

Cultural Festival Grant Proposal

Charlotte Art League



ATTENTION: ARTS AND SCIENCE COUNCIL

2016

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Introduction

The Art and Science Council in Charlotte, North Carolina, prides itself in its ability to provide art and culture to the community. According to its website, the ASC has, "... led the growth of arts and culture in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region." To foster art and growth, it is important for the ASC to continue to support local cultural partners that are willing to provide community events, but the last few years have adversely impacted the ASC's ability to provide support to its cultural partners because of the drop in donations to the ASC.

In 2014, the ASC released a Cultural Vision Plan titled "Imagine 2025," which is intended to guide long-range cultural stewardship of the region. The plan identified an increased desire by area residents for neighborhood-based, accessible, innovative, culturally relevant, and educational cultural programming. The demand for affordable cultural activities had increased at the very time that the ASC's network of cultural organizations' resources were shrinking due to the recession.

In accordance with the ASC's mission of, "Ensuring access to an excellent, relevant, and sustainable cultural community for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Region," the Charlotte Art League's (CAL) Art & Soul Festival would provide an annual event that would bring money, culture, and the community together, helping the ASC fulfill the call in its Cultural Vision Plan for affordable, neighborhood-based events as well as helping the council to connect with young potential donors.

As the city of Charlotte and the surrounding areas expand, so does the hunger for intellectual stimulation and relevant cultural experiences. At the forefront is the need for an appropriate venue to showcase an emerging creative class within our local communities. The 2015 Art & Soul Festival was instrumental in building the foundation and framework for the creation of a larger vision for the 2016 Art & Soul Festival and beyond. It is paramount for the future of Charlotte to have cultural experiences that appeal to its vast demographics, from the young family seeking family-friendly activities, to the technology savvy members of the Millennial Generation, to Charlotte's long-standing Charlotteans and patrons of the arts.

Proposal overview

In this proposal, we will first discuss the current situation of the Arts and Science Council and Charlotte's cultural environment, which are both recovering from the economic recession of the 2000's. As a prospective recipient of the Cultural Festival Grant, we will explain how our festival encourages artistic, historical, and cultural growth in Charlotte, as well as how the

festival aligns with the desires of the ASC according to its “Imagine 2025” Cultural Vision Plan. This festival will assist in the progressive recovery and growth of the cultural environment in Charlotte that the ASC seeks to preserve. In the current situation we also address the ASC’s current plan to gain new donors, particularly young donors under 40, and how our festival will help.

After a thorough assessment of the current situation, the next section of the proposal will go into the details of CAL’s plan. The plan details what CAL is, their mission, and who they serve. We lay out our plan to host the second annual Art & Soul Festival, for which we are requesting grant support. The plan will also address how the festival serves the young donor group that the ASC is hoping to attract, as well as lists other deliverables the ASC will receive as a grant contributor/sponsor of CAL’s Art & Soul Festival.

The plan is followed by an informative timeline of how the festival will be implemented, from marketing to promoting to execution. Through this timeline, the ASC will be able to observe CAL’s excellent planning capabilities that will make this festival a success. More evidence of CAL’s promise is available in the “Background and Qualifications” section.

After gaining a thorough understanding of how CAL’s festival will benefit the ASC and the Charlotte community, the budget at the end of the document will provide important financial information. Final remarks and a summary of points are laid out in the conclusion.

Art and Science Council’s Cultural Vision Plan and declining donations

In 2014, the ASC released a Cultural Vision Plan titled “Imagine 2025,” its fourth such plan since 1975. The plan was intended to guide long-range cultural stewardship of the region. The plan identified an increased desire by area residents for neighborhood-based, accessible, innovative, culturally relevant, and educational cultural programming. Respondents surveyed as part of drafting the plan asked for programs that would be inviting, engaging, and connecting for residents from all neighborhoods and areas of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. The demand for affordable cultural activities had increased at the very time that the ASC’s network of cultural organizations’ resources were shrinking due to the recession.

With the economic upheaval of the Great Recession, the ASC experienced a significant drop in its annual fund drive donations from corporations and individuals. From a record-setting high of \$11.5 million of unrestricted-use donations in 2007, which surpassed the ASC’s fundraising goal

for the year, donations dropped to \$7 million in 2009. Government and foundation grant support to the ASC also dropped during this time.

