

Aurora Studio & Gallery Sustainability Support

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Aurora Studio & Gallery

Ms. Lori B Greenberg
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Application Form

Question Group

Buncombe County requests proposals for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts.

Buncombe County has been awarded \$50,733,290 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding), as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. To date, Buncombe County has awarded projects totaling \$23,093,499, leaving a balance of \$27,639,791 available to award.

Visit <http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding><http://www.buncombecounty.org/recoveryfunding> for details.

This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Buncombe County is committed to investing these funds in projects that:

- Align to county strategic plan and community priorities
- Support equitable outcomes for most impacted populations
- Leverage and align with other governmental funding sources
- Make best use of this one-time infusion of resources
- Have a lasting impact

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

[Click here for the full terms and conditions of the RFP](#)

Organization Type*

Nonprofit

Nonprofit documentation

If nonprofit, attach IRS Determination Letter or other proof of nonprofit status.

501(c)3 aurora.pdf

Name of Project.*

Aurora Studio & Gallery Sustainability Support

New/Updated Proposal*

Is this a new project proposal or an updated version of a proposal submitted during the earlier (July 2021) Recovery Funding RFP?

New project proposal

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$92,600.00

Category*

Please select one:

- Affordable Housing
- Aging/Older Adults
- Business Support/Economic Development
- Environmental/Climate
- Homelessness
- K-12 Education
- Infrastructure and/or Broadband
- Mental Health/Substance Use
- NC Pre-K Expansion
- Workforce

Mental Health/Substance Use

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Since 2013, Aurora Studio & Gallery has been successfully hosting weekly workshops for individuals impacted by mental health needs, substance use or those who are unhoused. Participants have found the program to offer a safe setting for enhancing art making skills, self-expression, creating friendships and building community.

In the fall of 2021, the program began hosting 3 separate classes each week. 2 classes for those impacted primarily by mental health needs and a 3rd for individuals impacted by substance use. The classes are 3.5 hours, for up to 8 participants, for 8 weeks; and include a light meal. Aurora Studio offers its therapeutic art classes in the South Slope area of Asheville.

The proposed project is to assist with Aurora Studio's sustainability and expansion, so it may shift from a volunteer run organization to one that is salary based. It has begun taking steps towards this goal by focusing on hiring a part-time grant writer/fundraiser to strengthen its financial base.

Project Plan*

Explain how the project will be structured and implemented, including timeframe.

Lori Greenberg, is a Licensed Clinical Addiction Specialist who has built the program from the ground up. She has networked with local providers, such as: AHOPE, NAMI of WNC, RHA's Peer Living Room, Seek Healing, Sunrise Peer Support, WNC AIDS Project, Youth Villages, along with arts organizations such as the Asheville Area Arts Council and The River Arts District's artists. In doing so, she has positioned Aurora Studio at the crossroads where increased community support meets artistic enrichment and enhances community awareness.

Each workshop has one facilitator and one assistant who is either a Certified Peer Support Specialist (some one with lived mental health or substance use recovery under their belt), an intern or an artist. The program often invites visiting artists to visit and teach a specific medium as part of the arts enrichment. This collaboration provides educational opportunities for both Aurora Studio's participants and visiting artists. This partnership also helps dismantle the stigma attached to mental health and substance use, through relational engagement.

The program protocol is as follows:

A 8-9-week workshop session is scheduled.

Each interested candidate is interviewed.

Each candidate completes an application and emergency release form.

Visiting artists are scheduled.

Classes begin.

Each 8-week session ends with an evaluation.

Aurora Studio & Gallery began leasing a space in the Refinery AVL in May of 2021. This location is in downtown; near the bus station; has parking and is ADA accessible.

Since Greenberg is a licensed counselor she is able to work at arranging Mountain Mobility as transportation for members of the program who qualify. Over 60% of the current members who attend Aurora Studio are over the age of 50.

Other important components of the program include donated food which is served as meals from Bounty & Soul. (During COVID, this were offered as bagged lunches).

