

Describe, from the commencement of the organization, how you have evolved to or how you have continually engaged and uplifted historically and systemically under-resourced communities.

Since our inception, we have been dedicated to providing essential resources to individuals and families navigating the challenges of autism spectrum disorder. As our organization has grown, we have expanded our programming to include both educational and therapeutic art and music classes. While we have offered these classes free of charge on a limited basis since the onset of COVID-19, we are now launching a consistent, scheduled roster of art classes beginning in June 2023 and continuing throughout 2024.

With the increasing prevalence of autism spectrum disorder, the demand for our specialized services has never been greater. While we must reintroduce a monthly fee structure this summer to ensure our long-term sustainability, we remain deeply committed to inclusivity. Grant funding is essential to our mission, as it will allow us to continue providing these vital art, music, tutoring, and therapy sessions to families who otherwise could not afford them, ensuring that no client is left without support due to financial barriers."

Describe, from the commencement of the organization, how you have evolved to or how you have continually engaged and uplifted historically and systemically excluded and erased artists, cultural practitioners, or arts and cultural practices.

Our organization is deeply committed to cultivating an inclusive workforce comprised of a diverse pool of talented artists and educators. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we prioritized maintaining our services by utilizing personal resources to compensate our staff and keep our center operational despite providing care, free of charge. Because we serve individuals facing autism spectrum disorder, we actively recruit adult candidates on the spectrum or those with personal experience supporting family members with ASD. We recognize that these highly qualified professionals often face significant barriers to employment elsewhere due to their own diagnosis or the unique challenges inherent in specialized instruction. By prioritizing individuals who possess both creative talent and a profound passion for supporting the autism community, we ensure our center remains a nurturing and effective environment for our clients."

Describe the actions you have taken to build trust and ongoing relationships with these communities, artists and cultural practitioners.

Address how you:

a. Plan to evaluate success for the proposal and what success will look like.

b. Will listen and respond to the communities and artists / cultural practitioners through the project.

a. Evaluating Program Success and Community Impact

We will measure the success of our 2023 programming by tracking enrollment capacity and our ability to expand services to new community members. By monitoring available class spots against filled sessions, we will quantify the demand for our arts, music, tutoring, and therapy offerings. Currently, our promotional efforts are intentionally paced to match our capacity; however, grant funding will allow us to scale our advertising and social media presence, significantly increasing community awareness and accessibility.

To ensure our services remain impactful, we are implementing a formal survey process for clients and caregivers, which will provide direct feedback on program effectiveness and areas for improvement. Additionally, we will evaluate our long-term sustainability through the revenue growth generated by our new monthly class model.

b. Program Management and Instructor Support

We maintain a highly collaborative relationship with our artists and instructors to ensure they have the resources necessary to manage and deliver effective programming. To ensure programs are responsive to student needs, we facilitate ongoing communication through weekly and monthly in-person meetings, supplemented by consistent daily support via email and phone.