



Pennsylvania Creative Industries

Powered by Pennsylvania Council on the Arts

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Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Announces Critical Seed Funding to Launch National, Multi-Year Initiative, *Pittsburgh IS Craft*

Pittsburgh – Today, **Pennsylvania Creative Industries, powered by Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA)**, announced \$87,000 in seed funding to launch *Pittsburgh IS Craft* — a first-of-its kind, multi-year initiative with national reach aimed at positioning Pittsburgh as a premier destination for craft in the United States.

Pittsburgh IS Craft is a collaborative initiative led by the Pittsburgh Glass Center (PGC), Contemporary Craft, and Union Project — three well-established Pittsburgh-based organizations offering world-class facilities, exhibitions, and programming across fiber, wood, metal, ceramics, and glass media. The initiative will help drive tourism to the Pittsburgh region for people to see, make, and buy craft through collaborative marketing efforts, elevate Pittsburgh artists in markets across the country, and build meaningful partnerships that ultimately contribute to the local economy.

“*Pittsburgh IS Craft* is a wonderful example of the types of innovative creative sector projects we’re excited to support,” said **PCA Chair Susan S. Cohen**. “We cannot wait to see how this project helps elevate artists and Pittsburgh’s contributions to our Commonwealth’s creative sector.”

Last month, [PCA announced](#) new and expanded opportunities to support projects and programs that raise the visibility of and strengthen the creative sector in Pennsylvania, which contributes more than \$30 billion to the Commonwealth’s economy and supports nearly 190,000 jobs.

PCA’s support provides critical funding to launch the three-pronged *Pittsburgh IS Craft initiative*, which includes:

- Creation of a promotional video to be used at national engagements, and as a dynamic, digital component of the initiative’s comprehensive promotional materials.
- Inclusion of 20+ Pittsburgh artists’ work at the 2026 Seattle Art Fair (SAF), a highly respected national showcase of modern and contemporary art.
- Attendance at and presentations by the *Pittsburgh IS Craft* project partners at three national craft conferences, to reach attendee audiences from all over the country and world.

The launch and funding announcement took place at Contemporary Craft’s blacksmithing studio and brought together PCA Council members with local leaders, organizations, and representatives from arts institutions across the region. Elected officials in attendance included

Senator Pat Stefano, Senator Lindsey Williams, staff from Senator Jay Costa's office, Representative La'Tasha Mayes, Representative Lindsay Powell, Allegheny County Executive Sara Innamorato, and Contemporary Craft and Pittsburgh Glass Center Board Member Rich Fitzgerald.

"*Pittsburgh IS Craft* is so important," said **Senator Lindsey Williams (D-38)**. "We're focusing on these three entities here, but they are economic drivers for the whole region."

"What you're seeing here is an invention—taking siloed areas and coming together to create something brand new," said **Senator Pat Stefano (R-32)**. "This is going to be a great model, not just for Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh region, but I see this spreading across all the Commonwealth and beyond. There's a lot of people in these different industries; I know they're anxious to dive right in and to create an economy around that. That's what's going to bridge everything together."

"The *Pittsburgh IS Craft* initiative brings together three amazing organizations and the whole community of craft makers; not only to uplift the heart of craftmaking in our region, but also to spur economic opportunity in our region as well as to promote diversity of culture in our community, said **Representative La'Tasha Mayes (D-24)**.

"We're so excited to have *Pittsburgh IS Craft* here," said **Rep. Lindsay Powell (D-21)**. "It really gives an opportunity to showcase art that's happening in our communities."

Following remarks, attendees observed live glassblowing and clay demonstrations led by artists from Pittsburgh Glass Center and Union Project and toured Contemporary Craft's studio spaces and exhibitions.

Pittsburgh Glass Center, Contemporary Craft, and Union Project have a successful track record of partnering on shared initiatives. Together, they have identified outcomes for the *Pittsburgh IS Craft* initiative, including increased awareness of the Pittsburgh region as a craft art destination; increased economic opportunity for craft artists; and increased tourism to the Pittsburgh region.

"Pittsburgh's arts and culture sector is a cornerstone of the city's identity. *Pittsburgh IS Craft* will ensure that the arts — and craft in particular — continue to thrive, enriching our community while also contributing to Pittsburgh's reputation as a vibrant, world-class city," said **Pittsburgh Glass Center Executive Director Heather McElee**. "As the arts attract audiences from across the region, the economic benefits extend far beyond the organizations involved, boosting local hospitality, dining, and retail sectors, and supporting a diverse range of small businesses, including craft makers."

"We are excited to announce this partnership and expand our collaborative work," said **Contemporary Craft Executive Director Rachel Rearick**. "The wonderful thing about *Pittsburgh IS Craft* is that it's been here all along—our city fabricated the steel and glass that built the world. Now, we're innovating with these same materials to cultivate a creative economy rich in craft culture. We appreciate PA Creative Industries for recognizing and supporting this work."

"In a region full of potters, we're supporting local artists in the making of amazing studio and production pottery, ceramic sculpture and murals, using ceramics in architectural applications, ceramics as activism, and much more," said **Union Project Executive Director Jeffrey**

Dorsey. “Through the *Pittsburgh IS Craft* initiative, we can bring even more attention to these varied art forms, as well as the diverse artists who make them, in ways that raise cultural awareness and drive economic impact simultaneously.”

About the *Pittsburgh IS Craft* Project Partners

Established in 2001, **Pittsburgh Glass Center** is a nonprofit, public-access education center; and art gallery; a state-of-the-art glass studio; a community builder; and a hub for innovation and creativity. Anyone can take classes, explore the contemporary glass gallery, and watch the live hot glass demonstrations. World-renowned glass artists come to PGC to both create and teach. Learn more at pittsburghglasscenter.org.

Contemporary Craft fosters the use of traditional craft materials, such as ceramic, fiber, glass, metal and wood to make art. The Contemporary Craft community honors the history and heritage of craft, while showcasing modern, exploratory work. The organization’s mission is to engage the public in creative experiences through contemporary craft. Learn more at contemporarycraft.org.

Union Project is a community ceramics center located in Pittsburgh, PA. Since 2001, it has served as a hub for community education and artistic expression. Union Project offers ceramics classes, workshops, and events for individuals of all ages and skill levels. Union Project provides space for community members to connect, create, and celebrate, contributing to the stability and growth of Pittsburgh’s neighborhoods. Learn more at unionproject.org.

The mission of **Pennsylvania Creative Industries, powered by Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA)**, is to empower, connect, and amplify creatives and creative industries and their contributions to Pennsylvania’s communities, economy, and workforce. The agency invests in creative sector asset development, workforce development, community development, visibility, and policy with the long-term goal to help Pennsylvania become the national leader among states for creative communities, talent, and industries. The creative industries contribute more than \$30 billion to Pennsylvania’s economy and support nearly 190,000 jobs. Globally, creative industries contribute \$4 trillion to global GDP and generate nearly 50 million jobs. Learn more at pa.gov/creative-industries.

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