Once the grant is awarded, Aurora Studio's board will determine who will be offered the salaried positions (and whether they will be full or part-time). Positions will be advertised (offering internal volunteers or stipend positions first). Aurora Studio's bookkeeper will be consulted to assist with updating payroll needs. This transition time from receiving the grant to the changes in payments will go into place within the six weeks following the award.

Aurora Studio & Gallery has already identified three areas of outreach it would like to enhance for financial growth. Those areas are partnering with local businesses, civic groups and broadening its donor base. The program is in the process of working with a Graduate Intern who will be putting together outreach presentations to such organizations. Additionally, as funding permits, we will grow our grant writer position to include other financial development needs.

Statement of Need*

Describe the need that this project will address. Include data to demonstrate the need, and cite the source of the data.

The data for our program needs come from; the 2018 Buncombe County Community Health Needs Assessment which states:

The top three Mental Health Issues that were critical to address were: Substance Abuse - 29%, General Mental Health - 23% and Anxiety/Depression - 23%.

“18.9% of residents reported more than 7 days of poor mental health in the past month compared to 11.5% in 2015.

14.8% of people in Buncombe County lived below the poverty level.

30.9% of individuals given the Adverse Childhood Experiences Survey, reported experiencing emotional abuse as a child. This can manifest throughout an individual’s life...Such issues are further compounded when there are no financial resources available; people are unable to work; maintain healthy relationships; and ultimately become homeless.

Additional data on people who are unhoused and aging:

The Buncombe County Point in Time Count listed 527 people recorded as being unhoused.

The US Census Bureau projects that by 2034 the number of people over age 65 will outnumber the number of children (at 77 million older adults).

Community members who have been impacted by mental health and substance use, not only need treatment, but need to increase meaningful relationships, a sense of purpose and community. Individuals need a place to safely work on goals in their sobriety. The arts are a means of expression and communication that can be witnessed by both participants and the greater community.

The 2018 Buncombe County Community Health Needs Assessment reads, “By adding resources and supports, we are increasing the positive (or protective) factors and helping to reduce the negative stressors. Buncombe County has identified those populations with high ACE scores as priority populations to target. “

Aurora Studio, as a program, understands the importance of offering a space where individuals may gather and receive validation about their lived experiences. Resiliency is born through this programming.

[Link to COVID-19*](#)

Identify a health or economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency, describe the nature and extent of that harm, and explain how the use of this funding would address such harm.

An article in the Sept. 2021 Mountain Xpress outlined the increased requests for mental health services brought about by COVID. The article cited data from the Kaiser Foundation that reported 1 in 4 adults were more anxious due to the virus; including 1 in 3 women; people of color and adults 18-29. Crisis lines around the country and locally (Vaya Health, Mobile Crisis) noted an increase in call volumes, length of calls and anxiety based calls.

Trauma research notes that concurrent traumas can exacerbate the symptoms for those with mental illness. Any added trauma can often lead to additional hospitalizations, relapse, overdoses and suicide.

The added trauma, brought about by COVID, along with the change in service delivery, from face to face to online; while working for many, were not viable for those who do not have the equipment or understanding of technology. The isolation can profoundly affect this population was increased (especially for those 50 and older, not familiar with the technology). Many mental health and physical health issues progressed without the needed support or follow-up.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse lists thirteen principles of Effective Treatment. Number Six reads, “Behavioral therapies vary in their focus and may involve addressing a patient’s motivation to change, providing incentives for abstinence, building skills to resist drug use, replacing drug-using activities with constructive and rewarding activities, improving problem-solving skills, and facilitating better interpersonal relationships. Also, participation in group therapy and other peer support programs during and following treatment can help maintain abstinence.”

Aurora Studio utilizes a support group structure accompanied by the visual arts to enhance self-expression and self-discovery. In doing so, it: “builds skills to resist drug use, replaces drug using activities; improves problem-solving skills and helps to facilitate better interpersonal relationships.”

Population Served*

Define the population to be served by this project, including volume and demographic characteristics of those served.

Aurora Studio & Gallery’s mission is to provide a supportive visual arts program for individuals who have been impacted by mental health needs, substance use or being unhoused. Currently, over 50% of the population for which we offer services are above the age of 50. Approximately, 98% of the individuals for whom we offer services are under-resourced, several receive SSI.

