Activating Virtual Spaces

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Asheville Art Museum, Inc.

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Application Form

Question Group

Buncombe County requests proposals for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts.

Buncombe County has been awarded $50,733,290 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding), as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. To date, Buncombe County has awarded projects totaling $23,093,499, leaving a balance of $27,639,791 available to award.
Visit http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfundinghttp://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfundingwww.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfundinghttp://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfundinghttp://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfundinghttp://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfundinghttp://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding for details.

This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Buncombe County is committed to investing these funds in projects that:

- Align to county strategic plan and community priorities

- Support equitable outcomes for most impacted populations

- Leverage and align with other governmental funding sources

- Make best use of this one-time infusion of resources

- Have a lasting impact

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

Click here for the full terms and conditions of the RFP

Organization Type*

Nonprofit

Nonprofit documentation

If nonprofit, attach IRS Determination Letter or other proof of nonprofit status.

501 (c) (3).pdf

Name of Project.*

Activating Virtual Spaces

New/Updated Proposal*

Is this a new project proposal or an updated version of a proposal submitted during the earlier (July 2021) Recovery Funding RFP?

Updated version of previously submitted proposal

Amount of Funds Requested*

$103,361.00

Category*

Please select one:

- Affordable Housing
- Aging/Older Adults
- Business Support/Economic Development
- Environmental/Climate
- Homelessness
- K-12 Education
- Infrastructure and/or Broadband
- Mental Health/Substance Use
- NC Pre-K Expansion
- Workforce

Infrastructure and/or Broadband

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

The Asheville Art Museum will strengthen its capacity to respond to the virtual needs of the community quickly, effectively, efficiently, and responsibly by equipping studio and multipurpose spaces with technology to support hybrid in-person and live virtual programming by the Museum and, accessible to community partners. To sustain community engagement through difficult times, the Museum must build its capabilities to create virtual programming. Activating the Museum's virtual spaces will 1) expand public awareness about how the Museum is reaching out to our community and inspire new skills and development, 2) increase visitation of students, educators, residents, and tourists with programming designed to encourage new and repeat onsite participation, 3) utilize technology and training to ensure access through innovative educational experiences.

Project Plan*

Explain how the project will be structured and implemented, including timeframe.

This project will build the Museum's capacity and human resources to respond to new demands for virtual programming, while expanding access through outreach programming for new and existing audiences in the Museum's service area who have previously faced barriers to onsite participation. Providing high quality, authentic virtual experiences for the community will build individual social capital and keep the Museum relevant. We have learned multi-session virtual experiences followed by onsite participation leads to greater long-term learning and engagement. The newly activated virtual spaces will be available for use to our community partners. The Museum will also work with educators, experts, artists, and partners to create programming content.

Activity 1: Improved Virtual Infrastructure (Upon Grant Notification)

The Museum will work with Advanced Data & Network Solutions (ADNS) to identify software and hardware needs to activate our studio and multipurpose spaces. We aim to create Zoom Rooms, software-based room systems that provide integrated experiences for audio conferencing, wireless screen sharing, and video conferencing. The Museum's Zoom Rooms will provide access to programming for the community from anywhere they choose to participate using their desktop or mobile device.

The Museum will also recruit and hire and Learning and Engagement Media Manager to administrate the studio space, multipurpose space, and conference/meeting facilities. This position will set up and operate new equipment for lectures, presentations, performances, staff and trustee meetings, event live streams, classes, and various other programs. They will also provide strategic guidance for software and hardware maintenance.

Activity 2: Museum-wide Staff Training (Ongoing)

Providing training sessions and workshops for Museum staff is a critical project activity. Initial training will begin in Summer 2022 and continue throughout the two-year proposed grant period and beyond. This activity will provide Museum staff with the skills to integrate digital technology into Museum operations. Many art museums across the country lack internal digital expertise and capacity. With this project we aim to increase our ability to leverage technology to engage our community.

Activity 3: Virtual Programming Activation (June 2022—Ongoing)

During the two-year proposed grant period, the Museum will host 60+ programs in the newly equipped spaces. We anticipate these events will launch in the summer of 2022 and will include:

These programs are part of the Museum's ongoing outreach efforts and will extend well beyond the grant period. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the community's need for technology, access, and digital skills grew exponentially and this transition to virtual services and activities will continue even as the crisis subsides.

