

City of La Crosse Arts Board

2. Creative Development Grants

Sheely, Kareena
327 26th Place N
La Crosse, WI 54601, US
9515757524
keen.sheely@gmail.com

Submitted: Oct 1 2025 12:06AM



Evaluations

Overall Rating

93.63

Rating Method: Cumulative
Range: 0 - 125

80

Andrew Sherman
Oct 17 2025 4:23PM

Public Access: 8, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 22, Community Importance: 25, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational Merit: 25, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

"I am in full support of moving this project forward. It appears to be an amazing opportunity which engages the public throughout the totality of the project. Additionally, it aims to inform the public about a hugely important and timely issue within our community in a way which is digestible to all. I believe that this project has great potential to spread joy within the community, and to engage groups which otherwise may find it difficult to participate in something like this. I am optimistically cautious about the project budget. One consideration I have is the difficulty of obtaining a parade permit; I would hope that as an arts board we may be able to ease this process for the artists. Overall I find this project very intriguing and am excited about the prospect of it being realized!"

98

Zachary Stensen
Oct 19 2025 10:48PM

Public Access: 25, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 23, Community Importance: 25, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational Merit: 25, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

"This is a solid proposal. The Flower Parade combines art, ecology, and community engagement in a way that fits within the goals of the Arts Board's grant program. The planning is detailed and collaborative, with clearly defined partners and a strong educational component. While the parade route and city logistics still need confirmation, I think the project feels both feasible and impactful (and it's free and inclusive)."

92

Jennifer Morris

Oct 20 2025 2:27PM

Public Access: 24, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 21, Community Importance: 23, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational Merit: 24, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

"I think this sounds like a lovely project with the potential to bring some much-needed joy and levity to our community. I appreciate that the workshops are free and open to artists of all skill levels."

92

Maureen Freedland

Oct 24 2025 12:54PM

Public Access: 23, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 23, Community Importance: 23, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational Merit: 23, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

"Very vibrant, joyful and educational. I like that this will continue over several months so that different people/families have an opportunity to jump in. (I am assuming that each workshop can be a separate unit.) I appreciate that Kareena will purposely bring her indigenous and Mexican heritage to the community. Children will be encircled and intrigued, hopefully with long lasting positive affection for nature and sustainability. Timing of the parade will be important so that a nice crowd will be gathered -- perhaps this could be in conjunction with another local event such as Artspire to Riverfest?"

90

Christine Kahlow

Oct 22 2025 2:24PM

Public Access: 25, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 20, Community Importance: 25, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational Merit: 20, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

100

Mary Cate Wesling

Oct 23 2025 5:33PM

Public Access: 25, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 25, Community Importance: 25, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational Merit: 25, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

"I appreciate the detailed plan for reaching out to the under-served audience. I believe this project celebrates La Crosse and its nature through the arts, which must be supported by our board."

100

Paige Shafrath

Oct 26 2025 1:25PM

Public Access: 25, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 25, Community Importance: 25, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational Merit: 25, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

"No notes, this is simply amazing and I cannot wait to help out in any capacity possible!"

VISION, ARTISTIC GOALS, &
EDUCATIONAL MERIT
5, 5, 5, 5, 5 = 25

DEMONSTRATED PROJECT
PLANNING & FEASIBILITY
5, 5, 5, 5, 5 = 25

COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE
5, 5, 5, 5, 5 = 25

PUBLIC ACCESS
5, 5, 5, 5, 5 = 25"

97

Eva Black

Oct 27 2025 11:41AM

Public Access: 25, Demonstrated Project Planning & Feasibility: 22,
Community Importance: 25, Vision, Artistic Goals, & Educational
Merit: 25, Do you support moving this application forward?: Yes

*"Project is spot on for us to support. It hits all the major points. Great use of collaboration, education,
and lots of community involvement.*

*Obviously, a few small details need to be figured out. Location, permitting, date, etc. Happy to support in
any way!"*

Section 1 (CDG) - Contact & Project Information

1. Name(s)/Organization

Kareena Sheely

2. Mailing address

327 26th Pl N
La Crosse WI
64601

3. Email address

keen.sheely@gmail.com

4. Phone number

(951) 575-7524

5. Website (optional)

6. Biography

Kareena Sheely is a multidisciplinary artist based in La Crosse, Wisconsin. She works primarily in fiber and textile

arts, incorporating sewing, mending, weaving, and natural materials into her practice. Originally from Southern California, Kareena is a member of the Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians and draws inspiration from her Indigenous and Mexican heritage, as well as the natural world. She is passionate about ecological stewardship and community-building through creative expression. Her work often brings people together in joyful, hands-on experiences that connect art, and nature.

