

FY20 Arts Organization Support Panelist Comments

Organizational Excellence	Community Engagement	Arts Education	Artistic Quality
<p>The professionalism and positive energy that is projected in the application is palpable! This is an extremely well-written application. The applicant did an excellent job sharing the its long, strong history, current programs, and organizational information.</p> <p>Efforts to use volunteers to make the best use of limited financial resources are to be commended.</p>	<p>The applicant highlighted well the unique education and performance opportunities provided to the community. The diverse ages, from high school age to the elderly, that are members of the orchestra demonstrate an inclusive mindset. The post-performance receptions appear to be a relatively easy way to foster engagement, especially with youth. Kudos to members for taking the extra time to encourage interest.</p> <p>Collaboration and feedback appear to be embedded in the organization. For example, the first post on Facebook (April 17) had a thank you for attending and a request for feedback for the most recent performance.</p>	<p>The application does an excellent job describing the goals, activities and outcomes of the educational aspect of the organization. The current music director's leadership is to be applauded!</p>	<p>Outstanding promotional materials, website design and social media presence are presented in the application. The materials are inviting, visually pleasing and professional.</p>
<p>The organization show a clear history of programs and strategy for future growth. The budget shows a healthy increase of revenue, while also maintaining conservative budgeting in the strategic plan.</p>	<p>The organization seeks to increase participation by targeting Title 1 schools and also rural communities. Data is actively collected to help overcome barriers preventing students and families from participating in programming. It is evident that the organization works with various organizations to provide accessible programming to children.</p>	<p>The organization clearly exemplifies a quality arts education program through a variety of activities, with well documented data of who is benefiting program outcomes.</p>	<p>The organization showcases clear examples of artistic quality.</p>

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<p>Clearly defined mission, history and purpose with programming that aligns. Strong, committed board and good financial health.</p>	<p>Organization does a great job of engaging with the community to meet their needs, gather their input and include them. They state that they reflect the diversity of Lawrence in their audiences (Could provide evidence of this) and the work to increase engagement with under-served communities and have a strong plan to achieve that.</p>	<p>The organization offers a good range of educational camps and workshops that serve a large number of under-served students. The programs are well-developed, have clear outcomes and are taught by professionals or training professionals.</p>	<p>Great application overall. This organization shows a clear commitment to serving their community, actively working with them, building diversity and access, and offering quality artistic and educational experiences.</p>
<p>Board membership is diverse, with many (very) seasoned members and a few newer to the board as well. Consider actively recruiting practicing artists to the board in order to make sure those voices are the table and to increase community confidence in your leadership. Perhaps reconsider the removal of term limits.</p> <p>Explanation of the People's Bank loan of \$70K may be helpful—the necessity / terms of this were unclear to this reader.</p> <p>I particularly appreciated the strength of promotional goals: utilizing regular newspaper columns, providing grantees with access to local television and radio broadcasts, and deliberate increases to social media are all smart, affordable ways to garner public support and raise visibility.</p>	<p>The diversity of your region—communities ranging widely in setting, environment, population, etc—presents unique challenges as well as exciting opportunities. Your organization demonstrates a firm understanding of this and a commitment to remain flexible, open to input, and poised to utilize tools and partnerships to continually reach audiences and connect others at the individual and community levels.</p>	<p>The commitment to a diverse pool of instructors (in addition to students) is terrific. A deliberate outreach plan to include students with varying abilities is not outlined here, though I have no doubt that such inclusion would take place as opportunities are presented.</p>	<p>I love the video on "Haunt"! It demonstrates a high level of communication from an artistic as well as professional viewpoint, and results in an engaging look at an intriguing project. Social media is utilized well. Paired with the overall narrative and the open, honest tone of the application, I find myself feeling very invited to take a trip and participate in events, exhibitions, and programs in this region.</p>