Statement of Need*

Describe the need that this project will address. Include data to demonstrate the need, and cite the source of the data.

The Museum identified the need for enhanced virtual capabilities at the onset of the pandemic. Cancelled field trips, educational programming, classroom visits, tours, family and adult programming, and closed exhibitions resulted in a need to provide virtual access quickly. This has led to an increased awareness of adapting our long-term learning and engagement strategies.

Providing a range of resources enables visitors to select the way in which they are most comfortable experiencing the Museum. This project is just one of the ways we ensure inclusive participation. The Museum is committed to making its collection, buildings, programs, and services accessible to all audiences.

This project will help reimagine the "new normal" for our community. As the nation eventually emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, people will reconnect with one another and adapt to new ways of being with one another and new ways of participating in their communities. The Museum has an important role in these processes and will be critical to connecting the community in the times ahead. Aligning arts programming with local community needs is paramount, whether through onsite programming, virtual arts engagement, or a combination of opportunities. The Museum is able to provide inclusive programs through equitable partnerships and an evaluation plan. The Museum will work with community partners to encourage greater participation. Details are provided in the proposal sections below.

Musuems are no longer a static site, but include the digital and community arenas as equally valid spaces in which to operate. Health and wellbeing, digital engagement are central to the Museum's ambitions, delivered increasingly through partnerships. Making sure Buncombe County businesses and community members have optimal access to technology – both in terms of equipment and network connectivity – is central to reduce the impacts of digital inequalities in the COVID-19 context.

Link to COVID-19*

Identify a health or economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency, describe the nature and extent of that harm, and explain how the use of this funding would address such harm.

The COVID-19 pandemic completely upended the education system. School closures forced many parents to shoulder the additional burden of overseeing their children's educations. Teachers had to adapt to new, previously untested formats for lesson delivery. Virtual schooling highlighted the sharp divide in digital accessibility between urban and rural households, currently an area of focus for WNC and the state government.

The impact on pre-K—12 learning in 2020—2021 was significant, students are on average five months behind in mathematics and four months behind in reading. The pandemic widened preexisting opportunity and achievement gaps, impacting historically disadvantaged students the most. Research by (Mckinsey & Company 2021) confirms most students did not complete all the learning they would in a typical year. Unfinished learning leaves students without the skills, behaviors, and mindsets needed to succeed in college or the workforce. Curricula developed with professional teaching artist and Museum educators in collaboration with classroom teachers can produce positive gains in mathematics and language arts achievement.

The pandemic also impacted the health and well-being of students, with more than 35% of parents very or extremely concerned about their children's mental health (McKinsey & Company, 2021). Children and adults have also experienced high levels of social isolation, causing anxiety, depression, and other detrimental effects on mental health. The Museum's virtual and onsite programs promote different dimensions of wellbeing in our community. Museum programs provide positive social experiences, leading to reduced social isolation, opportunities for learning and acquiring new skills, calming experiences, leading to decreased anxiety, and increased positive emotions, such as optimism, hope, and enjoyment. Engagement with the arts also leads to an increased sense of identity and community.

Population Served*

Define the population to be served by this project, including volume and demographic characteristics of those served.

Activating the Museum's virtual spaces will serve diverse Western North Carolina (WNC) residents and organizations across all sectors. The Museum serves needs for arts education and arts-integrated learning and skill development, acting as a resource to teachers, librarians, students, and families both in the

classroom and as extracurricular engagement. Many of the school districts that the Museum serves are designated rural and low-wealth by the state and have little to no arts-education opportunities. The Museum develops programs with the goal of engaging urban and rural communities that make up our service area. The Museum also serves adults, both active adults and those with different abilities, responding to needs for lifelong learning, social interaction, and community-building and belonging.