7. 1-2 Page Resume or CV



8. Project Title

The Flower Parade

9. Brief Project Description

The Flower Parade is a vibrant, multidisciplinary community art project rooted in La Crosse, Wisconsin. It celebrates native plants, environmental stewardship, and joyful creative expression through hands-on workshops and a participatory public parade.

10. Project Start and End Dates

January–March 2026: Host three free community workshops (one per month) focused on costume making.

February–March: Commission visual artists for zine and seed packet design; begin layout and printing.

April: Finalize materials, promote the event, prepare seed packets and zines.

Early May 2026: Host the public Flower Parade along a walking route in La Crosse (location to be confirmed).

11. Requested Funding Amount

2500

12. List of Participants

Kareena Sheely
Ev Poellinger
Noël Herkes Tekai (née Bennetto)

13. Conflicts of Interest

No contracts

14. Previous Funded Projects

No

15. Are you a non-profit that is registered in the City of La Crosse?

No

16. Federal Tax-Exempt Status

Section 2 (CDG) - Project Description

1. Project Location

Workshops will be held at The Rivoli Arts District
123 4th N S La Crosse, WI 54601

The Parade location is yet to be determined.

2. Project Description

The Flower Parade

Overview

The Flower Parade is a vibrant, community-centered public art project rooted in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Blending ecological education with joyful, hands-on creativity, the project invites people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to co-create an immersive celebration of native plants and pollinators through fiber arts, costume design, and public performance.

Participants will attend a series of free workshops throughout the spring to create flower-inspired costumes and large-scale wearable sculptures from recycled and repurposed materials. These workshops will culminate in a lively, community-led public parade in early May. As they move through downtown La Crosse wearing their creations, participants will distribute native wildflower seed packets and an illustrated zine that offers accessible information on local plant ecology, biodiversity, and pollinator health.

This project celebrates art-making as both an act of personal expression and a tool for environmental connection. By inviting the community to learn, create, and celebrate together, The Flower Parade seeks to foster a sense of belonging while promoting care for the ecosystems we live within. With its inclusive, place-based approach, the project is designed to become an annual tradition in La Crosse, one that welcomes creativity to bloom each spring.

Background and Purpose

La Crosse, nestled in the Driftless Region of Wisconsin, is home to a rich diversity of native plants, prairies, wetlands, and pollinator species. However, like many places, the region faces threats to biodiversity due to habitat loss, climate change, and environmental degradation. One way to address these challenges is by strengthening public understanding and investment in native plants and ecological stewardship, particularly through community-centered initiatives that are creative, accessible, and rooted in place.

The Flower Parade responds to this need by combining hands-on environmental education with collaborative art-making and joyful public celebration. It is designed to empower individuals with knowledge about local ecosystems while giving them a tangible, creative role in fostering ecological health.

The project also addresses a cultural need: opportunities for people of all ages to gather, create, and celebrate together in a spirit of joy, imagination, and shared purpose. By offering a playful and participatory way to engage with environmental issues, The Flower Parade helps to build community and strengthen relationships to the land.

Project Components

1. Community Workshops

Leading up to the parade, we will host a series of free, inclusive art workshops where community members can

design and build their own flower-inspired costumes, masks, or wearable sculptures. These workshops will be held in accessible public spaces such as libraries, community centers, and schools.

The workshops are open to all skill levels and designed to be welcoming to families, youth, elders, and individuals with no prior art experience. All materials will be provided, with an emphasis on using recycled, donated, and repurposed items. We will also include optional storytelling, music, and short ecology lessons as part of the creative process to foster a deeper connection between participants, their costumes, and the plants they represent.

Through these sessions, participants will not only develop artistic skills but also gain an understanding of local plant species and their ecological significance.