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<p>Board list is provided. Strong committee structure evident in narrative. 100% board giving is noted. Plan for development of the board is not included (see section B). Board diversity is not discussed.</p> <p>Balance sheet is missing, however, plenty of financials were provided. I appreciated how each event was broken down, but organization did not have a side by side comparison of budget to actual for 2018 (budget and actual were in separate documents). Ideally, a side by side comparison is best to evaluate results.</p>	<p>Target audience is broad (young, old, ethnic, religious). Strategies to reach youth is evident through school programs and the scholarships for photography program</p> <p>Financial accessibility is evident through free concerts.</p> <p>Additional or new strategies for attracting other age groups, ethnic groups or religious groups are not evident other than general free admission. (see question 2 under Planning and your Organization.)</p> <p>Currently a partnerships with the Art Association to reach the Burmese population is underway for children, and the elderly at assisted living establishments. Partners of applicant do reach out to a variety of ages.</p> <p>Evaluation / Input is not mentioned in this section (see #2 regarding input).</p>	<p>Free concerts / festivals are a wonderful benefit to the community. Accessibility for those with mobility issues is also provided.</p> <p>Outcomes of participation are not clearly defined. Since organizations activities support partners, the applicant could list the specific outcomes of its partners in this section.</p> <p>Programming and those putting on the programming is hard to evaluate since its partners are the ones actually putting on the arts education portion. It might be helpful to have them submit outcomes and credentials of their instructors so the proposal can be stronger in this section.</p>	<p>Pictures from festivals look like the public is having a great time!</p> <p>Promotional examples were provided.</p> <p>Website looks professional and easily navigable. Two Rivers Music Festival website looks nice and is partially up to date with the exception of this year's schedule (which is only a month away).</p> <p>Social media has 800+ on FB, and has regular posts.</p>
<p>The figures in the FY19 budget are completely out of line with previous budgets. You have budgeted an income that is more than 10 times your previous 3 years budgets. Your explanation doesn't address this very well.</p> <p>You did not include a Balance Sheet.</p>	<p>You do not address how you will insure fair access and inclusion.</p> <p>You failed to answer the question concerning getting input from the people that will benefit.</p>	<p>The answers in the Arts Education section were very brief and didn't put forth much information. You need to describe your activities, who will benefit and how, and how their training will affect them. You did not answer what qualifications your teachers possess.</p>	<p>You did not include any artistic documentation.</p> <p>Although your program seems to be of high quality, there are some serious omissions from your application. Perhaps having an outside reviewer would catch these shortfalls.</p>

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<p>Narrative is very thorough on background of the organization, but could be organized more concisely, as some content seems repetitive. Board does not meet frequently, but its diversity is detailed and goals identified. Significant increase in expenses in the current year, coupled with expenses exceeding income the previous year, is cause for concern. The organization has undergone many recent changes and rather than regrouping, is forging ahead with very ambitious goals: bold, but also risky. Strategic plan upload is obsolete and much of the narrative supplement could be condensed.</p>	<p>The engagement as described is an effect of what the organization is already doing (e.g., moving to a new location could welcome new communities), rather than independent engagement efforts to supplement and strengthen the programming. Currently no audience demographic data is collected, so the organization has little knowledge of who its current audience is, or who is missing. K–12 students (presumably as a whole) are named as an underserved population, which is questionable, especially for a literary organization. Existing barriers are not identified, and so neither are strategies to address access. Feedback is gathered from convenient populations, and could be strengthened by effort of the organization to reach new audiences.</p>	<p>Education has a broad reach, with a limited number of activities. Teacher engagement in workshops is minimal, and unusual in that most participants are from another state. Underserved populations are again not mentioned. Sophomores are again named as a specific group for outreach, but each time the narrative lacks a reason for focus on this age group, or an impetus behind providing all sophomores copies of Vonnegut's work beyond promotion of Vonnegut's work. Outcomes are largely qualitative, and focus on the "what" of increasing knowledge of Vonnegut, rather than "why" of Vonnegut's reason for relevance. Additional content on outcomes, quantitative goals, and clear connection between organization's work and impact on society/participants would strengthen this application.</p>	<p>Website and social media are well designed and maintained, with engaging content; Instagram seems to have a stronger following than Facebook. Access seems open to all but there is not a drive to reach audiences who are not already involved or inspired to visit/participate themselves. The writing of the organization often does not draw clear/explicit connections between community impact and Vonnegut's work, but only alludes to a few central themes or reasons they have chosen to offer certain programs.</p>

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<p>The organization has a clear, well defined mission and purpose as well as a well developed series of performances that align with their mission. The organization has a strong board and overall is in good financial health. One year they did run a deficit but have since had surpluses.</p>	<p>The organization provided very limited information on what audiences they are targeting and they give limited information on how they build relationships with these people and if they gather input from them. They briefly mentioned a survey that gathers some input for potential performances. The organization has described their efforts to provide better access to senior communities but does not go any further than this. Overall a lack of information on community engagement and efforts to increase access and diversity.</p>	<p>The organization has given extremely limited information on the arts education program offered, giving no real description of what they are and very limited information on who they serve and the outcomes expected. They also do not address the question about whether these programs are developed by people with relevant training. Overall insufficient information.</p>	<p>The organization provides no examples of artistic quality and limited examples of promotional materials. The organization gives very little to no information on how they provide access to the arts for under-served communities. The application overall lacked sufficient information and descriptions and was disappointing.</p>

