



## **FY21 Flexible Support Program**

### **Eagan Art Festival**

Dakota Center for the Arts/Eagan Art Festival  
3795 Pilot Knob Road  
Eagan, MN 55122

**Organization Fiscal Year End:** 12/31/2019  
**Organization Annual Income:** \$68,215.00  
**Organization Annual Expense:** \$60,126.00

### **FS21-1-063 The 27th Eagan Art Festival: to pay fixed expenses & add a virtual experience**

Funding for the 27th Eagan Art Festival: to provide for staff and fixed expenses, and to increase organizational capacity to add a virtual event increasing accessibility to the community.

**Amount Requested:** \$15,000.00  
**Project Start Date:** 12/17/2020  
**Project End Date:** 09/30/2021  
**Total Project Expenses:** \$28,650.00

### **Group's Purpose & Background**

Mission: The Dakota Center for the Arts (DCA) is a community-based organization whose primary purpose is to develop, promote, and encourage participation in and appreciation of the arts. Historical iterations: Fine Arts Society of Dakota County (original 1963 charter), Dakota Center for the Arts, and the organization as it currently does business- Eagan Art Festival (EAF). This legacy organization furthers its mission by holding a free art festival with multiple disciplines. The June 2021 Eagan Art Festival will celebrate 27 years of providing artists a place to sell work, and providing the community a broad range of quality entertainment, robust art activities for all ages, and a new online platform, building increased community engagement through the arts. The festival board & volunteers also participate in the City of Eagan Art Block premiering in 2019. At Art Block, the DCA hosts a one day opportunity for

local artists to sell work and connect with the community. The EAF has also supported artists with workshops on displaying work and applying for festivals. DCA has two restricted funds supported by individual donations for tuition support for classes at City of Eagan's Art House and scholarships for high school seniors pursuing arts futures. The 2020 festival was cancelled due to the Covid 19 pandemic. The DCA pivoted and put together an online platform to support artists selling work in place of the in-person event connecting with approx. 3000 through social media.

## Community

1-The EAF draws audience primarily from Eagan with attendees also coming from surrounding areas including Rosemount, Apple Valley, South Minneapolis, and St. Paul. (zip code data) In the census Eagan residents identified as 81% Caucasian, 5% African American, 8% Asian, and 4% Hispanic/Latino. It can be difficult to learn about all 12,000 guests on-site, roughly the age range is from infants to over 80 years old with 55% female and approximately 8% Asian, 3% African American, 3% Latino and 80% Caucasian. The festival engages 100 local and regional artists to sell art in a vibrant community.

2-Leaders of the organization are recruited from volunteers, board member connections, and artists. Volunteer opportunities are open to all community members. The board spans ages early 30s to over 60 years and gender pronoun identifies as 1 he/him, and 6 she/hers. The artists and vendors in 2019 were 7% Asian, and 1% Latino. Progress has been made in the balance of attendees, but more needs to be done in racial equity with board members, artists and food vendors. The board seeks members to mirror the cultural diversity in our community in all areas of the event described by the demographics.

3-The EAF serves over 12,000 people annually. In the past ten years, festival attendance has increased over 60% and now serves over 20% of Eagan's population. This free event connects people to multiple art mediums, artist demonstrations and live entertainment. It is an opportunity for artists to build their businesses and this will be even more important with so many shows cancelled in 2020. The annual 10% growth speaks to the on-going popularity of this multidisciplinary event. Patron comments: "I have been coming for years," & "I wouldn't miss it." Artists state: "the show has caring volunteers", "parking is easy and accessible."

4-In 2020 the event was cancelled due to the pandemic. Artists received booth refunds and the organization took a big financial hit when sponsors pulled out, but connecting artists and community continues to be paramount. Drastic changes were made in a short time and, with the help of dedicated volunteers, an added on-line platform presented artists to the public with photos and website links. This new format needs improvement. Connecting community to artists must evolve in this new reality. In 2021 the organization will provide both an on-site and virtual experience in a parallel plan using the 2020 learning as a guide. Money for the in person piece will be raised separately. DCA's vision is to improve the online viewer experience and have the resources to be able to maintain the fixed costs of the organization including staffing, accounting, rent, and the website so that DCA can continue to offer arts access to the community. Web development and broadcasting expertise for streaming

will be necessary. An online event will allow those not able to attend in person a way to engage and connect by participating from home.

## Proposed Project

1-The EAF connects community to art and artists of multiple disciplines. In 15 years, it's grown from 4000 visitors to over 12,000. Many artists apply yearly. It includes local entertainers, and artistic quality and opportunities for artist engagement with the public have grown. Onsite hands-on community art for all ages are taught by professional teaching artists. An access bus was added to provide public transportation directly to the site. Located on an ADA accessible park, as a free event and the added bus, the work to closely mirror area demographics was coming to fruition. In April, the Covid 19 pandemic brought all of the plans for a 2020 event to a screeching halt. Like many nonprofits, the EAF is working to support artists and connect the community to art in this difficult time. In 2020, thanks to a volunteer with web expertise, photos of the artists' work were added online with links to their websites. However, only about 50% of the artists had websites or digitized images so that was a challenge. Some entertainment groups sent links that the EAF posted on the website for the audience. After moving the show online it was discovered the organization's website did not have the analytics tool to provide complete evaluation data. Over \$20,000 in irrecoverable funds were lost due to Covid and the cancellation.

2-Goals: In 2021 there is an opportunity to increase access by offering the EAF in parallel formats: in-person and virtual. The in-person festival will be reimaged for the realities of the pandemic and funding will be raised separately from this request. The virtual format will be improved and expanded. The organization needs to increase financial capacity to keep staff employed and pay bills while funding the required expertise to expand connections to community and support for artists utilizing a virtual platform. The virtual plan includes live streamed and/or video entertainment, artist interviews and demonstrations as well as an expanded website linking to artists. An improved online format will increase festival access, reaching those more comfortable interacting virtually, those with access issues, and expanding the event's geographic reach.

