

The Honorable Tim Kabat
Mayor of La Crosse
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Mayor Kabat,

I am writing on behalf of myself and the local arts and cultural organizations in La Crosse. I would like to commend you on your leadership during this incredibly difficult time, and I would also like to commend you for supporting the "Small Business Relief Grants Program". The availability of these funds is going to make a positive impact on many local businesses.

The purpose of this correspondence is to bring to your attention the need for relief funding specifically for the arts and cultural organizations. With the "Small Business Relief Grants" only available to For-Profit businesses, the non-profit economic drivers in our community are effectively left out of this source of support. I would urge you to consider opening up grant opportunities for Non-Profit arts and cultural organizations as well.

The impact of the mandated social distancing, and the general inability for people to congregate together has effectively shuttered the arts and cultural sector. Yet this industry has proven to be a significant economic boom for the City of La Crosse; not to mention the attraction it brings for prospective workers looking to come to our community.

By creating funding opportunities for the arts and cultural organizations, you would be helping to ensure their ability to sustain and eventually reopen. The ripple effect of the arts goes deep into the community, and ultimately our organizations generate revenue streams that help support local For-Profit businesses. I have included key quotes from the Americans for the Arts survey - Arts and Economic Prosperity 5, which shows definitive data that arts and culture are an important pillar in our economy.

Along with many other organizations and businesses, the arts and cultural organizations are, of course, seeking any and all opportunities for Federal, State, City, and donor support. Any opportunities you could provide would be yet another tool for us, and ultimately an investment in the betterment of our community.

Moving forward, I and many others in the community are ready to begin the conversation about what supporting arts and cultural organizations in La Crosse would look like. In the interim, I would again urge you to do everything in your power to direct the local government to find a solution on how to make available support to the Non-Profit arts and cultural sector as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dillon", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dillon McArdle
Executive Director
Weber Center for the Performing Arts
dmcardle@webercenterarts.org

KEY QUOTES FROM: AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS | Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 - 2015

- *The nonprofit arts and culture sector is a \$656.9 million industry in the State of Wisconsin—one that supports 26,695 full-time equivalent jobs and generates \$75.2 million in local and state government revenue. Nonprofit arts and cultural organizations are businesses in their own right. They spent \$376.9 million during fiscal year 2015 to employ people locally, purchase goods and services from local establishments, and attract tourists. They also leveraged a remarkable \$279.9 million in additional spending by cultural audiences—spending that pumps vital revenue into restaurants, hotels, retail stores, parking garages, and other local businesses. This study puts to rest a misconception that communities support arts and culture at the expense of local economic development. In fact, communities that support the arts and culture are investing in an industry that supports jobs, generates government revenue, and is the cornerstone of tourism. This Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 study shows conclusively that the arts mean business in the State of Wisconsin!*

AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS | Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 - 2015

- *“Mayors understand the connection between the arts industry and city revenues. Arts activity creates thousands of direct and indirect jobs and generates billions in government and business revenues. The arts also make our cities destinations for tourists, help attract and retain businesses, and play an important role in the economic revitalization of cities and the vibrancy of our neighborhoods.”*
— Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett
President, The United States Conference of Mayors
- *“A vital component to generating economic growth in our communities can be attributed to supporting and funding the arts. It is apparent that decreased support of the arts has negatively impacted some areas of our country. To compete and thrive in today’s workforce environment it is apparent that supporting the arts helps foster a more creative and innovative workforce that strengthens our economy.”*
— Nevada Assemblywoman Maggie Carlton
Co-Chair, National Conference of State Legislatures
Labor & Economic Development Committee