2. Collaborator Roles

The Flower Parade will be led by Kareena Sheely in collaboration with a team of artists and educators:

Noël Herkes Tekai is a Mexican and Indigenous multidisciplinary artist from the Driftless area whose practice spans large-scale puppetry, textiles, painting, music, film, and performance. With extensive experience in participatory arts, Noël has collaborated with renowned community arts initiatives such as In the Heart of the Beast's May Day Parade in Minneapolis, Bread and Puppet Theater in Vermont, the Giant Puppetry Festival in New Orleans, and co-founded the Viroqua Harvest Parade Festival in Wisconsin. Internationally, she has taught community arts with the Moriland organization in Aotearoa (New Zealand), and regionally she has led children's puppetry workshops at the New Orleans Museum of Art. Noël will co-lead the Flower Parade workshops, guiding participants in crafting large-scale wearable flower forms. As an Indigenous artist, Noël integrates nature conservation and cultural responsibility into her creative process, bringing invaluable insight and leadership to the project.

Ev Poellinger is a conservation biologist and educator who will oversee the selection of native seeds and contribute ecological content to both the seed packets and the zine. Ev will work closely with local seed providers to ensure that all seeds are appropriate for the region's habitats and support long-term pollinator health. Their contributions will ensure that the educational materials are accurate, engaging, and accessible to readers of all ages and backgrounds.

A local visual artist (to be selected) will be commissioned to develop original illustrations for both the seed packets and the printed zine. These illustrations will provide a cohesive visual identity for the project and help bring to life the native plants and pollinators being celebrated. This commission provides a paid opportunity for a regional artist and ensures that the project's aesthetics are grounded in local talent.

3. Seed Packet Distribution and Zine

A key element of The Flower Parade is the distribution of native wildflower seed packets during the parade. Each participant will carry a supply of seed packets to share with parade watchers, passersby, and community members. The seeds will be sourced from within a 60-mile radius of La Crosse in order to support local ecosystems and small-scale seed-saving businesses.

The seed packets will be accompanied by a hand-illustrated, family-friendly zine that explains the importance of native plants and pollinators, how to plant and care for the seeds, and how to get involved in local conservation efforts. This zine will also feature illustrations, poetry, and short essays or interviews with local biologists and growers, making it both educational and engaging.

Together, the seed packets and zine serve as an ecological outreach tool, turning a moment of artistic celebration into a long-term act of environmental care.

4. The Parade

The project will culminate in The Flower Parade, a joyful, community-led public procession held in early May. The parade will follow a central, accessible route through downtown La Crosse. Participants of all ages will wear their handmade flower costumes and walk together accompanied by live music, large-scale puppets, and mobile art pieces.

Unlike a traditional parade with onlookers and performers, this event invites full participation. Community members are encouraged to walk, dance, play music, and interact with those along the route. Costumed participants will hand out seed packets and zines to the public, transforming the event into a shared, creative, and informative experience.

The tone of the parade will be celebratory and hopeful, using playfulness to spark curiosity and connection. We aim to cultivate a sense of joy and empowerment around environmental action by reframing it as something communal, beautiful, and within reach.

Impact and Outcomes

The Flower Parade is designed to have both immediate and lasting impacts in La Crosse and surrounding areas:

Community Engagement: We anticipate engaging over 200 participants directly through workshops and hundreds more through the public parade. The project provides accessible entry points for all ages and abilities, especially families, youth, and elders.

Ecological Literacy: By distributing native seed packets and an educational zine, the project will increase awareness of native plant species, pollinator habitats, and biodiversity. These materials will reach an estimated 500 to 700 people, with potential for wider circulation through schools and community partners.

Artistic Access: The project removes barriers to participation in the arts by offering free workshops, materials, and leadership from experienced, community-focused artists. Participants will gain experience in costume design, collaborative art-making, and public performance.

Cultural Enrichment: The Flower Parade offers a joyful, imaginative alternative to typical educational or environmental events. It invites people to connect not only with the land but with each other through beauty, color, rhythm, and collective creativity.

Annual Tradition: Our goal is to establish The Flower Parade as a yearly event in La Crosse, building on each year's momentum to expand reach, deepen partnerships, and grow community investment in environmental art.

Conclusion

The Flower Parade is an invitation to connect with nature, to express ourselves creatively, and to build something beautiful together. At its heart, this project is about cultivating joy and ecological care through collective art-making. By weaving together costume design, environmental education, and public celebration, we aim to foster a deeper sense of belonging to both community and place.

In planting seeds, both literal and symbolic, we envision a growing tradition. One that invites people to take part in the flourishing of their ecosystems, their neighborhoods, and their imaginations. Each spring, The Flower Parade will bloom again, colorful and welcoming, rooted in creativity and care.

