

Applicant (GMS): My Story, Portland, OR

Project: We are Portland

Details of the Project Narrative

a) Budget. My Story and the Office of Portland, Oregon, Mayor Sam Adams request \$25,000 for Phase One of “We are Portland,” a two-phase project. The project costs of Phase One are \$50,000: \$16,673 in staff time and \$33,327 in supplies and other costs. *Cash support.* \$2,633 committed from the Regional Arts and Culture Council; \$10,000 anticipated from a My Story Kickstarter campaign; \$100 committed from Portland Reinvestment Initiatives (PCRI).

In-kind support. \$4,250 committed from Plywerk; \$1,106 committed from Digicraft; \$6,511 anticipated from program volunteers; \$400 committed in PCRI space rental.

b) Major project activities. “We are Portland” is an example of innovative arts programming that fosters community interaction. Picture the courtyard of an affordable housing complex transformed into a youth-run outdoor photography studio. Grandmothers rush inside to fix their hair as toddlers are trotted out in tiny suits and purple party dresses. Residents fill the courtyard as young photographers compose free portraits of their neighbors. At these festive events, new conceptions of community are formed, and as the portraits are broadly shared, underserved Portland youth focus the lens of public discourse on the places they call home. This project offers a participatory approach to showcasing Portland’s full diversity, a critical step in addressing Portland’s documented racial and ethnic iniquities.

Phase 1: Education & Creation

1) Site Selection: Implement equity-based application and selection process; choose five communities to join PCRI’s Park Terrace as projects sites; focus on reaching underserved communities with limited access to the arts.

2) Workshops: Teach six eight-session workshops to groups of 15 youth between the ages of 11 and 16; focus on photography skills, visual literacy, and leadership skills; prepare youth to manage photography studio.

3) Family Portrait Days. Bring professional-quality youth-run portrait studio to six project sites; run portrait studio and record interviews that gather participants’

perspectives on issues impacting livability at project sites.

4) Display. Edit and compile portraits and data; exhibit work at project sites; integrate portraits in citywide exhibitions (e.g. airport, public transit, and Director Park). “We are Portland” will put a human face on the Portland Plan, a strategic plan for Portland, with an eye toward the year 2035, developed by the City of Portland in concert with more than 20 agency partners. It is a plan for Portland to be a prosperous, educated, healthy and equitable city.

Phase 2: Campaign (*not included in this request*)

Includes creation of interactive map-based website featuring portraits and data collected during Phase 1; promotion through a citywide PSA campaign.

c) Outcome(s) and measurements. “We are Portland” addresses the NEA outcome for *Livability: Strengthening communities through the arts* with activities that:

1) Promote civic engagement and leadership through the arts. *Strategy:* Empower youth to become community leaders as they transform public spaces into sites for artistic expression and forums for building social cohesion.

2) Cultivate community identity and sense of place. *Strategy:* Improve civic and social engagement among residents of underserved communities through cultural participation, community art making, and forums through which residents share their perspectives on what makes a livable community.

3) Inspire a community dialogue through the display of work. *Strategy:* Connect Portlanders through interactive citywide exhibits that spark conversations about individual and community identity.

Measurements. (Measurements are discussed more fully in section h)

1) Youth participants complete pre-and-post surveys; My Story and project site staff document observable changes in youth leadership behavior.

2) Community participants are observed and responses recorded with an assessment tool inspired by “Measuring Joy,” a NEA approved metric; community members complete satisfaction surveys after livability interviews.

3) Exhibit attendees sign and leave comments in guestbook.

d) Schedule. Phase One of “We are Portland” will run from 9/1/2012 through 9/1/2013.

Fall/Winter 2012: Develop equity-based application and project site selection process; put out call for submissions; facilitate programming at Park Terrace.

Spring 2013: Select five project sites; facilitate programming at sites two and three; Hire intern; display work at events promoting the Portland Plan, and other venues.

Summer 2013: Facilitate programming at sites four, five, and six; compile livability data from Family Portrait Day interviews and edit images; display work at events promoting the Portland Plan, and other venues.

e) Partners, key organizations, individuals, and works of art. The primary partners on this project are My Story and the Mayor's Office. My Story satisfies the cultural requirement by providing arts programming. The Mayor's Office will maximize the project's impact by identifying and integrating portraits into planning efforts that intersect with "We are Portland." The Mayor's Office will contact the Port of Portland and Tri-Met to plan airport, and public transit displays.

Other project partners: BPS will identify aspects of the Portland Plan that intersect with "We are Portland," and will display work at BPS events. PCRI will host a photography workshop, Family Portrait Day, and community exhibit. Sonali S. Balajee, from Multnomah County's Office of Diversity and Equity, will provide limited assistance around the application of the Equity and Empowerment Lens (racial justice focus) to the application and selection process for project sites; Alexis Wichowski, Media Analyst and Social Media Advisor at the U.S. Mission to the U.N. will assist in developing of a cutting edge social media campaign.

f) Target community. This project targets 90 underserved Portland youth, 180 underserved Portland families, and an audience of thousands through public exhibit.

We will solicit project site applications from housing organizations, community development corporations, neighborhood associations, and other community organizations. Project sites will be selected based on the following criteria:

Does the community have limited access to the arts?

Does the community experience socio-economic, or racial and ethnic inequities?

Is the community under stress and/or in need of social cohesion?

g) Plans for promoting and publicizing. Project site outreach strategy includes: youth-run door knocking campaigns, community fliers, and student-produced invitations. Citywide

outreach strategy includes: promotion through local print and online media sources, a social media campaign, and by the Mayor's Office, and BPS.

h) Plans for documenting and evaluating. We will use pre-and post surveys, satisfaction surveys, and demographic data to evaluate the following objectives:

1) To promote civic engagement and leadership through the arts. *Indicators:*

and % of youth with increase in perceived ability to effect community change

and % of youth who display increased leadership qualities

2) To cultivate community identity and sense of place. *Indicators:*

and % of residents who participate in Family Portrait Day

and % of participants who volunteer to have portraits taken and data collected

and % of residents who assist others during photo shoots

and % of participants who report positive interaction with youth and peers

and % of residents who attend art exhibitions

3) To inspire a community dialogue through the display of work. *Indicators:*

and % of Portlanders engaged through exhibits in galleries and public spaces

and % of Portlanders engaged through social media campaign

i) Goals and impact. Our project goals can be split into three categories:

1) *Arts Education:* To empower 90 underserved Portland youth by offering opportunities to master photography skills, develop self-advocacy and leadership skills, and provide positive arts experiences to their neighbors.

2) *Community Engagement:* To engage six underserved communities by providing arts events to 180 underserved families that transform public spaces into sites for artistic expression, and forums for building social cohesion.

3) *Civic Engagement:* To showcase Portland's increasing diversity through interactive public exhibits that challenge preconceptions about the city's demographics and capture the faces and stories of a changing Portland.

This project can be replicated nationally, and even globally. In the past year, the project has served Portland's Somali, Slavic, and Latino communities. These communities have embraced the project, and have enthusiastically invited us to return. At Lincoln Woods, a housing complex that serves Somali and Slavic families, all 70 families came out to celebrate together and have their portraits taken.

j) Plans for making project assessable. My Story is committed to inclusion, and will make facilities and programs accessible to individuals with disabilities. In previous projects, we have worked with individuals who use wheelchairs and individuals who are hearing impaired. If questions arise, we will contact the Arts Endowment's Accessibility Office for guidance.