



**BRIDGEWAY  
CAPITAL**  
Connect Opportunity with Capital

PITTSBURGH  
707 Grant Street  
Suite 1920  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
T 412.201.2450  
F 412.201.2451

ERIE  
1001 State Street  
Suite 1400  
Erie, PA 16501  
T 814.451.1172  
F 814.451.1150

UNIONTOWN  
30 E. Main Street  
Suite 200 E  
Uniontown, PA 15401  
T 412.930.0511  
F 412.201.2451

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### CONTACT

Katherine Chamberlain | Director of Communications  
Bridgeway Capital | 707 Grant Street, Suite 1920 | Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Email: [kchamberlain@bridgewaycapital.org](mailto:kchamberlain@bridgewaycapital.org) | Phone: 412-201-2450 x118

## ErieMade Business Academy to provide hands-on support to emerging and established makers growing in Erie

*Erie Center for Arts and Technology, Bridgeway Capital, and Erie Arts and Culture team up to help creative entrepreneurs and businesses pursue opportunities for growth and impact in Erie County.*

With support from Bridgeway Capital and its Creative Business Accelerator (CBA), the Erie Center for Arts and Technology (ECAT) recently launched the ErieMade Business Academy. Entrepreneurial artists, designers, makers, craftspeople, and micro manufacturers are invited to apply to the six-month program, which will provide one-on-one and peer group support for a wide range of business fundamentals. With access to a new state-funded grant program by Erie Arts and Culture, the three partners bring capacity building and capital to Erie's creative economy.

ECAT will be leading the ErieMade Business Academy with programming support from the CBA and financial support from Bridgeway through its Western Pennsylvania Entrepreneur Diversification Fund, made possible by the Appalachian Regional Commission. By helping Erie's creative entrepreneurs realize financial resilience and social impact, ECAT delivers on its mission of serving communities in need of diverse and adaptive forms of economic empowerment.

The program is also one of many exciting ways ECAT will continue to activate its newly renovated and recently opened Wayne Building. "For many of the youth and adults ECAT serves, meaningful employment will likely be the pathway to become productive and successful members of society," said Jude Shingle, Arts Program Director at ECAT. "By launching the ErieMade Business Academy with Bridgeway, ECAT adds a new entry point to entrepreneurship and increases the possibilities for economic empowerment."

The online application will open on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 on ECAT's website and will be accepted until January 31st, 2022, at 12:00 P.M. EST. There will be a virtual information session on the program on January 13th at 4:30 P.M. Interested creatives can learn more, register for the information session, and apply at <https://eriecat.org/eriemade/>. Selected participants will be notified through email by February 7, 2021.

Up to 20 selected participants will gain insights by working with project consultant and business assistance specialist Kristen Santiago of Ivy + Atlas and Gone Local Erie. "I am already working with many Erie makers and understand their obstacles to success," cites Kristen. "I'm looking forward to working with a group of makers ready to expand and contribute to Erie's economy."

The selected small businesses will undertake an assessment to determine their strengths and weaknesses. This assessment, called the Creative Business Ladder, was designed and implemented by the CBA to help creative business owners find individual pathways of success. "We want ErieMade Business Academy participants to feel confident about their next steps," states Katie Johnson, Associate Director of the CBA. "Tools like the Creative



**BRIDGEWAY  
CAPITAL**

Connect Opportunity with Capital

PITTSBURGH  
707 Grant Street  
Suite 1920  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
T 412.201.2450  
F 412.201.2451

ERIE  
1001 State Street  
Suite 1400  
Erie, PA 16501  
T 814.451.1172  
F 814.451.1150

UNIONTOWN  
30 E. Main Street  
Suite 200 E  
Uniontown, PA 15401  
T 412.930.0511  
F 412.201.2451

Business Ladder will help Erie’s makers access capital, markets, space, guidance, and other key elements to growth.”

One of the key opportunities for the ErieMade Business Academy is business planning support, and Erie Arts and Culture recently launched a new grant program to encourage such strategic thinking. “The timing could not be better for the ErieMade Business Academy,” observes Laurel Mitchell Director of Public Impact at Erie Arts and Culture. “We stand ready to invest in the makers that do the hard work of thoughtfully planning for the future.”

Erie Arts and Culture is one of several statewide partners administering the Creative Enterprise Accelerator Program and grant, and the CBA is one of several referral partners for the region. Funding for the grant was provided through the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA). “The PCA recognizes the importance of organizing and empowering small businesses,” states Karl Blischke, Executive Director of the PCA. “Pennsylvania’s regions are poised to take advantage of strategic investment in creative entrepreneurs.”

###

**About Erie Center for Arts & Technology:** ECAT is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization located in Erie, PA that offers adult career training programs and after school arts programs for teens. These programs are offered at no cost to residents of Erie County. ECAT recently renovated the Wayne School building which serves as a hub for its programming and other community and economic development partners. More information at [www.eriecat.org](http://www.eriecat.org).

**About Bridgeway Capital:** Bridgeway Capital, a Pittsburgh-based social impact investor, operates the Creative Businesses Accelerator (CBA), which empowers makers, designers, artists, and craftspeople to grow and contribute to equitable economic growth. Since 2012, Bridgeway’s Erie office has served Northwest Pennsylvania and invested \$26 million into the Erie region. More information at [www.bridgewaycapital.org](http://www.bridgewaycapital.org).

**About Erie Arts and Culture:** Founded in 1960 as the Arts Council of Erie, Erie Arts & Culture is the regional arts agency for Northwestern Pennsylvania, as appointed by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (PCA). Erie Arts & Culture’s role is to promote, support, and develop culture and creativity at the regional level; ensuring broad opportunities for residents and tourists throughout communities in Erie, Crawford, Venango, Warren, Mercer, and Lawrence counties to engage with the sector educationally, socially, and economically. Erie Arts & Culture’s presence ensures that all communities, regardless of their geographic location or economic status, are systematically and equitably served. More information at [www.erieartsandculture.org](http://www.erieartsandculture.org).