The ASC has attempted to attract a younger demographic as loyal donors through its Young Donor Society, which offers people under the age of 40 the opportunity to join for a minimum of \$500 and receive special benefits. This society serves as a counterpart to the Vanguard Society, which requires a minimum donation of \$1,000 to join. The Young Donor's group has only one-third the membership of the Vanguard Society, with 500 members in Young Donor group versus 1,400 in the Vanguard Society as of 2014.

The ASC's Cultural Vision Plan includes a report by a specialized Cultural Life Task Force set up to study sustainability issues for the cultural sector. The task force concluded that among strategies local cultural groups needed to undertake for long-term sustainability were conducting more engagement and outreach. It also recommended that, with funding from the ASC and local government, the local cultural groups should engage in grassroots programs to fulfill the programming called for in the Cultural Vision Plan.

The task force also recommended that the ASC reinvent itself because the fundraising model it used successfully in the 20th Century was not suitable for the economic climate of the 21st Century. The task force recommended that the ASC move away from an annual, workplace-focused donation drive toward a year-round "Cultural Campaign" that focused simultaneously on engagement and fundraising with the intent to connect the donors directly with the cultural partners. It recommended that the ASC should expand funding grants "for projects that reflect the Cultural Vision Plan's emphasis on neighborhood programs . . . and accessibility." The task force also recommended for the ASC to support programming that would draw tourism dollars to the area. The Cultural Vision Plan recommends the ASC look beyond its traditional large arts organizations and programs to rethink how cultural assets are defined and how the ASC invests in them. To increase accessibility to cultural programming, the plan identifies that the programming must include four necessary factors: welcoming and inviting opportunities, relevant content, affordability, and location. Many participants in the plan research process "shared stories of their enjoyment of festivals and free days at large-scale arts and cultural events, and expressed the hope that these special offers will continue."

The Charlotte Art League's Art & Soul Festival serves to help the ASC with several of its goals and needs. The festival is a free, neighborhood-based event that provides an engaging cultural activity in the proximity of the under-40-year-old donors that the ASC is attempting to court. The ASC's sponsorship would give the council the opportunity to show this demographic that the council supports events relevant to their lives, thus giving the ASC the opportunity to

engage in its “Cultural Campaign” at the festival. The Art & Soul Festival drew approximately 1,000 people last year, and with the additional advertising that would be possible if CAL received a Cultural Festival Grant from the ASC, CAL would be able to help the ASC come closer to manifesting its “Imagine 2025” vision as well as receive exposure to the younger demographic it most wishes to engage as new donors.

Our Plan: Connect the ASC with young potential donors through the Art & Soul Festival

The ASC has sweeping, innovative goals in its “Imagine 2025” Cultural Vision Plan. To implement the plan, the ASC will need the opportunity to cultivate the lifeblood the council needs to fulfill its mission and vision — donations

The Charlotte Art League (CAL), located at 1517 Camden Road in the historic district of South Charlotte, was established in 1965 to promote cultural enrichment and creative expression for emerging and professional artists. From its headquarters in the Historic South End, CAL offers a unique mix of open working studios, classes, and community outreach programs.

Although the population in Charlotte and Dilworth (known as South End) is fairly diverse, the area where CAL is located has a median age range of 32-36 years old. With that demographic of potential young donors in mind, one may determine that CAL sits in the perfect position to host a community-driven event that will bring most of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community out. From the demographics of Charlotte’s South End, residents are primarily looking for something to do within their community where they can enjoy the weather outside with their children (married couples with children make up 45 percent of the population downtown).

CAL reinstated the Art & Soul Festival in 2015, and is determined to make it an annual festival in the South End. The Charlotte Art League’s Art & Soul Festival is a free, neighborhood-based event that provides an engaging cultural activity to community members. The event is a grassroots effort by CAL that invites the entire city to ride the light rail, which passes by the festival site, to enjoy the festival that celebrates the unique cultural offerings that the artists’ colony of the South End has to offer the entire region, and to provide a tourism draw. The Art & Soul Festival drew approximately 1,000 people last year, and offers an opportunity for the ASC to generate interest from the young donors in Charlotte.

