



2017-18 Signage Grant Program

Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship (PA Wilds Center), in cooperation with the region's local visitor bureaus, two Heritage Areas, local, state and federal government partners and many private-sector businesses, in 2016-2017 embarked on a successful effort to restructure and reboot marketing of the Pennsylvania Wilds as a region, which had been largely dormant for a decade due to funding cuts. This effort is now fully underway. Paid campaigns to bring visitors to the region and to inspire stewardship will begin in 2018 and live on many years beyond that. Partners can see how the region is being positioned as an outdoor recreation destination at pawilds.com.

As part of this effort, PA Wilds Center identified a need to assist the many public-facing, place-based businesses and nonprofits in its Wilds Cooperative of PA program -- which are the listings backbone for pawilds.com and serve the traveling public -- to help them better tie into the Pennsylvania Wilds brand through signage. As noted in the *Pennsylvania Wilds Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship*, this brand visibility helps build regional identity and lets visitors know they have arrived at their destination. It can also help small businesses attract new customers and improve their bottom lines. This Signage Grant Program was launched to address this need.

This program is funded through the Department of Community & Economic Development's Keystone Communities Program in coordination with PA Route 6 Alliance. PA Wilds Center greatly appreciates this support to help advance the Wilds brand and businesses participating in The Wilds Cooperative of PA.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of this program are:

- To support place-based businesses and nonprofits that are part of The Wilds Cooperative of PA that want to improve the economic prospects of their establishments through better signage.
- To build a stronger sense of the Pennsylvania Wilds as a destination by having more assets in the landscape co-branded with the Pennsylvania Wilds logo and place name.
- To encourage Route 6/PA Wilds co-branding along the Route 6 corridor in the Pennsylvania Wilds.
- To encourage use of the PA Wilds Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship in signage choices.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

The total funding per Wilds Cooperative member is 50% of the project cost, not to exceed \$500 per member.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Wilds Cooperative of PA member businesses and nonprofits that have brick-and-mortar sites serving the traveling public are eligible for Signage Grants under this program. These would include Wilds Cooperative members that are B&Bs,

unique lodges, campgrounds, visitor centers, galleries, museums, theatres, restaurants, shops, outfitters, guides, professional-level producers/artisans with public-facing studios, craft distilleries, breweries and wineries, retailers and similar venues.

Businesses and nonprofits like these that are just learning of The Wilds Cooperative of PA program and wish to join and apply for a signage grant can do so, but program application materials and payment must be received by the time your Signage Grant application is being reviewed to be considered. (See 'About the Wilds Cooperative of PA,' below for more details).

Applicants must be in good standing with their Wilds Cooperative of PA membership dues (\$105/year), as well as current on their State, County, School District, and local municipal taxes to be eligible for Signage Grants.

Applicants must be located in the 12 ½ counties of the Pennsylvania Wilds, which include: Warren, McKean, Potter, Tioga, Clinton, Lycoming, Forest, Cameron, Elk, Clarion, Clearfield, Jefferson, and northern Centre counties.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

This program is for exterior signage only. This includes:

- Signage on the building
- Signage separate from the building but still on the immediate property
- Awnings with PA Wilds/Rte 6 branding
- Adding PA Wilds branding to existing signage
- Exterior lettering

Ineligible Signs/Projects:

- Neon signs
- Plastic signs
- Billboards
- Wayfinding signs off the immediate property
- Interior window signs

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Pennsylvania Wilds is known for its strong sense of place. The region's rural and historic character are part of what makes it attractive to visitors and residents, so it is important to be good stewards of these characteristics.

The ***PA Wilds Design Guide for Community Character Stewardship*** is a voluntary planning document that highlights how communities in the PA Wilds can protect or enhance their rural character as they grow – whether that growth is due to tourism, resource extraction, or other industries.

The Design Guide is a great resource for developers, planners, architects, business or property owners, revitalization partners and community leaders and all applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the guide prior to applying for a Signage Grant. The Design Guide is available on line at www.pawildscenter.org/community-character-stewardship

Applicants considering integrating the PA Wilds logo into their signage should consult the **PA Wilds Brand Book** for technical information about the brand (fonts, color pallet, etc.) and helpful do's and don'ts. It can be found at: <http://www.pawildscenter.org/use-the-pa-wilds-brand>.