Additionally, Aurora Studio has been offering its workshops to 75-90 participants over each of the last two years. To date, participants have included those of varied racial composition, including; African-American, Caucasian, Columbian, Mixed Race, Native American, Pacific Islander, et. al.

Aurora Studio & Gallery interrupts the isolation for those who have felt marginalized due to having a diagnosis. It replaces that isolation by creating support and community. Additionally, Aurora Studio has been able to assist individuals with meals thanks to Bounty and Soul and transportation through Mountain Mobility.

Results*

Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

Aurora Studio will host a total of three classes a week in the twelve months following the grant distribution.

BASELINE - The program offers three groups a week and plans to continue this as its goal.

Aurora Studio will serve up to fifty individuals within the first year of grant distribution.

BASELINE - Since reopening in person workshops, Aurora Studio has offered classes to: 29 in person, 12 persons online, and trainings for 18 Peer Support Specialists.

The performance measures for the group include: attendance, participation and personal goal attainment. Questions asked include:

“Did participants engage in group activities?”

BASELINE -is YES, 100% of participants.

“Did you meet your personal goal?”

BASELINE - in a winter 2021 Survey 100% of those evaluated met their personal goal!

“Were you able to use any of the skills taught in the program outside of the workshop?”

BASELINE - in a winter 2021 survey, 92% of participants surveyed reported that programming had a positive impact on their well-being!

Every 8-weeks, participants complete an anonymous class evaluation which provides useful testimonials on personal achievements they feel they have gained from the program.

BASELINE - The stories received from this feedback is often the most useful. Here are two quotes:

“For eight weeks Aurora Studios offered me an environment where I could: Concentrate on myself; Find joy; Pleasure; Focus; Purpose; Play; Remember what is good in the world and in myself.; Move toward the future; Strive for a better life; Feel safe; Tell the truth; Be with people; Out of isolation; I simply haven’t had this much fun in a long time. I’ve told a few family members that the workshop is, “Saving my life. Just for me, no one else.” ~ Mary Lou

“I like being active. The world of art is exciting to me. Also, the discussions and quality time that I get to spend in a group means the world to me. Just knowing that people can and will communicate with one another and with me.” ~ Ralph

Evaluation*

Describe the data collection, analysis, and quality assurance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of contract requirements and outcomes.

Data collection is obtained through a simple weekly rubric that aids with attendance and group participation. Each participant is given a journal which they use weekly, at the end of each meeting, this assists them in tracking their own personal goals in the group. This attendance is taken each week.

Participation is recorded on a rubric; which includes group discussion and participation in art projects.

Personal goals will be reviewed during the group’s weekly “check in” time. After eight weeks an anonymous evaluation will ask participants, “Did you meet your personal goal? How did you feel about creating this goal?”

In the anonymous evaluation, participants will also be asked: “Were you able to use any of the skills taught in the program outside of the workshop? If so, please describe.”

Equity Impact*

How will this effort help build toward a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery? How are the root causes and/or disproportionate impacts of inequities addressed?

Aurora Studio offers support to many participants who are from communities of color or identify as being from the LGBTQ community. The program serves individuals who are under resourced. Additionally, the population is comprised primarily of individuals with mental health and substance use needs, who are interested in the arts and the community offered through the programming at Aurora Studio.

Some of the root causes that are addressed through the programming at Aurora Studio & Gallery include:

Isolation/Stigma/Marginalization is a common experience by those impacted by mental health issues, substance use or being unhoused. Aurora Studio offers an environment that respects individuals, enhances community and allows for a side income through sales of artwork. Participants are introduced to area artists where they can learn new art-making skills. Participants enhance skill development, but more importantly, gain self-confidence.

Social/Emotional disparities are also a common thread in the lives of those with lived mental health and substance use experience. Aurora Studio offers a structure that provides time and space for each participant to share and tell their stories, if they so desire. Individuals are validated and accepted.

