

Meadville organization receives state funds for art project

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Meadville is among the four communities selected for the pilot phase of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' Creative Communities Initiative.

The initiative supports community-driven, arts-based projects that serve as catalysts for livability, economic development and community connectedness. Each of the four projects will annually receive \$25,000 for a period of four years.

The ARC of Crawford County's community project was selected. The ARC plans a transformation of a vacant lot, located in Meadville's historic business district, into an inclusive community greenspace. The greenspace will include community-designed public art, environmental interventions to address stormwater management and community arts activities.

“The PCA’s Creative Communities Initiative (CCI) is an exciting opportunity for community and economic development and creative industries across Pennsylvania to collaborate on work that will benefit the priorities and identities of our cities and towns,” Gov. Tom Wolf said. “I look forward to seeing how these innovative projects create a lasting mark on their communities.”

The goals of CCI include strengthening the commonwealth’s communities through the arts; fostering livability; supporting authentic inclusive and strong community partnerships; promoting development and implementation of sustainable programs and projects; and investment in Pennsylvania’s creative industries.

“Arts-based community and economic development projects help foster community members’ sense of belonging and deepen their connection to where they live,” said Karl Blischke, executive director of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. “These projects nurture, support, and celebrate local artists and highlight their invaluable contributions to healthy, vibrant, livable communities.”

Some 105 communities submitted letters of interest, from which 15 projects were then selected for site visits by CCI program staff. Ten of these sites were then selected for the application phase, from which the four communities were ultimately selected. The CCI selection committee was composed of community and economic development experts from the public and nonprofit sectors.

The other three projects selected were the Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce in Mercer County; Spanish American Civic Association (SACA) and Millersville University in Lancaster County; and Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition (SEAMAAC) in Philadelphia County.

The Mercer County project includes planning, implementation and programming of a community, arts-based, co-work, incubator and workforce development space, with an emphasis on serving veterans and community members with physical and intellectual disabilities.

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