



Focus Area: Arts and Culture
Grant Finalist: Living Arts
Project: Out-of School Arts Expansion

Background: This grant will provide Out-of-School Arts (OSA) experiences to children in Southwest Detroit by expanding our footprint dramatically. Adequate space is the only barrier preventing us from serving more children and families. Our OSA programming runs year-round at the Ford Resource & Engagement Center (FREC) at the Mexicantown Mercado. However, space limitations dictate the number of classes we can offer. We are only able to provide programming for 25% of students who apply to OSA, which is approximately 120-150 students (dependent upon COVID protocols).

Living Arts was invited to partner with the Detroit Mexicantown International Welcome Center so we can expand into their location and build additional dance and art studios. Owned by the nonprofit Mexicantown CDC, the location is steps across the street from the FREC. We will continue using our FREC classrooms, adding in classes at the Welcome Center to create a campus-feel. The new space is 2,724 square feet and entirely open, and we can build it out however we wish. We are prioritizing Southwest Detroit contractors in our bid process so we can further invest in the community. This new location will include dance, art, and early learner studios, among other things. This project will be self-sustaining within a year.

The expansion will more than double our OSA classes, allowing us to serve an additional 240-360 additional students. This will require additional oversight and management. Although our original grant included information about hiring a Program Director, organizational growth dictated that this position be created and filled not long after the grant was submitted. We will still need to restructure our programming team, as this program will require two OSA managers. As with many of our positions, our priority will be to fill it with someone who lives in Southwest Detroit. We have an incredible network of community leaders, parents, students, and former students and parents, and involving the community means that lived experiences will have a distinct voice in organizational planning and programming implementation.

Unmet Need: In Southwest Detroit, there is an acute lack of accessible arts programming for youth. While children may have some exposure to the arts through school, after-school enrichment programming remains much less accessible to Detroit students than to their suburban peers. This unmet demand is evidenced by our incredibly long ongoing waitlist for after-school services, as well as continual feedback from parents. The pandemic has further exacerbated the need for programming in the area.

Outcomes: As an expansion of existing services, this project's success will be measured primarily by the number of enrollments we can offer from the new space. We are a data-driven organization, and we have outlined the following benchmarks: completion of all construction; Grand Opening Event; 240-360 additional enrollments for our classes; implementation of new camps, collaborations, and workshops; hosting at least 10 Baby ArtsPlay sessions; and the establishment of a subsidized rental program for Detroit artists to utilize our studios when we are not using them for programming. These studio rentals will be provided at approximately 30% of the average cost for similar studios in Detroit.

Sustainability:

This project will be entirely sustainable. Based on our class waitlist we will easily fill all classes at this location. Rent will be entirely covered by class fees. 90% of students receive full or partial scholarships funded by several foundations with which we work. We need only provide a minimum of 13 classes a year in order to be revenue neutral. Realistically, we expect to provide at least 20-30 additional OSA classes in the first full year. Furthermore, our 10 Baby ArtsPlay classes will bring in additional revenue of approximately \$6,000 a year. We will also bring in revenue by renting out our classrooms when not in use. Projections indicate that this new location will provide us with an annual surplus of \$30,000 at minimum.