

Applicant: City of Fort Collins, Colorado, Fort Collins, CO.

Project: Planning and Development of Rocky Mountain Regional Arts Incubator

Details of the Project - City of Fort Collins Cultural Services

a) Budget. The City of Fort Collins requests \$100,000 to design and plan the Rocky Mountain Regional Arts Incubator (RMRAI). The \$200,000 project includes \$50,000-needs assessment and relationship building with regional arts councils; \$50,000-develop curriculum; \$20,000-Internship program development; \$20,000-business plan development; \$50,000-building planning/interior and exterior design; \$10,000-marketing and web design and development. Both the City and Beet Street will provide matching funds, and several local foundations and business have committed to supporting this project. The project will be designed to produce financial sustainability through program revenue generation, fundraising, and continued in-kind building operations and maintenance from the City.

b) Major project activities. In the heart of the Rocky Mountain West, Fort Collins has more than 20 art galleries, dozens of professional arts organizations, and thousands of artists and creatives. Fort Collins draws arts appreciators from around the region, many who find Fort Collins more comfortable than Denver or Boulder. While there is depth and breadth in music, theatre, visual arts and even craft brewing, there is not strong business acumen. Artists are not making living wages and some arts organizations are on the verge of closing their doors. Beet Street and the City propose to create the Rocky Mountain Regional Arts Incubator (RMRAI) in the City-owned historic Carnegie building, a registered local landmark. RMRAI will encourage the education, growth and professional development of students, professionals

and the creative industry by offering innovative courses on the business of art, music and entertainment; internship programs focusing on real world career paths; continuing education for professionals and arts organizations; and support spaces including a gallery, black box theatre, classrooms, and workshop/event spaces serving both the community and the RMRAI programs. The RMRAI is a partnership between Colorado State University School of the Arts, City of Fort Collins Cultural Services Department, and Beet Street, an arts and culture economic development non-profit.

The goal of the arts incubator is to encourage the education, growth, and professional development of our arts and culture students, professionals, and industry. It will build the visual arts, performing arts, music, entertainment, and creative industries in Fort Collins and the Rocky Mountain West by offering:

- Innovative educational courses on the business of art, music, and entertainment
- Internship programs focusing on real world career paths for students in the arts
- Continuing education for professional artists and arts organizations

The RMRAI is the only full-service arts incubator in the Rocky Mountain West, and the only one in the nation associated with a major university. The RMRAI will also offer administrative services, professional resources, and gallery, performance, studio, and office space to students and professionals to assist them in creating, redefining, and sustaining their creative careers in the new economy.

Most importantly, the project includes utilizing new technologies and distance-learning opportunities that will provide rural communities with professional development training and regional networking that will strengthen the arts throughout the interior west.

Major project activities include: develop and complete a needs assessment of target participants; collaboration with Rocky Mountain West arts councils and organizations; develop incubator curriculum, internship program, and distance learning technologies; develop five year

business plan including pro forma budget, timeline, funding plan, market depth and feasibility, scaling plan for programming; interior space planning; Community charette and landscape design for surrounding park areas; naming, branding, marketing and web development.

Placemaking strategies include activation of this prominent historic landmark building, the surrounding urban park, and a courtyard housing five early Fort Collins historic buildings. The project will spur redevelopment of surrounding underutilized buildings and property and provide more direct pedestrian connections to the central business district and other cultural institutions. Livability strategies will focus on growth in community engagement with the arts, job and career growth through professional development, revenue growth in the creative industries, and retention of primary jobs due to increased quality of life indicators.

RMRAI will serve Fort Collins, Colorado and other small cities, towns, remote and/or rural communities in the interior West. The combination of thinking and acting regionally, use of distance learning and extensive internship, loaned executive and externship programs, designed collaboration and resource sharing will allow other Western community arts organizations to flourish and provide the support needed to attract and retain artists and creative professionals. The curriculum and professional development programs include components that are intended to be models for activating business professionals and other resources in small, rural communities.