The Museum's visitors reflect the demographic makeup of the Western North Carolina Region. The Museum is located in the urban center of the 10,601 square mile Appalachian region, which is comprised primarily of rural mountain communities. The region has an average poverty rate of 15.12%, well above the national average of 10.5%. 21 counties have annual median incomes below 80% of the national average. 7 counties are designated at-risk by the Appalachian Regional Commission and 21 are classified as rural by the NC Rural Center. Minorities represent a small percentage of the total population in WNC: 6% Hispanic or Latinx, 4.3% Black or African American, 1% Asian or Asian American, 2.5% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 1.8% two or more races. There are 13,000 enrolled members in Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians; approximately 10,700 live in WNC (both on and off Tribal lands). Compared to the entire state of North Carolina, the WNC region has a larger number of adults (25+) with only a high school diploma (16% higher average) and fewer adults with a bachelor's degree or higher (26% lower average).

Results*

Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

This project will equip the Museum for a hybridized future where constituents use both in-person and virtual capabilities to engage in cultural and educational activities. Performance measures include:

The Museum will host at least 60 events in the newly equipped spaces. We anticipate these events will include 12 board meetings, four In Conversation programs, four film screenings, 15 docent trainings, two teacher professional development workshops, 40 school programs and outreach programs, and six Adult programs.

These programs are projected to reach 10,000 participants

Following all programs, we will administer an evaluation survey to participants. The Museum will measure performance at a benchmark of 75% of respondents rating all program experience areas Good, Very Good, or Excellent.

Evaluation*

Describe the data collection, analysis, and quality assurance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of contract requirements and outcomes.

To ensure the community continues to fully experience all the Museum has to offer, assessment, evaluation, and redevelopment are key project components. Following all programs, we will administer an evaluation survey to participants. Individual surveys will be reviewed continually as submitted, and compiled and reviewed in aggregate monthly, quarterly, and at the end of the project. Participants score their program experience in six areas (knowledge/style of presenter/instructor, quality of program, value of ticket price/registration fee, interactions with Museum staff, physical accessibility to Museum/program, and overall satisfaction) on a four-point Likert scale. The Museum will measure performance at a benchmark of 75% of respondents rating all program experience areas Good, Very Good, or Excellent.

The project team will also review qualitative data provided in survey comments for further detail about participant experiences. Quality of program and project success will also be measured by program participation.

Finally, the project director will work with the Community Programs Associate to set goals for the number of contacts and partnerships to be developed through their outreach efforts. The project director will assess progress each quarter, including monitoring participant surveys, schedule of completion, and achievement of participation and partnership goals. The Learning & Engagement team also has a biweekly standing meeting where they discuss projects and initiatives and will address any emerging issues or obstacles to timely project completion. In addition to demonstrating accountability to the Buncombe County, the Museum's evaluation plan will help strengthen and improve future learning and engagement programs and offer insight to other cultural institutions in their efforts to increase community communication.

Equity Impact*

How will this effort help build toward a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery? How are the root causes and/or disproportionate impacts of inequities addressed?

The pandemic has forced our community to relearn how to work, connect, and live in virtual space. This project will provide better service the Museum's educational and social service partners and community members who face barriers to participation and help them meet their educational and recreational goals and objectives. The Museum can offer physical and virtual space for healing, learning, and inspiration. Identifying technology solutions that can bring live and recorded programs to those unable or unwilling to attend in person can help to address some of the inequities highlighted by the pandemic. Virtual programming has served us well, expanding the Museum's geographic reach and increasing accessibility for those who face barriers to participating in onsite programming including financial, mobility, or transportation barriers. The Museum has recognized the potential for virtual programming to become a long-term solution for community access, outreach, and engagement. Alongside face-to-face learning and interaction, virtual engagement has become a high priority for the Museum.

Project Partners*

Identify any subcontractors you intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate:
1.) What products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and;
2.) What percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.

Also, list non-funded key partners critical to project.

The Museum regularly collaborates with trusted partners to improve the quality of life in our community. The Museum's primary partners for this project will be Zoom and the Museum's IT consultant, Advanced Data & Network Solutions. The Museum will work with both partners to finalize technological needs for the project, including technical components and installation. ADNS will be primarily responsible for onsite installation and troubleshooting.

