

**Applicant (GMS): Public Corporation for the Arts of the City of Long Beach**

**Project: A LOT Series**

**Public Corporation for the Arts (dba Arts Council for Long Beach) Details of the Project Narrative**

**a. Budget.** Public Corporation for the Arts (dba Arts Council for Long Beach, or ACLB) requests a grant of \$150,000 for a period of two years. Matching funds include a secured grant from the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and in-kind support from our primary governmental partner, Long Beach Development Services. Additional grant proposals which will both match this request and sustain the project beyond the period of funding have been or will be submitted to The James Irvine Foundation, California Community Foundation, Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, Long Beach Community Foundation, Union Bank Foundation, and ArtPlace.

**b. The major project activities** will be performances in spaces not normally used for such purposes. The A LOT series will consist of performance-based artwork designed to activate vacant lots that contribute to urban blight in lower-income Long Beach neighborhoods and engage residents in the arts. The program offers free performances in dance, music, theatre and spoken word by diverse Long Beach-based artists and organizations in non-traditional venues in neighborhoods that traditionally have been underserved by arts organizations. The project is intended to reduce perceived or physical barriers to access to the arts and broaden the audience to include both the intentional viewer and the casual passer-by.

The A LOT series began in 2010 as part of ACLB's Public Art program, which has been integrating visual arts and performances into the city's infrastructure since 1989. Performances in August 2010 took place at "Chantilly Clad" -- an innovative public art work that also serves as a public gathering space and outdoor performance venue -- and featured Classical Beats with Paul Dateh and DJ Inka One. (Excerpts of the performances are included in the Work Samples; documentation of the performances can also be viewed on the ACLB website [www.artslb.org](http://www.artslb.org) in the Programs menu under Public Art and Design.) Over the two evenings, the size of the

audiences grew as passers-by became attendees, and residents, observing the spectacle from their balconies, left their homes to join the festivities. Other recent artists and ensembles featured in the A LOT series have included The Collage Dance Theatre and Khmer Arts.

**c. Outcome and Performance Measurements.** The primary intended outcome of the project is: the Long Beach community will be strengthened through the arts. A secondary outcome is public engagement with diverse and excellent art. Quantitative performance measurements of both outcomes will include the numbers of performances, artists, audiences, locations, and neighborhoods that participate. More detailed qualitative program assessment methods are discussed in section h. below.

**d. Schedule.** In each year of the project the schedule is the same.

- Quarter 1: Request for proposals issued to artists and organizations for calendar year 2013; review panel members selected and proposals reviewed and approved; performance sites selected.
- Quarters 2-4: Performances implemented at 6 to 8 sites in Long Beach. Ongoing collection of measurement data and qualitative assessment.
- Quarter 4: Evaluation meeting of partners and review panel members to assess the overall impact of the project and make recommendation for program modifications.

**e. Partners, key organizations, individuals, and works of art.** The primary governmental partner of the Arts Council for Long Beach will be Long Beach Development Services, a department of the City of Long Beach. The partners will collaborate to identify Public Corporation for the Arts (dba Arts Council for Long Beach) Details of the Project Narrative venues in traditionally underserved communities where performances will take place, streamline the necessary approval processes, builds alliances with community-based businesses and organizations (such as neighborhood associations and business improvement districts), and promote the performances to members of the community. Performing artists and performing arts organizations will be solicited to submit proposals for single or multiple performances that

engage the public as audiences, as participants, or both. Long Beach is home to many innovative, world-class and community-based performing artists, including Khmer Arts and Long Beach Opera. Proposals for the A LOT series will be reviewed by a panel of ACLB staff, the public art consultant, public art experts, and community members representative of the neighborhoods where the project will take place.

**f. The target community.** The City of Long Beach is the most diverse city of its size in the nation, with a population of 461,000 citizens. Long Beach is 36% Latino; 33% Caucasian; 15% African-American; 12% Asian; 1% Pacific Islander and Native American; and 3% other races and combinations. Within these larger ethnic groups, there are notable Cambodian, Filipino, Samoan, and Native American Gabrielino-Tongva and Chumash communities which help shape the unique cultural profile of the city. While 22.8% percent of residents live below the poverty level according to U.S. Census statistics, the percentage of low-income families served by the Long Beach Unified School District is much higher (66%), indicating the actual level of poverty is much higher than stated by the Census. 40% of Long Beach lies in designated redevelopment areas due to economic conditions and physical blight, especially a preponderance of vacant lots.

