

Oregon Cultural Trust Development Grant application – Final 5.15.2015

Project title: “Central Oregon Creative Economy Plan”

Summary of Request

To support the creation of an actionable plan to enhance the Central Oregon cultural economy.

Requested amount: \$15,000;

Awarded amount: \$12,296

Philanthropic funds committed: \$18,000

Overall budget 37,250

(Annette added this for the CORSAC meeting)

Summary of Organization & Project

Established as a nonprofit organization in 1978, Arts Central serves as a key leader in regional arts and cultural development. Our mission is to “build an appreciation of the arts through education and advocacy and encourage the inclusion of the arts in all aspects of community life.” Arts Central by name and action is a convener, advocate and centralized information resource for Central Oregon. Arts Central provides art classes through the Art Station in Bend. Through Artists in Schools and VanGo our programmatic reach extends into Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook, Klamath, Lake and Grant counties.

Arts Central is supported by the Oregon Arts Commission to serve as a Regional Service provider for Central Oregon. In that role Arts Central has undertaken numerous arts and culture projects including the creation and development of the Arts & Culture Alliance. This alliance is now a non-profit coalition undertaking projects of their own, which illustrates the leveragability of Arts Central’s work. Arts Central serves as fiscal manager of the Deschutes Cultural Coalition.

Arts Central has recently been presented with a significant opportunity to collaborate with Central Oregon Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (CORSAC) on one of their top tier economic development priorities for the region. We helped advocate for this regional priority in 2014 and have agreed to oversee a regional planning process. The first step will be the creation of the Central Oregon Creative Economy Plan designed with a focus on economic development through arts and culture. Leading the effort of crafting a plan to enhance the greater Central Oregon community through a vibrant cultural economy is a fundamental focus of our mission to “encourage the inclusion of the arts in all aspects of community life.”

Ultimately, the goal of the Creative Economy Plan is to inform and guide Arts Central, our community partners and CORSAC in the use of arts and culture to support the retention, stabilization and expansion of the creative (as broadly defined) economy to the diverse populations in Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes Counties. The grant funds will be used by us to hire a consultant, Paul Nicholson, who will work collaboratively with regional stakeholders.

The project is scheduled from August 2015 through July 2016. Initially we will gather an inventory of the mission, strategic plans, staffing and jobs of local arts and cultural organizations. With this inventory, we will create an opportunities analysis and obtain feedback from an advisory group of regional stakeholders. We will then develop prioritized action steps with leaders for each. To keep the Plan relevant and actionable Arts Central will then work with CORSAC and the various stakeholders to encourage broader and equitable community engagement, funding and actions based on Plan’s findings.

Quality and Significance of Program/Project

The project quality and significance is demonstrated by the strength of the partners who have come together to create and steward the Plan. The project lead is Arts Central, the recognized leader in regional arts convening. Arts Central’s relationship with the Arts & Culture Alliance (ACA) will accelerate information and data gathering for the Creative

Economy Plan. With arts and culture identified as a key regional priority, this project is supported and further strengthened by the Governor appointed Central Oregon Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (CORSAC). (See uploaded CORSAC roster.) CORSAC works locally to identify economic and community development priorities, and then leverage private, public and philanthropic resources with state resources to seize opportunities and accomplish projects. In February 2014 the legislature adopted the Regional Solutions program and directed key agencies (including Oregon Business Development Department) to consider regional priorities as a factor in awarding funding. Advancing the creative economy is one of six top tier priorities for the Central Oregon committee. This project will create the foundation for future action by the committee to complete projects identified by the regional action plan.

The contractor for the plan is Paul Nicholson, one of the nation's leading arts administrators, with a career spanning more than 50 years. The considerable reputation and professional integrity of Mr. Nicholson, Executive Director Emeritus of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, brings a high level of credibility to the project. As executive director he saw the organization grow from a third-tier theater to its current status on the world stage. His approach to strategic planning and job creation is regarded as exemplary by many organizations (including the Theatre Communications Group and the Doris Duke Foundation).

This project responds to the Oregon Cultural Trust category of Capacity: Strengthen cultural organizations to increase stability, improve sustainability, or measure/share cultural impacts. The key capacity benefit for Arts Central is leveragability. One of the most significant outcomes of our relatively recent relationship with Regional Solutions has been to jump start an agreement between Deschutes County and Arts Central to create a Community Partner category for the arts, with Arts Central serving as an arts and culture policy advisor and community connector. This assignment comes with about \$25,000 to \$35,000 in annual support. As most of the planning activity for the Creative Economy project will occur in Deschutes County (due to population and cultural activity levels), this formalized relationship is an important as a link with the county for planning purposes and builds Arts Central's capacity to support and develop our regional work with groups such as Bend 2030 (a visioning/planning group) and the Arts & Culture Alliance.

Here we begin to see how the power of connectivity can be leveraged for increased relevance and financial support for Arts Central. The process we used to prepare for this application for funding for the management of the Central Oregon Creative Economy Plan has accelerated the formalization of Arts Central's appointment as a Community Partner of Deschutes County. With this designation in place Arts Central can begin to work on creating an arts and culture re-grant program for the county, possibly in partnership with the Deschutes Cultural Coalition.

For Central Oregon to have an arts and culture plan is unprecedented. The aim of this project is to broaden and diversify the base of support and engagement for the creative arts, raising awareness to the value it brings as a core part of our communities. It will also provide a measurement of the economic impact, as well as locate and leverage potential collaborations between all sectors. When implemented, the plan will recommend focus for leveraged investments to support the growing creative economy in our region. Strategic planning viewed through the lens of job creation will provide the leaders in the region with a new way to relate to creatives and their enterprises, which in turn will increase the incorporation of arts and culture into other regional planning efforts. The process will more clearly identify new partners. We believe the arts and culture plan will increase public awareness and willingness to support arts and culture. Reducing fragmentation and developing a common message in the cultural sector will also provide communication tools that will be used in tourism and economic development outreach and recruiting efforts.