FY20 APS Sample Panelist Comments

Artistic Quality	Community Engagement	Project Management
	<p>It is not clear how the applicant is reaching out to the community. There is mention that a group of volunteers assist at concerts to reach out to those attending to obtain feedback on the concert. What does that look like? Are they handing out and collecting surveys? Walking around talking to a handful of people? It is vague.</p> <p>The application mentions the communities it is serving are diverse, hard-working and perhaps cannot afford to attend a symphony concert. It does not mention how the the organization is letting this target audience know that you are offering a FREE concert.</p>	
<p>The promotional materials were a bit visually confusing and it was not clear that this was a free event open to the public. It was very clear that it was a musical event that occurred outdoors and that seating was not provided.</p>	<p>It is clear the organization is making an effort to provide access to individuals that already are interested in attending a symphony, and that they are gathering feedback from that specific audience. It is not clear how they are reaching out to the greater community to gauge interest and feedback. It would be helpful share what songs will be performed and why. "We are mixing in a country and western cover or hip hop cover translated in to a symphony performance to engage a wider variety of the larger demographic audience available while relying on time tested classics to fill out the majority of the performance." To work "with" a community and not "for" a community, it's important to collect their input in these decisions.</p>	

FY20 APS Sample Panelist Comments

Artistic Quality	Community Engagement	Project Management
<p>There is no question that the orchestra will provide a high level of artistry, but more information about storytelling and the children's participation through supplemental programming is needed.</p> <p>The Facebook link was broken.</p>	<p>More concrete details would be helpful in evaluating the community engagement of the concert. The interaction between the school and organization is wonderful, but what other data measurement tools are being analyzed?</p> <p>Most of the inclusiveness of the program seems to be fostered by the partnership.</p>	<p>The required linked budget template is missing.</p>
	<p>The project seems well suited to the community it seeks to engage. Reaching into the community to gather actors, directors and staff for the productions is a great way to engage the community. It is unclear how you will go about finding the people and making the community aware of the opportunity you are offering.</p> <p>Once the production is up and running it looks as though every effort to promote to and engage with the greater community is being made.</p>	<p>The Staff looks well versed and qualified in the production of these sorts of events.</p> <p>As a new project the total audience reach seems possible yet ambitious.</p> <p>The time line seem reasonable.</p> <p>The Finances all look in order.</p>

FY20 APS Sample Panelist Comments

Artistic Quality	Community Engagement	Project Management
<p>Very detailed description of project, including theme, activities and rationales based upon previous programs. Inclusion of links to video of the locale for program activities and a field trip experience emphasize the artistic quality.</p> <p>Qualifications of artists and relation to theme are added information.</p> <p>Application brochure includes all pertinent information and has detailed descriptions for each class.</p> <p>The extensive collection of photographs cover every aspect of the program, from artist statements, to field trips, performances, artworks produced.</p>	<p>Participation of targeted and appropriate constituents includes a round table, which affords input.</p> <p>Networking partners are relevant to the purpose. They avail themselves of all types of communication to reach their community.</p> <p>They make a concerted effort to include diverse populations, including scholarships. A special camp for children with disabilities is offered but participation in other camps is also available to them.</p> <p>The traveling art displays increase awareness of art in general as well as this program, expanding its impact beyond program participants.</p>	<p>Timeline and activities are described in full. Details include specific goals, activities, and outcomes. Community involvement demonstrates engagement of the families and local businesses.</p>
<p>Clear demonstration of purpose and historical experience. Selection process seems strong, and performers span numerous disciplines. Materials are clear and concise.</p>	<p>Strong engagement plan that relies on past performance and data collected from previous years. Might suggest running feedback surveys throughout all six performances to ensure you're capturing the widest array of audience members.</p>	<p>Clear project budget and timeline. Clear plan for implementation and marketing.</p>

FY20 APS Sample Panelist Comments

Artistic Quality	Community Engagement	Project Management
<p>Concert series clearly something residents and arts patrons of South Bend look forward to each year. Evidence provided that prior year assessments have influenced current year programming (i.e. performance of "Oliver", increasing to 6 performance). Purpose of event could be articulated more clearly. Like that programming promotes inter-generational participation, and additionally, opportunities to break the fourth wall. Good representation of arts disciplines.</p>	<p>Good start to retrieving input from audiences through surveys. Applicant mentions that each performing group has its own audience that it has established a rapport with - perhaps there's an opportunity to call upon each organization to further engage their constituents in the planning and evaluation process and to then check in with each of them - to cast a wider net. Much of the response focused on exposure but not so much direct input in the planning and evaluation.</p> <p>Program is inclusionary, but there are opportunities to explore taking the programming to other parks. While this park is accessible by bus and centrally located, it sends a much stronger message to place a program directly in a community, especially one you intend to engage further with.</p> <p>Intended impacts could be a bit more sophisticated. Impacts should reflect more measurable factors (i.e. 70%</p>	<p>Project manager clearly experienced and qualified in this capacity. Timeline clear and reasonable. Marketing activities thorough. Project budget reasonable and artists being paid. Should this program consume a significant amount of staff time, may need to consider administrative costs for project manager, even if it's a small fraction of the budget.</p>

FY20 APS Sample Panelist Comments

Artistic Quality

Community Engagement

Project Management

The history and purpose of the series was clearly stated. However, the supporting materials were low to mid-level quality. None of the examples provided seemed to be from the event itself. It's difficult to know if those acts were featured at the concert series, or if they're examples of the type of musician / performance featured.