3. Project Execution & Timeline

January–March 2026: Host three free community workshops (one per month) focused on costume making.

February–March: Commission visual artists for zine and seed packet design; begin layout and printing.

April: Finalize materials, promote the event, prepare seed packets and zines.

Early May 2026: Host the public Flower Parade along a walking route in La Crosse (location to be confirmed).

4. Required Materials

Costume-Making Supplies (Recycled & Repurposed Focus)

Assorted fabric scraps

Old clothing for cutting/reuse

Cardboard (for structure: petals, stems, etc.)

Wire

Recycled paper (for paper mâché, decoration)

Paint

Brushes & sponges
Glue
Scissors
Sewing needles, thread, embroidery floss
Safety pins & binder clips
Tape
Yarn, ribbons, buttons, beads
Markers & pens
-Seed Packet & Zine Materials
Native flower and prairie grass seeds (from local seed companies)
Small paper envelopes or seed-safe packaging
Custom-printed seed packet labels (collaboratively designed)
Paper for zine printing (recycled preferred)
Printing costs
- Workshop & Parade Logistics
Tables and chairs for workshop spaces
Drop cloths or table covers (to protect surfaces)
Bins for sorting materials
Name tags
Storage containers or bins for organizing supplies
Signage for workshops and parade route
-Promotion & Outreach
Printed flyers and posters
Tape / pushpins for flyer posting

5. Durability & Maintenance Plan

6. Plans for Removal

7. Target Audience

The Flower Parade is designed for La Crosse residents of all ages and backgrounds, especially families, youth, and community members interested in art, nature, and connection.

We'll host three free, hands-on workshops where participants can create wearable flower-themed costumes using recycled materials. These events are open to all, with no experience required.

Promotion will be done through social media, flyers, and outreach via schools, libraries, and community organizations to ensure broad, inclusive participation.

The project culminates in a public parade where participants walk a central, accessible route, sharing native seed packets and educational zines with onlookers. This creates a joyful, interactive experience that blends art, environmental awareness, and community building.

8. Under-Served Audience (optional)

Workshops will be free, beginner-friendly, and held in accessible locations. No materials or experience will be needed, and the parade route will be flat and walkable to welcome a wide range of participants.

Outreach will include flyers at libraries, schools, and community centers, as well as social media posts and word-of-mouth. We'll also connect with local groups to help spread the word directly to the communities they serve.

Even those who don't join the workshops can participate by watching the parade or receiving free seed packets and zines, making space for engagement at many levels.

9. Artistic Goals

This project lets me grow as an artist by combining my love of fiber arts, nature, and community. I usually work with textiles, but The Flower Parade gives me the chance to create something bigger and more public, bringing people together through art and ecology.

Working with a puppet artist and a conservation biologist will help me learn new skills and think in new ways. I'm excited to collaborate, try new materials, and make art that lives outside the studio and in the community.

This grant will help cover materials, pay local artists, and keep everything free and accessible. It also supports my goal of starting something that could become a yearly tradition, fun, creative, and connected to the land we live on.

Media



"Gaillardia"

Media/Materials:
Size:



"Noël Herkes Tekai"

Media/Materials:
Size:



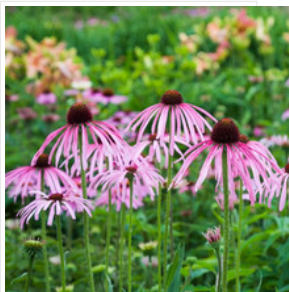
"IMG_1441"



"IMG_1442"



"IMG_1443"



"Echinacea Pallida"

Media/Materials:
Size:



"IMG_1648"



"IMG_4790"



"IMG_4789"

Attachments

Project Budget

53.3 KB

Provided by Applicant

Item	Details	Cost
Marketing Space - Booth	Trade show attendance is essential to our business	\$100
Materials & Labor Costs	Custom meeting agendas, locally sourced food, printed materials	\$150
Travel & Lodging - Team	Conferences, airfare, hotel & ground transportation	\$800
Production & Research	Product design, analysis, and ongoing data needs	\$200
Contingency / Miscellaneous	Insurance, support, public assistance requests	\$100



"Gaillardia"



"Noël Herkes Tekai"



"IMG_1441"



"IMG_1442"



"IMG_1443"



"Echinacea Pallida"



"IMG_1648"



"IMG_4790"



"IMG_4789"