One of the additional goals of the RMRAI is to encourage more community arts incubators/centers throughout the west and provide a richly networked regional arts community.

c) Outcome(s) and Measurements. This project will enhance the quality of life in Fort Collins including the creation and retention of jobs, increased non-profit and for profit revenues within the creative industries, real estate development, building the CSU student base, and increased visitation and event attendance. The Carnegie building will become the hub of Fort Collins arts activity. Both the Americans for the Arts and WESTAF Creative Vitality Index (CVI) baseline data will be used to track progress.

d) Schedule. 2011 Q3: Needs assessment/ Survey Western states; Begin curriculum and internship development. Curriculum summit. 2011Q4: Continue curriculum and internship development and overall program plan; Design collaboration with Western states. Rural western states arts summit. 2012 Q1: Continue curriculum and internship development, and overall program development. 2012 Q2: Complete curriculum, internship, and program development; Develop business plan and capital funding needs based on program plan and inputs; Interior design phase based on program plan. 2012 Q3: Naming, branding website design; Interior plan complete; Landscape charette and design; Institutionalize Western states collaboration; Coordinate internship program with CSU and others; secure capital funding to launch program.

e) Partners, key organizations, individuals. The City and Beet Street are the required partners, working as a team in managing the project. Beet Street will lead in developing the curriculum and internship programs, and the outreach to the Mountain West arts communities. The City will serve as fiscal agent, and lead the interior and landscape aspects of the building design. The RMRAI has already secured significant partners for the project. Colorado State University School of Arts is also fully committed and will be developing a masters and minor program in arts administration. CSU is committed to aligning curriculum, sharing faculty resources and collaborating on the internship program. The arts incubator project provides CSU School of the Arts with an opportunity to deliver a unique and unparalleled educational experience for its students with real world career paths in the arts and creative industries, while also helping the University meet its land grant mission with a program that includes significant outreach into the community. The Colorado and Nevada state arts councils have also committed to the project and intend to use the services of the RMRAI and assist with organizing the interior Western states' arts community. The Bohemian Foundation, the local foundation of billionaire Pat Stryker with more than \$40M in assets, has also committed to the project, intending to partner with

programming and funding. The project will include interior and landscape design professionals, who will be selected through the City's RFP processes.

f) Target community. The new economy of the 21st century, often referred to as the “knowledge or “creative” economy, is placing new demands on the creative industries. The arts incubator will provide services to a wide range of careers in the arts, entertainment, and the broader creative industries that is reflective of the unique arts and culture scene in Fort Collins. The RMRAI will serve: 1) Independent artists and creative professionals who need to learn business skills to make a living with their art, 2) degree-seeking arts students - and their parents – who need access to the many career paths where their artistic skills can be applied in the arts, culture, and creative industries, 3) working professionals who are looking for ways to re-align their careers with their creative passions, 4) non-profit arts organizations that are in need of business skills and a new approach to delivering world class experiences to redefine and sustain their organizations, and 5) creative industry businesses looking for access to students and professionals with real world experience who can apply creative skills to their business needs. The WESTAF 2009 CVI indicates there are 6,485 creatives of the 300,000 people who live in Fort Collins and Larimer County alone. The project will engage the target community through the needs assessment and curriculum development. The RMRAI will be the only full-service arts incubator in the Rocky Mountain West, and the only one in the nation associated with a major university. The population of the interior mountain west is more than 16 million, with an average of 19 people per square mile. Anticipated state participants include: Colorado, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and New Mexico.

g) National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act. The Carnegie building and adjacent courtyard is a registered local landmark but not on the National Historic

Register. The project will comply with all applicable policies for the preservation and adaptive reuse of this historic resource.

h) Plans for promoting, publicizing, and/or disseminating the proposed project. The proposal to design and develop the RMRAI will be promoted through the website and branding component of the project. The planning components of the needs assessment and relationship building with Rocky Mountain West arts councils will disseminate the proposed project throughout the region, help build the program, and ultimately attract participants to RMRAI. The program will also be publicized in industry newsletters, social media, and local media.

i) Plans for documenting, evaluating, and disseminating the project results. The results of this project are to create successful regional cooperation and a model incubator program to serve the needs of independent artists, students, arts professionals, non-profit arts organizations, and creative business. The true evaluation of the project will be participation in RMRAI programs and increased sustainability and economic impact in our community and the region.

j) Evidence of impacts achieved. Ultimately, RMRAI will impact our community and region by serving artists and creatives to grow and sustain themselves, improving the quality of life and adding to economic vitality. Fort Collins participates in two important studies that will help quantify the on-going impact of this project: the Americans for the Arts “Arts and Economic Prosperity Study” and WESTAF’s Creative Vitality Index (CVI). Fort Collins participated in the Economic prosperity study in 2003, and 2007, and will again in 2011. Fort Collins will have a baseline CVI in 2011. Each study helps our community gauge the success and growth of the arts and creative industry overtime. We will also be analyzing the use patterns of the RMRAI and its programs, enrollment in classes at the incubator and CSU School of the Arts, and activation of

networking and collaboration among the artists and arts professionals in the target western states.