Action Plan that outlines how the district will grow, strengthen, and activate. This plan should be grounded in the findings from the asset mapping community engagement activities and the district map. The Action Plan focuses on five required planning areas, with goals, objectives, and actions identified for each.

The Action Plan should be forward-looking, realistic, and aligned with the district's unique strengths and opportunities. It is not intended to restate information already provided elsewhere in the application.

Communities that have already completed an action plan or strategic plan must consult with Creative Industries staff to ensure alignment with Creative District program goals and requirements. The guide and template are provided to support communities at the very beginning of the Creative District process, offering a framework to organize priorities, engage partners, and outline strategies. Communities may adapt the template as needed, but all plans should clearly demonstrate how priorities were developed, how partners and community members were engaged, and how the district intends to move its goals forward.

#### Definitions

**Goal** - A broad, long-term outcome the district wants to achieve within a specific planning area. *Goals describe direction and intention – the “what” you want to accomplish.*

**Objective** - A focused, measurable component of a goal that breaks it into smaller, actionable parts. *Objectives clarify the “how” you will move toward the goal.*

**Action** - A specific step the district will take to achieve an objective. *Actions identify the concrete tasks – who will do what, and when.*

#### Required Planning Areas

For each of the following areas, districts will identify at least:

- **2-3 Goal(s)** for the next five years
- **1-3 objectives** that support each goal
- **1-3 actions** for each objective

Actions should include:

- Lead partner and supporting partners

- Timeline (Years 1–2, Years 3–4, or Year 5)
  - Years 1–2: Foundational work
  - Years 3–4: Expansion, deeper partnerships, and program growth
  - Year 5: Evaluation, refinement, and sustainability planning
- Resources needed
- Success measures

The required planning areas are:

### 1. **District Identity, Branding & Marketing**

The strategies and tools the district uses to express its unique character, tell its story, and build recognition. This area focuses on defining what the district stands for, how it presents itself visually and verbally, and how it promotes its creative assets to residents, visitors, and partners. It includes branding, messaging, marketing campaigns, digital presence, and other efforts that strengthen visibility and reinforce a cohesive district identity.

### 2. **Creative Economy & Business Support**

The district’s approach to supporting, strengthening, attracting, and retaining its creative assets. This area focuses on how the district will nurture its creative workforce, arts and culture nonprofits, makers, cultural organizations, creative entrepreneurs, and small businesses by building partnerships and providing resources that advance their work. It includes identifying gaps in the local creative ecosystem, offering professional development and business support, fostering collaboration among partners, and—when needed—working together to recruit new creative enterprises that enhance the district’s overall economic vitality. It also emphasizes ensuring that creative individuals, organizations, and businesses are meaningfully involved in planning, shaping, and implementing district activities and development, reinforcing their role as core contributors to the district’s growth and identity.

### 3. **Public Art & Placemaking**

The district’s approach to creating, maintaining, and activating public art and placemaking projects that reflect local culture and enhance shared spaces. This area includes stewardship of existing artworks, planning and implementing new projects, and identifying the artists, designers, and placemaking practitioners who contribute to the district’s creative identity. It also emphasizes integrating public art into district development and ensuring creative practitioners and community members are engaged in shaping and enlivening public spaces.

#### 4. **Community Engagement & Participation**

The district's approach to involving local entities, creative practitioners, and the broader community in shaping and participating in district activities and development. This area focuses on ensuring that planning and decision-making are informed by community voices, that people are invited into the process in meaningful ways, and that district initiatives create opportunities for connection, belonging, and shared ownership. It includes strategies for outreach, communication, collaboration, and participation that strengthen relationships and ensure the district reflects the people who live, work, and create within it.

#### 5. **Governance, Partnerships & Sustainability**

The Creative District's approach to building and maintaining the structures, partnerships, and resources needed for effective coordination and long-term sustainability. This includes supporting the District Coordinating Organization (DCO) as a central hub for communication, leadership, and accountability. The area focuses on strengthening existing partnerships, developing new collaborations, and establishing clear roles, communication practices, and decision-making processes. It also encompasses strategies for financial sustainability, resource development, and cultivating the people, leadership, and organizational capacity required to sustain the district over time.

#### **Connection to the Asset Map**

The Action Plan should reflect and reference how it works with and builds on the assets:

- How existing assets support planned work
- Where new partnerships or opportunities may emerge
- Gaps or needs identified through mapping

#### **Monitoring & Updating**

Districts will briefly describe:

- Who is responsible for tracking progress
- How often the plan will be reviewed (recommended annually)
- How community input will continue to inform updates

This ensures the plan remains a living document throughout the 5-year designation period.