Accessibility/Transportation can be a barrier for those who are under resourced. Aurora Studio has worked with Mountain Mobility in offering transportation to individuals who are eligible for this service. The program is housed downtown, in a building that is ADA accessible, with a parking lot and two blocks from the bus station.

Food Insecurity is also a reality for many of the members of Aurora Studio. In the last year, the program has partnered with Bounty & Soul to receive donations that are offered as lunches and take home for those who attend the program.

Project Partners*

Identify any subcontractors you intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate:

- 1.) What products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and;
- 2.) What percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.

Also, list non-funded key partners critical to project.

Aurora Studio & Gallery hosts a Visiting Artists Program. Artists are paid a stipend of \$100/class. Aurora Studio contracts with approximately 20 Visiting Artists/year. Visiting Artists meet with a class for the 3.5 hours and offer hands on skills in their area of work (from watercolor to mixed media).

Currently, all positions are subcontracted as there is no funding for paid positions. This includes: administration; group facilitator and assistants.

The administrator works 30-35 hours/week. This includes: both volunteer and participant recruitment and interviews; staff supervision; scheduling; grant writing; fundraising; hosting special events; building needs; etc. This is a stipend position, it is currently \$666.66/month.

Assistants are either Peer Support Specialists or Resident Artists meet with groups weekly. The time spent co-hosting groups is collectively 15 hours per week. Assistants help with set up, clean up and group facilitation. Each assistant has an additional task, ie. food pick. Assistants are paid \$15/hour.

In the future subcontractors may also include a part-time grant writer, who will receive a \$30/hour.

Bounty & Soul and Mountain Mobility provide ongoing to support to members of our program.

Aurora Studio & Gallery networks with the following providers who share information about upcoming workshops: NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health) of WNC, October Road, RHA's Peer Living Room, Seek Healing, Sunrise Peer Support, WNC AIDS Project, Youth Villages, etc.

Aurora Studio is a member of the Asheville Area Arts Council and an associate member of the River Arts District. It collaboratively joined the Chamber of Commerce with other artists from the Refinery AVL (the building where Aurora is housed).

Greenberg attends committee meetings with Safer Together and Buncombe County Care Team.

This spring (2022), Aurora Studio will be working with a Graduate Intern who will be working on outreach presentations for business and civic organizations.

Capacity*

Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your organization or department as it relates to capacity for delivering the proposed project and managing federal funds.

Lori Greenberg founder of Aurora Studio & Gallery, is a licensed clinical addiction specialist, who brings with her over forty years of experience working in the field of human services. She has worked in the areas of prevention education with youth and since moving to Asheville, in 2010 she has worked providing crisis support for all populations (through 2019). In 2012, she founded Aurora Studio with a focus on working with adults who have experienced trauma.

Greenberg has built a team of board members, volunteers and stipend staff who add to the spectrum of program needs by offering: lived mental health and substance use recovery knowledge and feedback; artistic enrichment; writing skills; and fundraising support.

Aurora Studio & Gallery has successfully been hosting therapeutic art workshops for nine years. During this time, the program has grown and with it, the understanding of the needs of hosting a nonprofit and supporting its participants have grown. The program initially operated one day a week, it now offers three half day sessions each week, and has managed to support up to eighty participants per year.

The program director has had close to ten years of managing the budget; writing grants; hosting fundraisers along with managing day to day program needs. She works closely with the board on all areas.

Aurora Studio plans to work with both its accountant and a new grant writer/fundraiser (a position that will open come summer/fall of 22) to ensure that the financial record keeping is recorded according to the requirements outlined in the grant. Appropriate parties will be requested to attend any training sessions needed to manage these federal funds.

Budget*

Provide a detailed project budget including all proposed project revenues and expenditures, including explanations and methodology. For all revenue sources, list the funder and denote whether funds are confirmed or pending. For project expenses, denote all capital vs. operating costs, and reflect which specific expenses are proposed to be funded with one-time Buncombe County Recovery Funds.

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Recovery-Funds-budget-template 2022.jpg

Special Considerations*

Provide any other information that might assist the County in its selection.

