

## Craig, Sondra

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**From:** Jennifer Williams <jwilliams@uwlax.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 31, 2023 3:52 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Resolution to approve ARPA funds to City Arts Board

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and Members of the Common Council:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the resolution approving \$75,000 of ARPA funds for the City Arts Board.

As you are aware, the Arts Board has initiated an ambitious new program for grant funding to broaden arts exposure throughout the city, expand its reach to be include both small scale and larger projects, and to further our efforts of creative placemaking on behalf of the city. The ARPA funds requested would allow us to fund projects that involve works of art that directly impact residents of the City of La Crosse. These could include, for example, public art (murals, sculpture, etc.); performances of music, theater, dance, and spoken word; and arts workshops/education open to the public. Our most recent Arts Board public listening session revealed strong support for the grant program. The board is dedicated to mentoring individuals and groups throughout the application process. We have taken steps to make the program inclusive and accessible to artists who reside in the city of La Crosse to be able to share their work within the community, to partner with artists from other communities to realize projects that take place here in La Crosse and broaden cultural understanding and creative endeavors.

Visual and performing artists were impacted significantly by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the board responded with funds we had available to support La Crosse artists during challenging times. The arts continue to face challenges: The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies ranked Wisconsin 49<sup>th</sup> in arts funding. Many artists in our region choose to live in Minnesota (Minnesota ranks 3rd), due in part to established grant programs for artists at the state and local level. Our new grant program will set a new trajectory for arts funding in La Crosse, and ARPA funding is a key part of that effort. We will offer support to creative innovators at various stages of their careers, from emerging to established artists. We will be able to fund individual as well as collaborative projects, providing the opportunity for artists to share their creative voice and vision through art that actively engages the public.

The Arts Board is dedicated and passionate about creating and sustaining a robust program of arts funding in the city and we are seeking ways to establish ongoing revenues. We want artists to make a home here in a community that sustains creativity in myriad ways. This request for ARPA funding will give the board a chance to demonstrate how creative projects resulting from our new grant program can help keep artists engaged in their community, enhance overall quality of life in La Crosse, and make an even greater impact on the local economy.

Thank you for considering this important resolution. I urge you to support it for the greater good of our community.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Williams  
Arts Board Member and Former Chair of the Arts Board

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