

Guidelines for Statewide Services – Request for Proposals (RFP) for Creative Sector Impact Investment Research

Application due date: November 27, 2026

About Pennsylvania Creative Industries

Pennsylvania Creative Industries is the new flagship brand of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (Council), 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

The 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 at pa.gov/creative-industries.

About the Statewide Services – Request for Proposals (RFP) for Creative Sector Impact Investment Research

The Council recognizes the value of connecting creative sector enterprises with growth capital. To advance and more fully inform this value point, Council invites proposals from qualified applicants to research and document the impact investment landscape, potential opportunities therein, and related strategic recommendations for Pennsylvania's creative sector.

For this RFP, impact investment is defined as placing capital into organizations, businesses, or funds to generate positive, measurable community and social benefits alongside a financial return.

Proposals must address, but are not limited to, respondents' intended approach to the following project components:

- **Landscape Analysis:** Map and describe Pennsylvania's impact investment ecosystem by geography, potential investors, and investment opportunities.
- **Findings and Recommendations:** Based on data-driven analysis, develop recommendations for an impact investment thesis, strategy, and implementation framework tailored to Pennsylvania's creative sector.

Award Amount

The Council anticipates approving one, non-matching grant award of up to \$150,000.

Project Period

Applicants may propose project durations of up to 24 months.

Eligibility

Applicants must be a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation or university.

Crediting of Pennsylvania Creative Industries

The selected applicant must prominently acknowledge funding from Pennsylvania Creative Industries, powered by Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, in promotions, flyers, programs, media announcements, press releases, websites, social media, etc. by utilizing approved logos, branding, and materials. Pennsylvania Creative Industries will provide relevant brand materials.

Proposal Narrative, Submission, and Review Criteria and Process

Proposal narrative (not to exceed four pages):

1. Describe your organization, including mission and goals, and how your work aligns with the purpose of this RFP.
2. Detail your research approach and implementation plan for this project.
3. Describe your organization's relevant experience with comparable projects and demonstrated outcomes.
4. Describe your organization's capacity to carry out the proposed project.

Required attachments:

- Proposed project budget of up to \$150,000.
- Résumé(s) for key project staff.
- Most recently completed audited financial statements.

Submission process: (Please note: all questions regarding the application process should be directed to Amanda Lovell at alovell@pa.gov or (717) 585-7987)

1. **Read this document thoroughly.**
2. **Before applying,** contact Amanda Lovell at alovell@pa.gov or (717) 585.7987.
3. **Submit your proposal** to Amanda Lovell at alovell@pa.gov by November 27, 2026.

Proposal Review Process

Review Criteria:

- **Alignment with approach:** Applicant's proposal demonstrates alignment with the requirements outlined in the guidelines as it relates to approach, implementation plan, and program budget;
- **Experience with comparable projects:** Applicant demonstrates a successful history of developing and executing comparable projects; and
- **Capacity:** Applicant demonstrates organizational and key staff capacity to carry out the proposed project.

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee based on the review criteria included in this document. 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 proposal. The selected proposal will be notified (via email) with next steps outlining the 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 on 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.