Had problems with the budget file and needed to convert it as a jpeg. Please email if you should need another format. Thank you.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- 501(c)3 aurora.pdf
- Recovery-Funds-budget-template 2022.jpg

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: **SEP 21 2017**

AURORA STUDIO & GALLERY INC
PO BOX 2094
ASHEVILLE, NC 28802-0000

Employer Identification Number:
46-4916413
DLN:
26053648001967
Contact Person:
CUSTOMER SERVICE ID# 31954
Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 829-5500
Accounting Period Ending:
December 31
Public Charity Status:
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)
Form 990/990-EZ/990-N Required:
Yes
Effective Date of Exemption:
August 31, 2017
Contribution Deductibility:
Yes
Addendum Applies:
Yes

Dear Applicant:

We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donors can deduct contributions they make to you under IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522. This letter could help resolve questions on your exempt status. Please keep it for your records.

Organizations exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3) are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined you're a public charity under the IRC Section listed at the top of this letter.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that you're required to file Form 990/990-EZ/990-N, our records show you're required to file an annual information return (Form 990 or Form 990-EZ) or electronic notice (Form 990-N, the e-Postcard). If you don't file a required return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

For important information about your responsibilities as a tax-exempt organization, go to www.irs.gov/charities. Enter "4221-PC" in the search bar to view Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, which describes your recordkeeping, reporting, and disclosure requirements.

AURORA STUDIO & GALLERY INC

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Martin

Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Agreements

Enclosure:
Addendum

AURORA STUDIO & GALLERY INC

ADDENDUM

If you have been in existence for at least three years and you have not filed a Form 990 return or notice for three consecutive years, you may soon receive a letter (Notice CP120A) that we automatically revoked your exempt status, as required by law, for failure to file a return or notice for three consecutive years. This letter will serve to reinstate your exempt status, so you will not need to re-apply. However, you may need to file the appropriate delinquent Forms 990 for all years you have operated as a tax-exempt organization.

Based on the information submitted in your application, we're treating your Form 1023-EZ as an application for reinstatement under Revenue Procedure 2014-11. Your effective date of exemption, as shown in the heading of this letter, is the submission date of your application.

**Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
Proposed Project Budget**

Organization Name: Aurora Studio & Gallery
 Project Name: Aurora Studio & Gallery Sustainability Support
 Amount Requested: 92,600 over two years

| Proposed Project Revenue Funder | Amount | Confirmed or Pending? | Notes |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds | 92,600 | Pending | |
| List other sources here Budget 2022 - | 16,395 | Confirmed | |
| List other sources here WNC NOW Foundation | 3,000 | Confirmed | |
| List other sources here Asheville Area Arts Council GAP | 2,000 | Confirmed | |
| List other sources here Strategic Partnership Grant | 10,000 | Pending | |
| List other sources here Tipping Point Grant | 5,000 | Pending | |
| List other sources here AARP Community Challenge GRANT | 10,000 | Pending | |
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| List other sources here | | | |
| List other sources here | | | |
| TOTAL | 138,995 | | |
| Total | 0 | | |

| Proposed Project Expenses | BUDGET FIGURES LISTED COVER 2 YEARS | Proposed Recovery Funds | Other Funds | Total | Capital or Operating Expense? | Notes |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| List expenses here | Admin Salary | 39,000 | 14,000 | 53,000 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Assistant | 21,000 | 7440 | 28,440 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Bookkeeper | 0 | 2000 | 2000 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Grant Writer | 15,600 | 10,000 | 25,600 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Insurance | 0 | 1100 | 1100 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Lease | 17,000 | 17,500 | 34,500 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Office Supplies | 0 | 300 | 300 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Postage | 0 | 600 | 600 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Printing & Copying | 0 | 800 | 800 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Professional Development | 0 | 500 | 500 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Supplies | 0 | 300 | 300 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Visiting Artists | 0 | 4400 | 4400 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | Web Site | 0 | 70 | 70 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | OTHER | 0 | 1000 | 1000 | Operating | |
| List expenses here | | | | 0 | | |
| List expenses here | | | | 0 | | |
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| List expenses here | | | | 0 | | |
| Total | | | | 152,610 | | |