

3/10/2017



FREE ARTS MINNESOTA: SEEKING ARTISTS

About Free Arts Minnesota

Free Arts Minnesota works with youth in challenging circumstances to support artistic and personal development through a unique combination of adult mentorship and arts learning. We strengthen communities by partnering with community organizations, and local artists in the Twin Cities area, and over 20 social service agencies; by engaging underserved youth with the arts and allowing creativity to drive learning; and by building positive relationships with these youth. The youth we work with are 3-18 years old, and persevere through chronic poverty, homelessness, abuse, and/or mental illness.

Overview

Free Arts Minnesota is applying for a grant with Minnesota Philanthropy Partners (F.R. Bigelow Foundation, Mardag Foundation, and the St. Paul Foundation) in order to fund the development of culturally relevant curriculum. As part of this application, Free Arts would like to identify and work with five local artists who will be represented within the grant application to assist us in creating culturally relevant curriculum for different age groups. Artists will be in charge of creating curriculum that represents one of the following five cultures: Hmong, Latino, Black or African-American, Native American or American Indian, or Somali. Through different art mediums, the curriculum will represent traditions found in each of these cultures, and will be translated into their native languages. While the primary focus for the curriculum is for youth in the St. Paul area, the curriculum will eventually be available to all of our sites and the general public through our website.

Purpose

Free Arts serves a diverse population of youth, many coming from first generation immigrant communities and/or communities of color. This project will provide accessible and relevant curriculum to the youth we serve and beyond. This will also be a vehicle for Free Arts to continue to support the employment of local teaching artists, which we typically do in conjunction with our Weekly Mentorship and CREATE Workshop programs.

Organizational background

Free Arts began serving Twin Cities youth in residential treatment centers, domestic violence shelters, and therapeutic preschools in 1997. Over the past 20 years, we have broadened the scope of our programming and now work with more than 20 agency partners. We are still the only organization in Minnesota that specifically uses team-style arts mentorship, in which several adults work together with a small group of youth, to facilitate positive development for youth on an ongoing basis.

The neighborhoods we serve are among the most diverse and economically challenged in the Twin Cities. Among them are Minneapolis's Powderhorn, Phillips,

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Seward, Central, Bancroft, and Near North neighborhoods, as well as Frogtown, East Side, and Summit-University in St. Paul.

Weekly mentorship is our most intensive program. Volunteers commit to an entire term (Spring/Fall term- 12 weeks; Summer term- 8 weeks) with one partner site, and they engage in an hour of art programming with the youth at that site every week. Weekly Mentorship takes place at the partner sites that work with/house youth for three months or more, and this allows volunteers to spend the term building long-lasting relationships with mentee youth. These volunteers are also responsible for creating the projects they lead, though we ask them to get input from the youth before creating the project. This ensures that projects are meaningful to the youth and helps keep youth engagement high.

Within Weekly Mentorship, we are sometimes able to implement Teaching Artist Series. Through Teaching Artist Series, we bring a local artist into the site for 3-8 weeks of intensive programming that allows the youth to dive deep into a specific art form. We value all types of art (visual, theatrical, music, dance, etc.), and we try to be inclusive when considering our instructors' various experiences and backgrounds. We are intentional in where we place to ensure that the art form is relevant to the youth taking part in the lessons. We value each and every one of our artists and pay them adequately for their time and efforts.

In CREATE Workshop, volunteers commit to at least 3 sessions over an entire term. These sessions take place at our sites with youth in high transition situations (average stay is less than 3 months), occur less frequently (1-2 times a month), and each session is longer (1.5-2 hours) than in Weekly Mentorship. This ensures that the youth present at the session have adequate time to work on the project and are able to form some relationship with the volunteers. Projects are in-depth and intensive, and though they are created by Free Arts, partner site staff chooses the project best suited for their site before the term begins. This ensures that the art will be relevant and engaging for the cohort of youth taking part in the program.

Project Goals

The project goals for each artist will be the creation of five pieces of curriculum that represent one cultural group. Each piece of curriculum will represent a different age: Preschool-Kindergarten, 1st-2nd grade, 3rd-4th grade, 5th-8th grade, and 9th-12th grade. Each piece of curriculum be tied around a central theme or tradition, and will also be translated into the represented culture's native language. We ask that the artist, or an acquaintance of the artist, complete the translation. This will be accounted for in the final payment to the artist. The finished project will be laid out in our current curriculum format and implemented into our programming.

Project Outcomes

The outcome, after working with all five artists, will be to have 25 new pieces of curriculum that represent the five cultures mentioned above. These pieces will be

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offered as Free Arts Minnesota curriculum to our partner sites where programming takes place, but will also be accessible to the general public through our website.

Minnesota Philanthropy Partners provides majority funding to serve the broader St. Paul community. Free Arts currently has seven partner sites in Ramsey County. This project will be a direct benefit to them. Other benefits include accessible curriculum by any St. Paul organization looking for youth art curriculum, overcoming arts curriculum barriers to non-English speaking communities in St. Paul, raising awareness and building trust with new cultural communities of St. Paul, and supporting local artists in the St. Paul area. Indirect benefits will be that the curriculum will be available to all of our partner sites in the Twin Cities and to the general public via our website.

Initial application steps

If interested in being one of the five artists taking part in this grant proposal, please send Chelsea Unold, Chelsea@freeartsminnesota.org, the following documents by April 10th, 2017 no later than 5pm:

- Resume
- Address
- 3 references
- Biography
- Curriculum/Project example
- 2-3 photos of art examples
- Information on who will be translating material into native language (if applicable)

If selected

If chosen as one of the five artists, you will be asked to fill out the following paperwork:

- Application (for database purposes)
- Contract
- Photo/video/work release
- W9

Free Arts Minnesota pays all of our artists \$75 an hour. An initial meeting will determine the timeline and hours that will be put into the project. A contract will be completed and signed by both parties.

Project completion

When the project has been completed, you will be asked to fill out the following paperwork:

- Post work experience survey

Proposal due date: April 10th, 2017 no later than 5pm

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Final artist selection: If selected to be part of this project, you will hear back from a Free Arts Minnesota staff member by April 14th, 2017 no later than 5pm

Grant due date: The grant proposal will be submitted by July 12th, 2017. Between April 14th, 2017 and July 12th, 2017, Free Arts Minnesota staff will work with the five selected artists to procure any information needed to complete the grant.

Grant funding: Free Arts Minnesota will be notified whether or not they have received the grant funding in late December 2017. If funding is awarded for this project, Free Arts Minnesota staff will reach out to the five selected artists to let them know, and meetings will be set to begin working on curriculum creation.

Project completion date: All curriculum will be completed and translated by June 1, 2018, giving the artists six months to create and complete the project.

Points of Contact

Program Manager: Chelsea Unold will be overseeing this grant-funded program to make sure that requirements and timelines are staying on track. She will be the main point of contact for the artists. Chelsea@freeartsminnesota.org.

Program Coordinator: Leah Moore will work closely with the artists during curriculum creation. With her education background, Leah has youth classroom insight that will help bridge the artists' knowledge and experience with the logistics that our volunteers follow during session. Leah@freeartsminnesota.org.

Development Coordinator: Jon Bellefeuille will work with the artists to obtain any information needed to complete the grant. Jon@freeartsminnesota.org.