CAL’s Art & Soul Festival will provide the ASC with the opportunity to raise funds from new donors by bringing a new audience’s awareness to the ASC as a sponsor of CAL’s Art & Soul Festival. By displaying the ASC’s logo and brand tagline on print and electronic advertisements,

the festival will introduce the ASC to a new generation of Charlotte residents who may be unfamiliar with the organization. Budding patrons will experience Art & Soul as an ASC-sponsored event, and will desire more of what the ASC has to offer, inspiring them to donate and support the ASC. Art & Soul will demonstrate to young donors how the ASC will impact the quality of their own lives. CAL will accomplish this goal for the ASC in the following ways:

Deliverables to the ASC for Sponsoring the Art & Soul Festival

1. Foster art and invite new artists to participate in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County (Achieve Sustainability)

- a. Fund the Art & Soul Festival to showcase the work of local artists, including those who are members of the ASC.
- b. Funding the Art & Soul Festival will enable the ASC to offer Charlotte residents the opportunity to purchase art, which assists the local economy the ASC depends on for funding.

2. Highlight the ASC's support for local cultural partners and community events (Community Involvement)

- a. As a financial supporter of the festival, the ASC will spark a greater appreciation for the South End's historical and artistic value, while also bringing in revenue to vendors, businesses, and the ASC's cultural partners.
- b. The festival will support the goals in the ASC's Cultural Vision Plan by providing affordable, neighborhood-based events.

3. Guide long-range cultural leadership of the region (New Fundraising Models)

- a. Member motivator model: Nonprofits, such as the Charlotte Art League, rely on individual donations and use a funding model called *Member Motivator*.
- b. Individuals donate money to gain a collective benefit.
- c. By funding the festival, the ASC will connect with potential donors.
- d. The ASC will benefit from establishing a long-term partnership with CAL. CAL members host more than 24 events each year that raise funds and receive donations that account for about 7 percent of the annual revenues.

4. Attract a younger demographic of donors (Target Donors)

- a. The festival provides an engaging cultural activity in the proximity of the under-40-year-old donors that the ASC is attempting to court.
- b. The ASC's sponsorship would give the council the opportunity to show this under-40 demographic that the council supports events relevant to their lives, thus giving the ASC the opportunity to engage in its "Cultural Campaign" at the festival.

c. The festival will provide an opportunity to highlight the ASC's and generate interest in attracting young donors, thus helping the ASC fulfill its mission of being the city's "investor of those resources in the cultural sector and community."

Overall Timeline for Completion

Upon notice of grant award: Committee directors; Susan Dunn, Brooke Gibbons, Cindy Connelly, and Vicki O'Keefe will meet to discuss advertising, marketing, artists who participated in 2015 festival, and vendors to invite.

Month 1 (January):

Festival Planning January 2016. The festival will take place on May 7, 2016. The planning committee will send a mass email to previous artist participants. Another email will go out to all CAL artists and volunteers.

This step will promote the arts by inviting previous artist participants and allow time for registration.

Month 2 (February):

CAL will begin composing promotional literature and send invitations to local businesses that participated in Art & Soul 2015.

Promotional literature will go out via email, radio, and material advertising allowing for the community to know of the event and to plan to attend it. Particular focus will be given to inviting businesses such as craft breweries and outdoor sports that appeal to people ages 25-40, the potential young donor demographic.

Month 3 (March):

Notice to local media about event: 30 days before event.

Once CAL receives notice of support from the ASC, all advertising will include notation of the ASC as an underwriter so that the arts community and the young donor demographic are aware of the ASC's support for the festival.

Local media include:

1. WFAE (NPR) and Time Warner Cable for calendar on television.
2. Social media: Charlotte Blogs, Charlotte agenda (email), Twitter, Instagram, and Community Facebook pages. *Social media will be critical for promotion because the target demographic of young donors makes heavy use of social media.*
3. Newspapers: Creative Loafing and Charlotte Observer

Creative Loafing is of particular importance because younger adults use this free arts and entertainment paper to refer to as a resource for finding events to attend.

4. Local television show “Wilson’s World”

Local media will conduct interviews with committee members and past participants to draw local attention. Many of the members and participants from last year have a local following.

5. CharlotteCultureGuide.com

This ASC events website both connects with people interested in the arts as well as connects with how young potential donors seek information about events to attend, placing Art & Soul in front of the demographics with which the ASC wishes to connect.

Month 4 (April):

Meetings with committee continue to convene and discuss materials needed and attendance for event.