For applicants along Route 6, another design resource is ***The Pennsylvania Route 6 Management Plan, Historic Conservation Strategy and Corridor Management Plan***. Among other strategies, it contains guidelines and

recommendations for the downtowns, commercial districts and public spaces within the Heritage Corridor. The multi-faceted plan can be found at http://www.paroute6.com/planning_efforts.

Sign Design Recommendations

Signs can be one of the most important parts of a storefront. Signs can have a dramatic impact on the overall image of your business and your community. A sign can cause an individual passing by to become a potential customer. Signs that are properly sized, attractively designed, constructed of appropriate materials, and properly located enhance the image of the business and again that of the community. Signs should be designed to complement the façade of the business.

Please note, not only must the sign design be approved by the **Signage Grant Review Committee**, it also must be approved by local Code and Zoning officials and meet all state and local requirements and codes. Signs should be sized to balance, not hide or overwhelm a structure.

This program recommends:

- The use of display windows for creative signage.
- The use of individual lettering on a structure itself to recreate the feel of an earlier era to the time of construction of the building.
- Locating signs to avoid covering or overwhelming architectural details such as cornices, trim, windows, decorative brickwork or other unique structural characteristics.
- Orienting signs to pedestrians, not vehicular traffic. Signs should be detailed so as to appeal to someone proceeding slowly at close range.
- Sign material(s) and design(s) that reflect the period of the building and the design of the storefront along with sign colors that complement the paint scheme of the storefront façade.
- Artisan-crafted signs and quality sign materials manufactured specifically by the sign industry for handcrafted signs such as wood, metal, and urethane.
- Colors should complement the paint scheme of the storefront to distinguish the type of business and create interest without losing community appeal.
- The lettering of the sign should be kept to a minimum and, likewise, the message brief. A logo or illustration may be substituted to communicate the nature of a business.
- Avoid using multiple signs where one sign would be sufficient.
- Where appropriate, using the PA Wilds logo or the regional place name (see example in Chapter 2 of the PA Wilds Design Guide)

APPLICATION PROCESS/PROJECT AWARD

This program opens Nov. 1, 2017. Applications must be submitted online by end of day Nov. 30. Award announcements will be made in mid-December. Winning applicants will have seven months to complete their signage project. All appropriate paperwork must be turned in no later than June 1, 2018 to be eligible for reimbursement.

Upon final approval, the applicant will receive a Letter of Commitment stating the reimbursement grant amount, terms of the improvements and any other provisions related to the project. The applicant can then begin their project. Any work performed, materials purchased, or contracts entered into prior to approval and a completed Letter of Commitment will **NOT** be eligible for grant assistance.

Grants are made on a cost reimbursement basis. The applicant must submit documentation to PA Wilds Center that substantiates that the agreed upon work is complete and has been paid for in full in order to receive the reimbursement check. This documentation shall include photographs of the completed project, final invoice(s) and or receipts, and cancelled check(s) or confirmations of payment in full.

Find the online application portal at: www.WildsCoPA.org.

ABOUT THE WILDS COOPERATIVE OF PA

The Wilds Cooperative of Pennsylvania (WCO) is the core business development program of the PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship (PA Wilds Center). The program covers a quarter of the Commonwealth and focuses on growing and connecting unique place-based businesses, which are vital to creating vibrant, sustainable communities.

The Wilds Cooperative is the main program through which small businesses and nonprofits – from artisans and breweries, to B&Bs and outfitters, to retailers and restaurants, to designers and videographers – engage with the Pennsylvania Wilds brand, networks and platforms.

Functionally, The Wilds Cooperative is the listings backbone for the regional visitor site pawilds.com; the product supply line for the PA Wilds Conservation Shops physical and online stores; and the entry point for those looking to team up on PA Wilds licensed merchandise. It is also the program through which PA Wilds Center connects place-based businesses to each other for mentoring and business-to-business marketing opportunities; where the Center sources most of its contracts; and how it refers businesses to lenders, small business development centers and other service providers.

In other words, The Wilds Cooperative is a lot of businesses cooperating with PA Wilds Center to grow the regional brand in a way that builds local pride, puts more locals to work and keeps more dollars in our rural economy longer.

The Wilds Cooperative is a juried program. Establishments interested in joining can find applications at www.WildsCoPA.org.



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