Community Impact & Public Benefit

As stated previously, the creative economy is essential to strong communities and to connecting diverse cultures. This project aims to strengthen the value of, support for, awareness of, access to and active engagement with arts, creative work and culture in our communities for all ages and all economic backgrounds. This audience is the same community that Arts Central already serves, or works to extend our programs to. Additionally, ultimate impact will be to use arts, creative work and culture to support the retention, stabilization and expansion of the creative economy in Central Oregon (Jefferson, Crook and Deschutes Counties).

The geographic focus is three counties in Central Oregon including Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties. The most recent 2014 population counts are Crook (20,998), Deschutes (170,388), and Jefferson (22,192) which totals 213,578 in the three counties. Initially, those who will benefit are those currently working within the Central Oregon creative economy as we gather a comprehensive data inventory and overview of their impact. Additionally, the public agencies and community leaders will also be involved in stakeholder interviews, advising and ongoing information sharing. The final report and the Plan will also be available to all in communities through Arts Central's website and other outreach.

After the phase one of data gathering, the remaining work will be focused on public and private outreach in community to gain a deeper understanding of how the creative economy is working today, and where there are opportunities to stabilize or enhance job growth and community engagement. The essence of this work is to broaden public knowledge, understanding, appreciation and access to these life enhancing arts and culture assets and business resources. Additionally, please refer to the section below describing the project impact and outcomes.

We define the creative economy broadly as including museums, heritage the visual, literary and performing arts, music and publishing as well as advertising, architecture, crafts, design, fashion, film, research & development, software, toys and games, TV, radio and video games. In addition to forging new alliances and strengthening partnerships, outcomes will supply a report summarizing the research resources and methodology, including asset inventories and stakeholder feedback, and a strategic plan, endorsed and supported by the stakeholders, with clear priorities, action steps and consensus recommendations for future investment.

The project success will be measured by future investment in the identified action items. Consultant Paul Nicholson is available to champion the Plan for the next three years. Additionally, discussions are under way with private and public sources for future funding, including the Crook County Foundation, the Bend Foundation, Bend Cultural Tourism Fund, the City of Prineville, Crook County, Deschutes County and Jefferson County, as well as additional Central Oregon private donors and the Deschutes Cultural Coalition.

Evaluation

The project's intended outcomes will be measured by:

1. The level of buy-in and support for the recommendations by the affected arts and cultural organizations (evaluated and reported annually by Arts Central).
2. The extent to which Arts Central's leadership in advocacy is recognized.
3. The extent to which the recommended action items are implemented successfully (using information collected and reported annually by the Central Oregon Regional Solutions Advisory Committee).
4. The successful publication of the proposed report and strategic plan at the conclusion of the project and made available to the public.

The project will produce a report that will be shared with all regional arts organizations and funders, and other interested parties. This report will bring together, for the first time, all the disparate research and surveys done on the arts and cultural organizations in our region and produce an inventory of their goals, jobs and economic impact. It will

serve as the foundation for funding requests to multiple philanthropic, private and public entities. In addition, the project will produce a consensus-driven strategic plan that presents a unified set of action items that provide the region with the means by which it can work more effectively to move the creative economy forward. Ultimately, project success will be measured by future investment in the identified action items.

In addition we expect to publish findings with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and share our findings with Americans for Arts as well as all of Oregon's other regional arts councils.

Organization Management & Program

Cate O'Hagan has led Arts Central for 20 years, taking the organization from a small guild-type group to a multi-faceted regional provider of arts education and advocacy services. Early in her career she developed and honed her arts management skills at the Portland Art Museum, the Corcoran in Washington, DC and the Oregon Symphony. Interested in diversifying her field of arts disciplines she moved into entrepreneurial work in marketing and project management for Oregon Ballet, Oregon Humanities, arts festivals, small theatres and the Museum at Warm Springs. Upon moving to Central Oregon she entered the field of rural arts development through her work at Arts Central and spearheaded work to restore historic structures, establish a regional art council presence, and champion an artist-in-schools residency program. She also created the region's first and only nonprofit art school open to anyone of any age with a penchant for arts exploration. Considered a significant arts leader and voice in the center of the state, she serves on numerous community committees including the Deschutes Cultural Coalition.

The Arts Central board treasurer (a certified public accountant) prepares all the financial reports for the board. The finance committee meets monthly to review and provide an opinion regarding organizational financial health to the board. The board reviews cash flow at every monthly meeting and the full array of YTD comparison to prior year, comparison to budget, P&L, etc. every quarter. A contract bookkeeper addresses the day to day accounting needs and payroll. An auditor performs a financial review annually.

Outcomes are measured against our three-year revolving strategic plan (updated annually) and the objectives and tactics set forth in our 18 month work plan. Every board member serves on a committee (Finance, Development, Board Development, Marketing, Fundraising Events, Education and Advocacy.) Every board committee and staff member works with a strategic planning consultant to develop and update the sections of the plan for which they are responsible. Progress and success is evaluated through this multi-layered planning process; when actively managed in this manner, these steps address budget shortfalls. All committees meet monthly and generate progress reports presented to the board with the consent agenda.

The Arts Central strategic plan is very much a living working document. The plan tracks accomplishment. Success is measured differently for each program. For example, evaluating education program success uses different evidence-based performance metrics than the evaluation of advocacy or fundraising efforts. As a part of our mission, this Creative Economy Plan effort is a key piece of Arts Central's work over the next three years.