

# Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program



The Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program is a new program funded by the [Pennsylvania Council on the Arts](#) (PCA), a state agency under the Office of the Governor, and administered regionally by the [Pennsylvania Partners in the Arts](#) (PPA), PCA's statewide network of re-granting partners. The [Lehigh Valley Community Foundation](#) serves as the PCA's PPA partner organization for Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, and Northampton Counties.

The Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program is designed to:

- Pair creative entrepreneurs with existing small business consulting services.
- Help creative entrepreneurs grow their business, audience, and revenue.
- Provide financial resources through grants of up to \$2,000.
- Advance the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' overarching value of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Prioritize investments to creative entrepreneurs who identify as Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC).
- Prioritize investments to creative entrepreneurs located in and whose work benefits low-income communities as defined by the Small Business Administration.

## Eligibility Criteria

Entrepreneurs are eligible to apply for the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program once every three years. Applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years of age and a current resident of Pa. for at least one year.
- Intend to form or operate a business with annual gross revenue less than \$200,000.
- Be a creative entrepreneur intending to form a business or operating a business in Pa. 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, 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

**NOTE:** Previous Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program Grantees are eligible to re-apply once every three years, as long as they have maintained the terms of their Grant Award Agreement.



## Grants & Eligible Uses of Funds

Grant amounts range from \$500 to \$2,000. Funds must support business formation or development. Eligible grant uses include:

- + Professional fees for workshops, consultants, and career coaching
- + Participation in events, trade shows, festivals 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

## How to Apply

Lehigh Valley Community Foundation needs to receive a Referral Form from a participating Referral Partner to begin the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program (CEAP) application process.

### CEAP Referral Form

New clients should choose a referral coordinator that serves their area and follow the initial steps outlined on the referral list. Once connected to the referral coordinator, clients will need to complete at least one consultation regarding a business formation or development activity.

- Existing or past clients of any referral partner on the list, may reach out to their contact to request a referral to the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program.
- The referral coordinator will submit the referral form to LVCF on your behalf.
- If eligible to apply, the referred entrepreneur will receive an invitation to apply via email. If the entrepreneur is not found eligible to apply, we will either follow up with the entrepreneur via email to gather more eligibility information or send an email explaining why they are not eligible.

The application form will be online and access will be given to those who are invited to apply.

**Please note:** A referral of an entrepreneur to the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Program does not guarantee a grant will be made.

## Key Dates

| Cycle | Completed Applications Received Between | Will be Reviewed for Funding |
|-------|---|------------------------------|
| 1     | Before March 31, 2025                   | May 2025                     |
| 2     | April 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025           | August 2025                  |
| 3     | July 1, 2025 - September 30, 2025       | November 2025                |

## Questions

### Contact | Mariska van Aalst

Program Officer, Community Impact & Policy  
840 Hamilton Street, Suite 310, Allentown, PA 18101  
610 351-5353, Ext. 17 | [Arts@lvcfoundation.org](mailto:Arts@lvcfoundation.org)



## Participating Referral Coordinators

### [Lehigh University Small Business Development Center](#)

Serving Lehigh and Northampton Counties  
To get started, submit a Request for Service:  
<https://sbdc.lehigh.edu/request-service>  
Phone: (610) 758-3980  
Email: [sbdc@lehigh.edu](mailto:sbdc@lehigh.edu)

### [Wilkes University Small Business Development Center](#)

Serving Carbon County  
To get started, submit a Request for Service:  
<https://pasbdc.ecenterdirect.com/signup>  
Phone: (570)-408-4335  
Email: [lucy.singer@wilkes.edu](mailto:lucy.singer@wilkes.edu)

### [The University of Scranton Small Business Development Center](#)

Serving Monroe County  
To get started, submit a Request for Service:  
<https://pasbdc.ecenterdirect.com/signup>  
Phone: 570-941-4152  
Email: [Leigh.Fennie@scranton.edu](mailto:Leigh.Fennie@scranton.edu)

### [Rising Tide Community Loan Fund](#)

Serving Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, and Northampton Counties  
To get started, call or email Chris Hudock at the contact information below  
Phone: (484)-893-1093  
Email: [chudock@caclv.org](mailto:chudock@caclv.org)

### [Community First Fund](#)

To get started, visit website & mention CEAP to request service, or contact Marilyn Morel  
Phone: (717)-205-6074  
Email: [mmorel@communityfirstfund.org](mailto:mmorel@communityfirstfund.org)