A LOT will contribute to the vibrancy of these areas by linking arts and culture with the mission of redevelopment, helping to revitalize economically-challenged neighborhoods with world-class performances that will increase social and economic activity. In each year of the grant period, there will be a minimum of 50 performances at six to eight different sites in Long Beach, engaging a total estimated audience of 10,000 people. ACLB will work with the Neighborhood Services Bureau and its neighborhood representatives to select the neighborhoods and sites where the A LOT series will take place. Community members from each of these neighborhoods will serve on the panels that select the artists and organizations for the performances.

**g. Plans for promoting and publicizing.** All A LOT performances will be publicized through a number of different media and community outlets with the goal of reaching the

targeted audience of neighborhood residents. These will include: mailings; postcards and posters strategically placed at gathering places in the community; flyers distributed through neighborhood public and private schools; online calendar listings, social media, e-mail blasts, and the websites of ACLB and participating artists and organizations; presentations by ACLB staff at community/neighborhood meetings; and traditional print and broadcast media.

**h. Plans for documenting and evaluating.** In addition to the quantitative performance measurements that will be reported to the NEA (see question c. above), Arts Council for Long Beach will work with its primary partner, Long Beach Development Services, to evaluate the qualitative impact of the project on the communities involved. The partners will assess the level of increased social and economic vitality in areas where performances take place, such as reduction of blight; businesses opened in vacant storefronts; new gathering spaces; positive reporting in media; and increase in membership in neighborhood and block associations. The partners will also work with the community to gather anecdotal evidence of change, such as increase in neighborhood pride; and greater interaction of cultures and ethnic groups. This information will be gathered through surveys and interviews with key staff of the partners and leaders of the community.

ACLB will, whenever possible, document the performances and include audio and visual excerpts on its website and social media such as YouTube in order to promote the project. The organization's ability to document and broadcast these performances will depend on the agreements with the artists and organizations contracted for the project.

**i. Goals and impact.** The goal is to expand who engages in the arts and where they engage. The project will revitalize the community through engagement of people of all ages living in underserved lower-income neighborhoods with exemplary artists practicing a variety of art forms, representing different cultures (and cultural combinations) that make Long Beach so diverse. Rather than placing activities in enclosed venues for a limited number of people for a couple of hours, the objective is to enliven vacant lots, streets, and entire areas with creative energy -- sound, light, visual art, and performance -- for days or weeks at a time. The projects'

mobility is intended to offer this kind of transformative opportunity to multiple underserved neighborhoods, thus creating lasting impact throughout the city. Because of the mild climate of the region, the program will take place year-round. It also will significantly expand opportunities for artists to engage new audiences for their work, which will in turn make Long Beach a more attractive place for artists to live and create. Since the A LOT series began in early 2010, there have been 11 performances and events by 20 different artists and organizations at two sites engaging an estimated audience of about 3,000 people of diverse age, income level, and cultural background. A grant from the NEA-Our Town initiative will allow for the significant expansion of the program, with regularly scheduled performances and events at more sites for a much larger audience.

**j. Accessibility.** A primary criteria for A LOT site selection is accessibility to persons with disabilities. ACLB will work with the artists and organizations selected to perform in the A LOT series to fund or directly provide services such as sign interpretation for persons who are hearing impaired, or audio descriptions for the visually impaired.

**k. Mayors' Institute on City Design 25th Anniversary Initiative grant.** ACLB received a \$25,000 MICD grant in 2010 (Grant No. 10-4229-7076) to solicit designs for the Mobile Arts and Architecture Project, a portable performance venue for the community. The artist/ architect/ design team of Steve Roden, Formation Association + 64 North was selected and developed a full set of plans for the project, now known as the Mobile Arts Space (MAS), which shares many of the same goals of the A LOT series. These plans can be viewed at [www.formationassociation.org](http://www.formationassociation.org). The phase of this project that was funded by the NEA has been completed and all reports submitted. ACLB is currently raising funds for construction of the Mobile Arts Space, which we hope to have completed by the end of 2013. When built and operational, the MAS will become a portable venue for the A LOT series.