

This small business or non-profit is owned by, employs, or serves low to moderate income (see definition in the policy to determine exact income limits) citizens.

If checked, please provide a short narrative explaining the reasons you checked this box. Supporting documentation may be requested if there are additional questions by the review committee.

Negative Economic Impact Narrative

Please explain the negative economic impact COVID-19 has had on your business and how the grant funds will mitigate or resolve these impacts. Provide ample relevant documents in support of your case (such as bank statements, tax returns, financial statements, quarterly employment filings, etc).

08/05/22 Please accept the following amendment to this initial proposal:

Since first applying and receiving funds from the Town of Carrboro through their Covid Mitigation Grant Program, The ArtsCenter has learned of new technology that will better serve our needs in offering hybrid meeting and classroom solutions. With this new proposed budget, The ArtsCenter will install 5 conference room monitors in high traffic classrooms, makerspaces and its conference room. In addition, The ArtsCenter will purchase 2 Meeting Owl Pros plus Meeting HQ, manufactured by Owl Labs. The Owl creates an immersive hybrid meeting experience in any space with the intelligent 360° camera, mic, and speaker that gets smarter over time. We believe that this technology, along with the investment of several large HD screens, will be a better use of the funds than what our original plan outlined. The Owl is user friendly and easily transferred from room to room. With this technology, our art instructors can create hybrid classes. As we tract this pandemic, we recognize that we may be living with COVID or even new viruses for the foreseeable future. Ensuring that everyone can participate in the arts is key to our mission. With this technology, we will not only ensure that our patrons can participate in our ArtSchool classes at their comfort level, be it in-person or remotely, we will also reach patrons who have moved away from our community. (In 2021, our online ArtSchool classes reached 23 out of state cities and 16 in state cities). This technology will also allow us to conduct board and staff meetings in a productive and safe way. Early in the pandemic, these meetings occurred via Zoom but now are run in a hybrid format. Our solution to date is clunky and not always successful for those logging in remotely. We have witnessed the success of meetings run with the Owl technology and are confident that this will help us have more productive meetings. We are confident that this solution is a sound investment to ensure that even during times of social distancing, our programs can continue, keeping our patrons, artists, board members and staff safe.

The shuttering of our performance spaces has been a tremendous hardship on The ArtsCenter. Due to Covid19, we had to shutter our performance spaces for most of 2020 and ran a very few and very small in person performances for 2021. We lost 80% of earned income from our performances for 2020 with a total of 69% of earned income overall, including programming and gallery sales. As there was no programming or performance to run, we furloughed three full time staff with full benefits and kept a few managers on at 2/3 time to help manage grants and continue working to pivot into new programming. With a plan in place, we were finally able to bring back much of our management staff

but the loss of revenue was staggering. Many expenses such as utilities, and basic facility upkeep have not gone away, simply because we were closed. Also, while we offered performances and classes online, the rate of participation was much lower than when they are offered in person. Therefore, while we still incurred the expenses of producing and hosting these events, the returns were significantly less than our profits prior to COVID. This model left us in the red and therefore we are a good candidate for this grant.

While we had to shutter our physical organization due to COVID, we remained relevant in the community by offering streaming events to schools, and the community at large. We also continued to offer classes on-line noting that participation in the arts during crisis, is crucial to processing trauma and remaining connected to the community. As state restrictions have allowed, we slowly opened our building, allowing small numbers to view live performances all the while streaming. With the roll out of vaccinations, we are offering more performances and classes but require proof of vaccination. We find that The ArtCenter's community is still hesitant to return to in-person events and our attendance rate is not up to pre-Covid19 numbers.

With the grant funds, we will update our technology which allow us to not only stream performances without using outside contractors, but it will also allow us to offer online classes through a zoom platform. With this technology in place, we will be prepared for any future variants or pandemics that might cause an additional shutdown. We will also be able to expand our mission by offering performances and classes virtually as well as in-person.