



2026–2027 Application Guidelines Creative Innovation & Impact Grant Program

Due date: Rolling

Performance period: September 1, 2026 up to August 31, 2029

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About Pennsylvania Creative Industries

Pennsylvania Creative Industries is the new flagship brand of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency. With this name, the Council aims to elevate the creative sector's visibility, engage broader audiences, foster collaboration across disciplines, and underscore creativity's vital role in innovation, economic growth, and community vitality.

In 2025, our Council adopted a new strategic plan with the mission to empower, connect, and amplify creatives and creative industries and their contributions to Pennsylvania's communities, economy, and workforce. Our vision is that Pennsylvania becomes the national leader among states for creative communities, talent, and industries.

To maximize impact and align with state community and economic development goals, Pennsylvania Creative Industries invests resources in five key areas:

- **Asset Development** (e.g., creative organizations, entrepreneurial ecosystem, technical assistance, regional networking).
- **Workforce Development** (e.g., creative skills, career awareness, and employment pathways).
- **Community Development** (e.g., creative placemaking, engagement with local governments, and networking for practitioners).
- **Visibility** (e.g., promotion of creative industries, products and services, and of the contributions and opportunities within our commonwealth's creative sector).
- **Policy** (e.g., creation of policies that promote and foster relevancy and opportunity for creative industries, within governmental and non-governmental agencies and businesses)

Creative Industries Defined

Creative industries encompass individuals, organizations, and businesses that generate goods, services, and intellectual property through creative work. This includes, but is not limited to, advertising, architecture, performing and visual arts, design, crafts, music, media and film production, publishing, and digital games. Innovation, technology, and creative expression unite these diverse sectors.

In 2023, our commonwealth's creative industries contributed \$30B to Pennsylvania's economy and supported nearly 190K jobs. Learn more [here](#).

About the Creative Innovation & Impact Grant

The Creative Innovation and Impact Grant program supports new, multi-year strategies that empower, connect, and amplify creatives and creative industries and their contributions to Pennsylvania's communities, economy, and workforce.

The Creative Innovation & Impact Grant program is designed to support initiatives that drive innovation and sector visibility. Applications to this program should feature creative sector projects that address either visibility, innovation, or both.

- Visibility – Enhance public awareness of creatives and creative industries through marketing, branding, and outreach efforts.
- Innovation – Support new ideas, models, and partnerships that expand the role of creativity in Pennsylvania's communities, economy, and workforce.

Applications must describe projects that clearly extend beyond the applicant's regular programming or services.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation, unit of government; college or university; or school district providing creative sector programming and/or services in Pennsylvania.
 - Applicants are required to provide proof of incorporation and activity in Pennsylvania before an application will be reviewed or awarded funds.
- Fiscal agents and fiscal sponsors are not eligible to apply for Creative Innovation & Impact funding.

Funding Restrictions

Grant funds cannot be used for any of the following:

- Activities that occur outside the Performance Period.
- Activities that have a religious purpose.
- Payments to lobbyists.
- Cash prizes and awards.

- Benefit activities.
- Hospitality expenses.
- Competitions.
- Performances and exhibitions not available to the public.

Please note the following:

- Generally, grant amounts will be between \$100,000 and \$150,000.
- No more than 20% of the grant award may be used for administrative expenses.
- A 1:1 cash match is required.
- Applicants can only receive a Creative Innovation & Impact Grant once every five years.

Narrative and Submission Process

Narrative (*not to exceed three pages*):

1. Describe your multi-year initiative and what makes the project innovative and impactful. Indicate how the project aligns with one or more of Pennsylvania Creative Industries' five key areas. Provide a proposed timeline for each year of the project/initiative.
2. Explain how the project will engage key stakeholders and collaborators, such as other non-profit organizations, tourism bureaus, local governments, and educational institutions.
3. What do you hope to accomplish with your project/initiative? How will this be measured?
4. Describe your relevant experience with comparable projects and/or events.
5. Describe your capacity to carry out the proposed project/initiative.

Required attachments:

1. Proposed project budget including match. Please note if matching funds are committed or anticipated.
2. Letters of Support from collaborators and investors.
3. Examples of similar programs and activities completed by your organization.

Submission process: (*Please note: all questions regarding the application process should be directed to Jamie Dunlap at jadunlap@pa.gov or (717) 525-5542.*)

1. **Read this document thoroughly.**
2. **Before applying**, contact Jamie Dunlap at jadunlap@pa.gov
3. **Register and apply** through Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) grants management system: <https://grants.pa.gov/>.
 - Note: You must register for a Keystone Login in order to apply through the grants management system. You may register here if you have not already: <https://keystonelogin.pa.gov/Account/Register>

4. Submit your application.
5. Please note that the Commonwealth uses ACH to make grant payments. Register for ACH Authorization at the following link, if you have not already done so:
<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pennvest/programs-and-services/financing/ach-authorization-change-form>

Questions?

- For questions, concerns, and issues with Keystone Login call: (877) 328-0995.
- For technical and login questions, contact the Enterprise eGrants Customer Service Center: (833) 448-0647 or egrantshelp@pa.gov.
- For questions about grant application content and required attachments, contact Jamie Dunlap: jadunlap@pa.gov or (717) 525-5542

Proposal Review Process

Review Criteria:

- Alignment with approach: Application demonstrates alignment with one or more of Pennsylvania Creative Industries' five key areas. The approach outlined demonstrates a clear strategy/vision and collaboration;
- Innovation/Impact: Application clearly illustrates innovation and the potential impact of the proposed project/initiative;
- Experience with comparable projects: Application demonstrates the organization's successful history of developing and executing comparable projects and/or initiatives; and
- Capacity: Application demonstrates qualified/experienced organizational and key staff.

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee based on the review criteria included in this document with considerations for geography and reach. Committee recommendations will be presented to the Council, Pennsylvania Creative Industries' governing body.

Council will act on recommendations and has final authority in the awarding of grants. Applicants will be notified about the status of their proposals. Selected proposals will be notified via email with next steps outlining the grant award process.

Appeals Process

The Council recognizes that errors may occur in the application process. The Council is committed to acknowledging any errors and responding to rectify the effects of an error. The appeals process enables applicants to identify these errors and omissions and bring them to the attention of the Council. Appeals may result in a change in the determination of eligibility or the award amount if the applicant can satisfactorily document that an error or omission occurred through no fault of the applicant. Appeals are awarded only if the error or omission had a substantial effect on the evaluation of an application or on the determination of an applicant's eligibility.

Appeals are not intended to provide the applicant with an opportunity to challenge the qualitative assessment of the application. Missing the published application due date or failure to submit required information or documentation are not grounds for appeal.

Applicants considering an appeal should contact the applicable [program director](#) for advice and guidance. The appeal must be made in writing (hardcopy letter) to the Council's [Chief of Staff](#) within ten business days of the date of the notification of the award status from the Council. Appeal letters should identify the error or omission and the effect such error had the Council's application review process. If the appeal is supported, funds will be awarded only if they are available.

Grants under this program are processed under the authority of the act of January 25, 1966 (P.L. 1542 (1965), 71 P.S. Section 1530.1 et seq., as amended, and 58 Pa. Code §301.32.