A townhall meeting will take place to discuss community involvement and demographics of the event itself. Attendees will provide community feedback. This will help CAL tailor the festival so that it offers the events that most appeal to people ages 25-40, the young donor demographic, and to the arts community.

20-25 days before event:

Three CAL volunteers will be appointed to run CAL’s front desk, monitor the gallery, and welcome guests.

Volunteers will be CAL members who work specifically with “Outreach” and social media providing a familiar face to new and returning festival participants. Volunteers will be chosen based upon their ability to speak knowledgeably about the arts as well as their ability to connect with people age 25-40, the young donor demographic.

One to two weeks prior to event:

Planning committee will meet to map out locations for all tent vendors. There will be a hands-on art booth for children’s activities and a face painting station. This event strives to be inclusive to the entire community, even outside of the target donor age group, and will be stroller/wheelchair accessible.

Final event preparations will include providing facilities necessary to render the festival family friendly in recognition of the fact that the young donor demographic may well have children that they will bring to the festival.

Day of event:

All festival banners and flyers will include a description of the ASC’s support of the festival. CAL will station a booth at the festival that will distribute the ASC’s information, to include what it does for the community and how to join and donate to the ASC. All performances will include an announcement thanking the ASC’s for its support when the bands (or performers) are

introduced, at band breaks, and then when the performances wrap up. Information about how to connect with the ASC will be included in the announcement.

Results Response Report:

This wrap-up report about the festival's outcome will be delivered to the ASC by July 1, 2016. The report will include information about how the festival supported the arts and about how it attracted the young donor demographic, as well as how many times, places, and ways acknowledgement of the ASC's support of the festival was made.

Qualifications of the Charlotte Art League

For over 40 years, the Charlotte Art League has been a diverse, non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the cultural vitality of Charlotte. CAL offers an innovative approach to community involvement that aligns with the Art and Science Council's Community Cultural Connections programs that will offer support to neighborhood-based creative projects. In their 2008 Strategic Plan, the ASC held broadening community engagement as a key priority; likewise, CAL engages anyone committed to the vital role that the arts plays in building a strong, vibrant, and diverse community. CAL serves as an accessible gateway to the arts experience with events that are culturally diverse and locally based, such as its popular monthly South End Gallery Crawl held in conjunction with Food Truck Friday, free monthly lecture series, and South End Theatre with Donna Scott Productions.

Facilities and Experience

With its location by the Bland Street Light Rail stop in the heart of the historic South End, Charlotte Art League serves as the ideal organization to lead the Art & Soul Festival from its headquarters on Camden Road. With events spread out at 10 locations over two miles and four different light rail stops, the free festival revolves around CAL both geographically and as the central organizer that coordinates the many activities at the multiple business, nonprofit, and public park locations on Art & Soul day. CAL's experience with throwing successful events has spurred other organizations to seek CAL out as a partner for events, such as its recent partnership with David Dalton to assist him with the Festival in the Park and the King's Drive Art Walk. The combined talents of CAL's innovative leadership and festival committee provided the needed coordination that made Art & Soul a successful festival last year. CAL will continue with that momentum to stage an even better festival this year.

Biographies of the Staff and Organizational Board for 2016 Art & Soul Festival

With experience in art, business management, and social media, our management team offers the insight needed so the Art and Science Council will successfully reach young donors.

President and Social Media:

Susan Dunn is a graduate of the Art Institute of Houston. Her degree is in photography, but she is comfortable with many artistic mediums. Ms. Dunn has extensive experience working with others in a parent/teacher organization and runs Off The Canvas, a business where she teaches others how to paint silk. She also ran a retail/consignment business that contributed to her ability to organize events and people.

First Vice President, Marketing, Programs, and Community Outreach:

Brooke Gibbons holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Texas at El Paso. She has extensive experience with program development such as "Outreach." Brooke serves as Vice President and Secretary at the Charlotte Art League, where she is a resident studio artist and instructor.

Treasurer:

Cindy Connelly holds a bachelor's degree in paralegal science and an associate degree in graphic design and imaging. She is a practicing artist, currently focusing on digital arts photography. Cindy is currently the Treasurer and Rental Agent at Charlotte Art League. This is Cindy's third consecutive year as treasurer at CAL. Cindy spearheaded multiple events, one being "CAL is Hot" where she raised \$6,000 to fix the aged air conditioning system for the building. She runs the silent auctions for project "Outreach" that occur year round and average \$400 per auction.

