

Project Profile

Location:

4609 Butler Street
Pittsburgh, PA

County:

Allegheny

Description:

Business
development loan

Total Project Cost:

\$3,729,000



Photography by: Kelly Perkovich, Iris Photography

Lawrence Hall



People:

"Don't give up the ship." That was the final command uttered by Navy Capt. James Lawrence in the War of 1812. Two years later, a Pittsburgh neighborhood was named for him. And in Lawrenceville two centuries after that, Brett Minarik and Phoebe Fraser set out to open a dining hall in an empty warehouse. COVID-19 and a neighbor contesting their zoning approval held them up in court for more than three years and when the couple finally prevailed, "all of the costs had gone up by between 30% and 50%," says Brett.

Progress:

Lawrence Hall's original business plan and financing were a team effort involving the University of Pittsburgh's Small Business Development Corp., the Regional Development Funding Corp., Enterprise Bank and The Progress Fund. Despite the delays and

inflation, that coalition held and delivered a loan package of \$3,729,000.

Impact:

Dining halls bring multiple, passionate restaurateurs under one roof with shared seating. Lawrence Hall brings together four culinary experiences, employing scores of people and partnering with a neighboring organization to train youth in work skills and entrepreneurship. The hall will be anchored by a bar called Dear James – yes, another reference to Capt. Lawrence. And why not? None of it would have happened if Brett or his allies gave up the ship. "I am so grateful and thankful," says Brett, "for the flexibility and the understanding and believing in what we were doing."

This project was financed in part using Pennsylvania Small Business Credit Initiative (PSBCI) funds from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development.

The Progress Fund is an equal opportunity provider and employer.