3-Paperwork for artists and entertainment will include online and virtual information. Assistance for artists will be offered for videoing a demo, interview and photo digitization. Contracts for entertainment will include permissions for livestream at the onsite event and support to submit video if desired. Plan: Jan/Feb contract videographer, entertainment, web developer, update website & add text to voice. Mar/Apr create & collect video of entertainment & artists, May/Jun marketing, festival with streaming, surveys. July/Aug, gather data from surveys and website, Sept analyze data, reports.

4-In a new web platform accessibility will increase by the adding a text to speech widget to the website. Text to speech also provides translation to multiple languages, vastly increasing the ability to connect with more diverse populations. A new compatible plugin to present artists' work will be added. To connect community with

the new virtual festival, social media presence will increase with multiple postings to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram platforms, and online ads. To reach the varied communities in Eagan not connected through social media, postcards will be distributed to all public venues including the Library, City Hall, Art House, Community Center, Farmers Market, and local ESL location. Online access to all parts of the virtual event and the in person event will be free. The in person event is in a fully ADA compliant park, near the transit station, fully accessible restrooms, plentiful handicap and visitor parking. The board has a member fluent in Portuguese, volunteers that speak Spanish & French available on-site during the two day event. Golf cart assistance is available providing transport help to artists and patrons. Parking is plentiful and free.

## Impact

1-In 2021 it will be the 27th year of the Eagan Art Festival and the 2nd season of Covid 19. After discussing the mission of the organization and how to move forward with a large event to connect community and support artists, the board decided that there needed to be a new way to provide access and the solution would be to do both an in person and parallel virtual event. The emphasis for this funding is to build a robust online presence through the website to support and connect festival artists with the community, and to cover some of the fixed expenses where funding was lost due to event cancellation. To be able to provide this access model, first, the organization needs to be able to retain staff, and second, additional funds are needed to be able to do an online event effectively. The event will support artists that are getting back on their feet after a year with few summer shows, and it will connect community to artists following the mission to “develop, promote, and encourage participation in and appreciation of the arts.”

2-Moving to a more robust and accessible online event is a formidable task requiring additional funds and volunteerism, but a dynamic on-line option will allow the organization to support artists and community increasing its relevance into the future. Additional online connection will increase the marketing support the organization can give to artists. Supporting staff salary will keep the organization stable and able to provide arts access going forward.

3-The EAF has a tradition of providing the community a place to interact with multiple artistic practices and artists. With enhanced online access, there will be a new mechanism for people to interact with the artists beyond the in-person festival via their websites or social media. The event has provided in person arts access to over 12,000 people annually and with the limited data from the online pivot in 2020, approximately 3000 were impacted. With time to plan further ahead and the funding to pull together the people and tech expertise required, the EAF can provide higher quality virtual access to those that need or prefer to attend from their homes. By adding text to voice capability in multiple languages, access will increase for vision impaired and participants who have found English to be a barrier. The festival provides a venue for up to 100 local and regional artists to sell art and build their businesses. These creative contributors are important to the vitality of the local

community and economy. The festival utilizes over 40 volunteers and over 1,000 volunteer hours annually. There is a desire in this community to be connected to the arts. This is a multigenerational event that invites all to participate and be a part of the art.

## **Board of Directors / Advisory Committee**

Brenda Lyseng (President) Title III Project Director - Inver Grove Heights Community College and Dakota County Technical College.

Mary Devine (VP) Retired fundraiser.

Jerri Neddermeyer (Secretary) Art Works Operations Director. Working artist.

Bethany Nelson (Treasurer) IS technician, Builders Group.

Zachary Wang (Director) Works for Lindt, pottery sculptor.

Leslie Chudnoff (Director) Retired librarian, art collector.

Wanda Borman, Executive Director

## **Amount Requested**

\$15,000.00

## **Project Budget Expense**

\$ 3500 Website Contractor includes add'l website upgrade/platform & Text to Voice upgrade

\$ 1500 Videographer

\$ 3000 Entertainment Groups

\$ 1100 Account/Taxes stipend

\$13600 Exec Director salary

\$ 1100 Payroll Tax

\$ 1350 Rent include mtg space

\$ 2000 Marketing: online ads, postcards, posters etc.

\$ 1500 Insurance D&O

\$28650

## **Total Project Cash Expenses**

\$28,650.00

## **Project Income Budget**

\$ 11600 Business Sponsorships (15 year track record of this amount & 8000 in reserve now)

\$ 500 Individual donations

\$ 250 Corporate Employee matching fund  
\$ 600 Rotary Foundation grant received 8 years  
\$ 700 Eagan Foundation Grant received 8 years  
\$ 15,000 MRAC Grant

\$ 28,650

## Total Project Cash Income

\$28,650.00

### ***(Important!)*** Additional Fields Required

Please note that in the full application there are additional fields that will need to be completed and are not shown to panelists:

- Type of group
- Legislative MN House District
- Legal Status
- Type of institution
- Organization's arts discipline
- ADA Plan status
- Individuals in leadership (for help filling out this section, please download the [FS21 Organizational Leadership Worksheet](https://mrac.org/grants/flexible-support) on the [Flexible Support grant program page](https://mrac.org/grants/flexible-support) [https://mrac.org/grants/flexible-support])
- Annual participants in the organization's activities
- Project's arts discipline
- Populations benefiting from the project

Depending on your organization and/or project, you may also need to upload:

- Fiscal sponsor letter
- Property owner permission letter