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CRAFTNOW EXPANDS ORGANIZATION AND ECONOMIC IMPACT PROGRAMS FOR CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS

Images: [HERE](#)

PHILADELPHIA, PA | May 11, 2022 – After spending the last year gathering data from past and ongoing programming, Philadelphia-based organization [CraftNOW](#) has successfully launched several initiatives for creative entrepreneurs aimed at increasing their access to economic resources and technical assistance. CraftNOW is a non-profit arts organization launched in 2015 by a consortium of individuals, galleries, museums, universities, retailers, and civic organizations. Last fall, CraftNOW was granted 501c3 status, which has allowed the organization to explore additional and more significant funding streams to support its expanded mission.

CraftNOW Economic Programming and Initiatives

In 2021, CraftNOW launched [CraftECON](#), a series of programs focused on economic opportunity through craft. These programs included resource mapping of retailers and gallerists; assembling a regional artisan database; creating artisan workshops focused on business skills; resource mapping of service providers; sponsoring digital programs highlighting artisans; and connecting makers with developers and architects.

As part of these new initiatives, CraftNOW partnered with Pittsburgh-based [Creative Business Accelerator](#) (CBA) to launch the statewide pilot program [Keystone Alliance for Creative Economies](#) (KACE), formerly the Keystone Alliance for Creative Economies and Entrepreneurship. To date, efforts by KACE organizations led to \$5.56 million in impact investments, the activation of 150,000 in commercial space, \$2.3 million in facilitated product sales, and 2,500 guidance hours. These numbers will change as partners compile and report the impacts of their collective efforts. CraftNOW also created an [Artist and Maker Directory](#) to facilitate peer-to-peer networking among professionals who create work for wholesale or exhibitions. The directory demonstrates the expansive network of artisans based in Philadelphia to collector and consumer audiences.

“CraftNOW’s early partnership in KACE was essential,” stated Adam Kenney, Managing Director of Programs at CBA. “We worked closely with them on launching this initiative and refining the collaborative dynamic. KACE now has seven more organizations on deck to participate, and follow the path CraftNOW established with us.”

As KACE enters its second year, CraftNOW and CBA are processing the data they’ve collected to inform ongoing and future initiatives. While the focus of these programs has been centered on artisans, CraftNOW is collaborating with the [Building Industry Association of Philadelphia](#) to create a series of events to facilitate networking and direct conversations between makers and developers. Furthermore, CraftNOW’s Artist and Maker Directory will include creators in the fabrication and production fields to encourage builders and designers to infuse their projects with locally-made goods.

Another new initiative, [CapitalNOW](#), provides instructive programs to creative entrepreneurs on grants, crowdfunding, and financing while highlighting the business readiness required to secure investments. *CapitalNOW* has provided approximately 1500 hours of instructive programming and helped connect attendees to over \$50,000 in grants and sales. The program also laid the groundwork for a first-of-its-kind conference designed to give attendees access to experts, resources, and peers working in the craft community.

Developed by CraftNOW and Philadelphia-based makerspace NextFab, the organizations presented [Tools of the Trades](#), a three-day hybrid conference focused on connecting artisans to business resources in Philadelphia and beyond. In its inaugural year, the conference provided approximately 1,200 hours of technical assistance to approximately 350 participants.

As the organization promotes these new initiatives, CraftNOW continues providing long-standing educational programming that enriches local communities. Last year, CraftNOW spent approximately \$20,000 in honorariums for partnering organizations to deliver 6,000 hours of craft instruction to 3,000 children across 120 locations at the Philadelphia Parks & Recreation's summer camps. [CraftNOW Create – Summer Camp Edition](#) is set to provide up to 10,000 hours of craft programming to 5,000 campers when it returns for its second year this June.

Combined with its ongoing programming, CraftNOW is in a position to remain an impactful resource to the city's craft scene while promoting it nationally and internationally for years to come. Additionally, CraftNOW has announced the addition of five new board members to further its ongoing mission to unite and strengthen Philadelphia's burgeoning craft community.

CraftNOW Expands Board of Directors

The new board members will join CraftNOW at a key point in the organization's recent history, which has centered on developing programs and initiatives to positively impact craft economies. Tariem Burroughs, Director of Experiential Learning at Drexel University's Dornsife School of Public Health, provides communities with resources they need to thrive through sustainable and innovative programs. An attorney at Duane Morris LLP, Eric Hague advises non-profits and Mid-Atlantic-based clients on wealth transfer, tax planning, and estate and trust administration. Hague also serves on the tax committee of the Probate and Trust Law Section of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

Frances Hoover led the Office of Institutional Advancement at The Philadelphia School, a leading independent school in Center City Philadelphia, before becoming Executive Director of Smith Memorial Playground and Playhouse. Paul S. Stark brings over 40 years of experience in healthcare management, consulting, and executive search and served on the boards of several arts institutions. Vanessa Stella, Director of Marketing for JLL in the Philadelphia market, develops creative campaigns, targeted messaging, and branding strategies for projects that shape spaces, places, and communities.

"The extraordinary range of talents our new board members bring to CraftNOW speaks to our expansive view of how craft can positively impact individuals and communities," said Leila Cartier, Executive Director of CraftNOW. "We are thinking about public health, youth education, sustainable real estate development, and creating direct lines of communication among a variety of sectors like these through craft. Their experiences as industry leaders outside of the arts will also strengthen our capacity as an organization and connect our exhibiting partners and artisans to new audiences."

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About CraftNOW

CraftNOW was founded by a consortium of individuals, galleries, museums, universities, retailers, and civic organizations. Though diverse in background, CraftNOW has been united in its desire to capitalize upon Philadelphia's outstanding resources and highlight the city's continuing role in defining the future of craft. With its inaugural events in 2015, CraftNOW began its mission to showcase the city's community and create opportunities for the public to engage directly with the handmade. CraftNOW is made possible through a collaborative partnership with University of the Arts serving as fiscal agent and funding from the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, CraftNOW's Board of Directors, Raggo Auctions, and many other generous donors. For more information on CraftNOW, visit www.craftnowphila.org.