Membership Coordinator:

Vikki O'Keefe has a bachelor's degree in graphic design from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. She is heavily involved with the Charlotte Art League in South End Charlotte as its bookkeeper, membership chair, art camp co-founder, and avid volunteer. She assists with all CAL events. This is her second year helping with Art & Soul. At last year's Art & Soul, Ms. O'Keefe kept track of all finances along with participating artists' needs and expectations.

Our plan's benefits and budget

In order to establish the financial need of CAL to host Art & Soul for a second year, we have put together a budget. We know that the ASC has typically provided up to \$5,000 grants to festivals of the same sort as Art & Soul, so we have prepared a budget to stay within that range.

One of the great aspects of Art & Soul is that it is put on entirely by volunteers. Last year the festival had about 15 volunteers and 1,000 attendees. CAL expects about the same number of volunteers, and with the financial support of ASC's cultural grant, hopes to increase attendees for this year's festival. However, despite volunteer help, CAL still has other fixed costs that it must pay for itself. As a non-profit, CAL relies on fundraising and grants to meet these fixed costs.

The budget chart below lays out the costs involved with effectively promoting and staging the Art & Soul Festival. The budget below outlines management, supply and material, administrative, and advertising and communication costs in detail. The advertising and communications section requires the most financial contribution. Most important to CAL are the costs associated with advertising so that we can effectively market to the young demographic of potential donors who fit with the ASC's donor development plans.

The 2015 Art & Soul Festival was partially funded by City Center, but scheduling has prevented our organizations from partnering again for the 2016 year festival. We hope that, since the ASC has learned about the benefits this festival will provide it in gaining donors and the positive impact it will have on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community, the ASC will find it a worthy cause to provide CAL with a grant that covers a portion or all of the following costs in Table 1.

Table 1. Art & Soul Costs/ Budget

Management	Hourly Pay	Time Devoted to Project	Total Cost
Project Manager Cindy Connelly	Volunteer	75 hours over 4 months	\$0
Supplies and Materials	Individual Items	Quantity	Total Cost
Artists' exhibition supplies	frames, wire, paint, hooks	Enough to service an estimated 50 artists/vendors	\$500
Dining supplies	paper plates, cups, napkins	Enough to serve 1,000+ attendees	\$500
Water and food for volunteers	Caterer, bottled water	Enough to serve 15 volunteers	\$300
Administrative Expense			
Printing paper, letterheads, envelopes, printing cartridges	n/a	n/a	\$300
Advertising & Communication Cost	Individual Cost	Quantity	Total Cost
Postcards and postage	\$1.60	1000	\$1,600
Promotional postcards, fliers, posters	\$0.80	1000	\$800
Advertising: ads, promotions, social media campaign	n/a	n/a	\$1,000
Grand Total			\$5,000

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Charlotte Art League's Art & Soul Festival would provide the Arts & Science Council a prime opportunity to connect with young potential donors while fulfilling the call in its Cultural Vision Plan for affordable, neighborhood-based events.

CAL has aligned its grant-request budget to prove comparable to other cultural festivals that ASC has supported in the past while providing the ASC with the added bonus of visibility at a festival taking place in the virtual backyard of the young donors it wishes to cultivate. The ASC's support of the festival would demonstrate to the young donors that the ASC provides cultural events relevant to their lives. By further developing its relationship with CAL by supporting the Art & Soul Festival, the ASC gains the advantage of tying into and leveraging CAL's many decades as an arts institution in the now-trendy South End. CAL and the ASC share the common goal of enriching the Charlotte community through the arts.

With the ASC's support, even more people in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community will hop the light rail every May to explore and discover the delights of the South End neighborhood through the Art & Soul Festival. Those community members will see the ASC's logo and tagline on every piece of festival materials and signage and hear thanks given to for its support frequently, encouraging them to become involved with the ASC.

If you have any questions or need further information about CAL or the Art & Soul Festival, please call Cindy Connelly at (704) 537-9061 or email her at cindy@charlotteartleague.org. We look forward hearing that the ASC's Cultural Festival Grants committee has chosen to support the Art & Soul Festival.