Strong community partnerships are at the core of all we do at the Museum, from our learning and engagement outreach to lectures, programs, and special exhibitions. Partnerships are abundant with virtual programming. Key partners for pre-K—12 school and teacher programs will include Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Schools, and charter schools located in Buncombe County. The Museum's current partners include schools, libraries, care facilities, colleges and universities, and arts groups and individuals. Our partners are in need of expanded program opportunities and enhanced facilities to reach our community.

Capacity*

Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your organization or department as it relates to capacity for delivering the proposed project and managing federal funds.

The COVID-19 public health emergency and a corresponding Museum closure of nearly four months highlighted the importance of responding to the needs of visitors, donors, and staff in new ways not identified previously. The Museum pivoted rapidly to offer engaging new, virtual experiences for children and families, launching its new flagship virtual program, Museum from Home, within weeks of its closure.

In 2021, the Museum was recognized by the South Easten Museum Conference for our digital outreach. The Museum won gold in the Student Projects category for our NEH Cares Videos, Silver in the Media Production category for our smART guide, and bronze in the Digital Education for our Summer Camp to Go! program. We were the only museum to be honored in multiple categories for the Virtual Technology Competition.

Since March 2020, Museum from Home initiatives have received a total of 36,951 pageviews including virtual programs and activity pages. The Museum's virtual offerings have grown steadily in response to audience demand, hosting virtual donor events, creating virtual school field trip programs, and hosting free virtual arts and cultural programs—all in an effort to enhance community access to the Museum's extraordinary collections and programming. Offering programs virtually simultaneously with in-person experiences gives the community more opportunities for learning and connection.

In addition, the Museum has a long history of successful financial and project management with federal and other large grants, and this management has continued seamlessly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The Museum is a significant contributor to the quality of life in Asheville, which is essential to attract businesses, the creative workforce, and tourists. The Museum generates significant economic activity annually due to direct and indirect impacts. The vast majority of the Museum's expenditures stay in the local economy.

Budget*

Provide a detailed project budget including all proposed project revenues and expenditures, including explanations and methodology. For all revenue sources, list the funder and denote whether funds are confirmed or pending. For project expenses, denote all capital vs. operating costs, and reflect which specific expenses are proposed to be funded with one-time Buncombe County Recovery Funds.

Download a copy of the budget form HERE. Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Buncombe County ARP_Asheville Art Museum.pdf

Special Considerations*

Provide any other information that might assist the County in its selection.

School Programs are led by volunteer docents with Museum staff, the Museum's inquiry-based, conversational Small-Group Tours and Virtual Visits introduce the Museum's galleries and challenge students to hone their observation skills.

Literacy Through Art (LTA) is a school outreach program in which the visual arts are utilized to explore the language arts.

In Conversation provides a trusted place for learning and dialogue and promotes community cohesion in collaboration with national and regional artists, educators, and subject matter experts.

Connections addresses the need for community gatherings and safe spaces to stimulate the minds of adults with memory loss (i.e. living with Alzheimer's Disease, any form of dementia, and other memory loss), their care partners, and Museum staff and volunteers. Connections offers both virtual and small-group/in-person options each month led by specially trained Museum staff, contractors, and volunteers.

Film screenings are a valuable tool for raising community awareness. Community members are invited to screen art films, films that relate to artists and artworks in our galleries, and films about the ins and outs of the art world.

Adult Programs are facilitated by artists, scholars, and subject experts, Adult Programs meet the needs of our community through social connection, creativity, and learning experiences virtually and onsite.

Docent Training Sessions for volunteers who lead group learning experiences in the form of museum tours, demonstrations, or instruction in special activity areas—in-person and virtually.

Teacher Professional Development Workshops include curriculum-based and exhibition-inspired workshops led by Museum educators and/or special guests that provide teachers with tools to facilitate object-based learning.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- 501 (c) (3).pdf
- Buncombe County ARP_Asheville Art Museum.pdf

P.O. Box 2508
Cincinnati OH 45201

In reply refer to: 0248159680
May 21, 2009 LTR 4168C EO
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ASHEVILLE ART MUSEUM
 ASSOCIATION INC
PO BOX 1717
ASHEVILLE NC 28802-1717

010393

         Employer Identification Number: 56-6060776
                  Person to Contact: Ms Schadler
         Toll Free Telephone Number: 1-877-829-5500

Dear Taxpayer:

This is in response to your request of May 12, 2009, regarding your
tax-exempt status.