The applicant does an excellent job in gathering input from the community by providing a feedback survey each week of the concert series with the option to leave comments and suggestions. However, because their target audience includes the entire community, it's difficult to analyze whether or not their evaluation efforts and feedback from the community will be addressing a specific need or if it is simply the interests of individuals. It would be helpful for the applicant to identify a specific target audience and engage them in a more concerted two-way dialogue to identify key needs, then address them accordingly.

The project manager of the concert series is also the recreation director for the Warsaw Parks and Rec department, which I assume means that this project is one of many that she handles. For a concert series of this size, I wonder if attendance could grow with the help of another part-time staff person. I'm curious if and how the board is involved in the planning and implementation.

There appears to be a solid history of the project and adaptation from prior experiences.

The application does not provide the rationale behind the selection of choosing participating artists.

The website clearly explains how art is used in the project to have a meaningful impact.

The logic behind the projected participation is solid and there is an extremely clear description of the evaluation tools and goals.

My concern with the admission price would be the following: If \$9 is prohibitive, what rationale is used to determine that \$5 is no longer cost prohibitive?

The budget seems reasonable and the staff for the project seem to have the experience needed to run such an event.

The timeline could be laid out in a fashion that shows clear deadlines.

FY20 APS Sample Panelist Comments

Artistic Quality

I would like to see more history provided about the Christkindlmarkt. What is it? Why is it relative to the town's German history?
 I would like to see more information provided about how and why the artists were selected.
 Why did you choose those artists...significance of opera/dance/"local songstress"?

Community Engagement

I would like to see much more detail in this community engagement section. Tell us more about the "rural community" that you reference. What are the demographics? Has the intended audience expressed interest in a German festival of this kind? What research was done to show that there is a need for a festival of this kind? You mention that the planning committee is already "diverse." More detail would be great - who, what are their backgrounds? How do they represent the community? Remember: we only know about your project based on the information you provide in this grant application. So, the more information you can give us, the better.

When you state that "all of your activities will be accessible to the physically challenged," please elaborate as to how. In reference to the impact that your project will have on your community, I would like to know what type of impact this festival will have on members of your community. Why is it important? What is the benefit to them if they attend? Audience participation is important, but the IAC is asking for community engagement to be more inclusive as a whole. I think this festival has great potential to include the community in a more proactive way.

Project Management

Project Manager

Who is the project manager? Is she the only person who is involved? What exactly does "do community engagement mean?"
 Please be more specific in this section.

FY20 APS Sample Panelist Comments

Artistic Quality

Community Engagement

Project Management

Although I certainly feel like the idea of the project has merit, I'm not convinced, based on the examples submitted, that the artistic quality of the work is high enough.

What training are you providing to the individuals experiencing homelessness on the type of art you are asking them to produce? Are the artists being compensated for their time and the work they create in any way? You could be more clear about the specific questions you plan to ask in your assessments following the event. I also think you could better develop your assessment for your artists. It isn't very clear how you are assessing the impact of the programming on that particular group. Outside of providing the artists with cameras, what are you doing to support their development as artists?

Your project timeline should include any assessments and analysis of the project. Your budget seems appropriate for the project. However, I am disappointed to see there appears to be no compensation for your artists. And it appears you are serving a population that could very much use income for their work.

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Being a first-year project, including past models for artistic quality was helpful and informed my scoring of the application.

While there is an emphasis on local or regionally recognized artists, the feeling of the application seemed to skew more toward notoriety and draw than specific artistic innovations--a leading criteria in the project summary. This informed my score of 7/10 on the artistic quality, question B.

This project has a lot of potential to create engaging events and open up dialog. However, the application generalizes the process of soliciting community input. Having more specific details about this process would bolster the application score and help provide more direction during the planning process.

Similarly, it's great that there will be NAEC commissioners on site collecting information. Knowing a bit more about exactly how this will happen and goals for this process would strengthen the application.

The project has clear leadership and a board and this instills confidence in the project. However, the financials are very broad. The project budget shows grants and contributed income but does not detail any expenditures. This is the reason for lower than average scoring in this section.