Our records indicate that a determination letter was issued in
October 1976, that recognized you as exempt from Federal income tax,
and discloses that you are currently exempt under section 501(c)(3)
of the Internal Revenue Code.

Our records also indicate you are not a private foundation within the
meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are described in
section 509(a)(2).

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of
the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or
for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes
if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and
2522 of the Code.

If you have any questions, please call us at the telephone number
shown in the heading of this letter.

                              Sincerely yours,

                              Michele M. Sullivan

                              Michele M. Sullivan, Oper. Mgr.
                              Accounts Management Operations I

BUNCOMBE COUNTY AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS
PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET

Organization Name	Asheville Art Museum, Inc.
Project Name	Activating Virtual Spaces
Amount Requested	

Proposed Project Revenue Source	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe CountyFunds	$ 103,361.25		
List other sources here			
Total:	$0.00		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed ARPA Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Personnel Expesnses					
Learning & Engagment Media Manager	$ 80,000.00		$ 80,000.00	Operating	
Other AAM Staff	$ -	$ 135,065.00	$ 135,065.00	Operating	
Benefits (25% salaries)	$ 20,000.00	$ 33,766.25	$ 53,766.25	Operating	
Total Personnel	$ 100,000.00	$ 168,831.25	$ 268,831.25	Operating	
Technology, Equipment, Materials					
Neat Bar Pro	$ 9,980.00	-	$ 9,980.00	Capital	$4,990 each x 2
4 IPads	$ 2,000.00	-	$ 2,000.00	Capital	$500 each
Accoustic Treatment	$ 5,000.00	-	$ 5,000.00	Capital	custom panels
Total Technology, Equipment, Materials	$ 16,980.00	-	$ 16,980.00	Capital	
Services/Honoraria					
ADNS	$ 9,000.00	-	$ 9,000.00	Operating	$150 per hours (60 hours)
In Conversation	$ 2,000.00	-	$ 2,000.00	Operating	$500 x 4 programs
Teacher Professional Development Instructor	$ 1,000.00	-	$ 1,000.00	Operating	$500 x 2 PD
Teacher Professional Development Honoraria	$ 2,250.00	-	$ 2,250.00	Operating	$75 honoraria per teacher
LTA Contract Educators	$ 16,000.00	-	$ 16,000.00	Operating	$40 per class x 10 classes per classroom x 20 classrooms per year x 2 years
Artists Lectures & Programs	$ 3,000.00	-	$ 3,000.00	Operationg	6 programs per year x 2 years
Total Services/Honoraria	$ 33,250.00	-	$ 33,250.00	Operating	
Art Supplies & Materials					
LTA	$ 8,000.00	-	$ 8,000.00	Operating	$200 per class x 20 classrooms x 2 years
Other Programs	$ 1,500.00	-	$ 1,500.00	Operating	$50 per adult program + Connections program
Printing & Postage	$ 1,000.00	-	$ 1,000.00	Operating	program printing + supplies shipping
Teacher Professional Development	$ 800.00	-	$ 800.00	Operating	$400 per PD session
Total Supplies and Materials	$ 11,300.00	-	$ 11,300.00	Operating	
Other Expenses					
Film Licenses	$ 1,000.00	0	$ 1,000.00	Operating	$250 per film x 4 films
Admission Support pre-K-12	$ 1,000.00	0	$ 1,000.00	Operating	$50 virtual visit x 20 classrooms
In Conversation Travel	$ 1,000.00	0	$ 1,000.00	Operating	$250 x 4 prgrams
LTA Student Admission & Travel	$ 4,000.00	0	$ 4,000.00	Operating	discounted admission for 200 students per year
Connections Virtual Visits	$ 900.00	0	$ 900.00	Operating	18 virtual Connections programs
Zoom Enterprise License	$ 500.00	0	$ 500.00	Operating	$250 x 2 years
Total Other Expenses	$ 8,400.00		$ 8,400.00		
Project Subtotal	$ 169,930.00	$ 168,831.25	$ 338,761.25		
		Total:	$ 338,761.25		