



**City of Annapolis**  
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**Community Grant Application**  
 Deadline: January 22, 2016

Organization name Creating Communities Corp.  
 Contact Rob Levit Title Executive Director  
 Address 116 Sunset Dr., Annapolis, MD 21403  
 Phone 410-279-3809 Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email rlevit@comcast.net  
 Federal ID # 26-0631265  
 Incorporation Date January 2008 501(c)(3) Registration date 3/21/2008  
 Project title Youth Arts Program  
 Project location Bates Middle, Maryland Hall, Eastport United Methodist Church, Harbor House/Eastport Terrace

Amount requested \$ 8,500.00  
 Other funds \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total project amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Certification**

*"I certify that I have reviewed this application and that to the best of my knowledge and belief, all the information provided in this application is true."*



\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Chief Executive Officer 1/20/2016  
Date

Print name Rob Levit Title Executive Director  
 Address 116 Sunset Dr., Annapolis, MD 21403  
 Phone 410-279-3809 Fax \_\_\_\_\_ Email rlevit@comcast.net

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Provide a brief summary of your project. Please be sure to include the following items: purpose of the project, number of people to be served, and how the city grant funds will be used.

Creating Communities respectfully requests a grant of \$8,500 from the City of Annapolis so that we may continue to deliver high quality arts-based educational programs for young people from Annapolis who live in low-income households and would not otherwise have access such programs but who can benefit significantly from the skills taught through the arts. Funds will be used to compensate guest artists and instructors.

Our Youth Programs include: Arts Mentorship Academy, Youth Arts Fellowship, Arts Ambassadors, and an After School Arts Club: The **Arts Mentorship Academy** is comprised of weeklong summer intensives for 60 students who participate in interactive creativity sessions with instructors, work in smaller groups with master teaching artists, and create collaborative art.

The **Youth Arts Fellowship** provides arts-based education for 15 teens who meet once a month for nine months for an all-day retreat to explore the power of music, poetry, dance, and visual arts as a means of building life and employability skills. Students receive SAT tutoring, coaching, mentoring and are required to write a resume and present an employment road map developed with their mentor.

**Arts Ambassadors** are 15 middle school students who meet once a week during the school year to learn and practice world percussion, modern and traditional dance, and vocal music. Weekly sessions include a study period that incorporates homework help and goal setting instruction. Performances take place at schools, retirement homes, and nursing homes.

The **Afterschool Arts Club** is a twice weekly session held for 25 elementary school students from Harbor House/Eastport Terrace. Activities include cooking, muraling, mask-making, reading aloud, literary-based art work, outdoor discovery walks, and self-portraiture.

The **Middle School Residency** takes place during the school day and consists of arts-integrated activities in math, language arts or social studies.

## PERFORMANCE HISTORY

If you received Community Grant funds last year, please evaluate progress you have made in implementing those projects. Please discuss any factors that may have hindered your progress.

Creating Communities is sincerely grateful for last year's \$4,000 from the City Community grant. We continue to provide high-quality arts-based alternative educational opportunities to teach artistic skills, life skills, academic competencies, community service, and employability skills to young people from low-income families. We anticipate meeting or exceeding all annual measures by the end of the grant period.

To date, three sessions of Youth Arts Fellowship were conducted with 12 participants, each targeting the learning, engagement and academic needs of our high school students. The first was at Whole Foods where students were welcomed with team-building activities and a healthy and inexpensive meal preparation class in the Culinary Center. The second was a College Summit in partnership with Anne Arundel Community College. Students and their families participated in sessions on student loans, scholarships, student life and career paths. The third session was held at the Annapolis Shakespeare Theater where students were introduced to theater and improvisational skills in order to build confidence and presentation skills, learn about production techniques, and watch a staging of "It's A Wonderful Life."

Eighteen sessions of Tuesday Afternoon Tutoring and Wednesday Afternoon Arts Club were conducted with 25 elementary students from Annapolis public housing. The children received art lessons and participated in hands-on activities tied to the Common Core at Eastport United Methodist Church. Creating Communities established the Tuesday Afternoon Tutoring program in October 2015 to serve the 25 elementary school students living in public housing who participate in our Wednesday Afternoon Arts Club in order to increase academic engagement. In January 2016, we are introducing a Reading Comprehension and Language Acquisition program to target literacy skills in these students. Two mentors in the program will work to bolster the arts lesson connections to Common Core and Anne Arundel County Public Schools outcomes and standards. In April 2016, the students from these programs will create four large permanent murals that will be on display at the Harbour House Recreation Center.

Ten sessions of the Arts Ambassadors program took place for eight low-income middle school students from Bates Middle. The students took part in world drumming and began to set academic and music goals for the year. All students are provided healthy snacks. The program targets low-income students who are not in the Performing and Visual Arts Magnet. A second mentor has been added to the program to allow us to provide more individual attention, better liaison and communication with the guidance department at Bates Middle and add a creative writing and journaling component to the program. The creative writing exercises will be turned into a book of essays and art to be released in Spring 2016 to the Bates Middle School and wider community. Arts Ambassador students participate and perform in the quarterly arts integration showcases at the school.

### RATIONALE (20 Points)

Describe the issue or problem to be addressed including the size and/or severity of the problem. Provide the demographic data and geographic information used to determine the extent of the problem.

Studies show that students from low-income circumstances are the ones who can most benefit from the skills taught through arts. For our population of students from low income families, research shows that those who are highly engaged in the arts are more than twice as likely to graduate from college as their peers with no arts education. Additionally, low-income students with high participation in the arts have a high school dropout rate of only 4 percent, in contrast to their peers with low participation in the arts who have a dropout rate of 22 percent.

Creating Communities fills an important gap in services for these young people. Not only are tight budgets limiting arts programming in school, but this group of young people often lack the mentoring and coaching needed to help them plan for the future and take the steps necessary to achieve their dreams.

We tailor our programming to meet the needs of young people from low-income households. Designed with a high teacher to student ratio, Creating Communities' programs place a strong emphasis on 100% student-generated work, self-reflection, exploration of creativity, and collaborating together as a team – all of which makes our service delivery unique.

81 percent of families that sent their children to the 2015 AMA had a combined annual family income of less than \$50,000. 79 percent reported current or past use of government assistance. 40 percent of the students lived in a female-led single parent household. Demographically, 49 percent of the students were African American, 28 percent were Hispanic, and 21 percent Caucasian. All participants were students in Anne Arundel County Public Schools. The vast majority live in the City of Annapolis.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION (30 Points)

Please give a detailed description of the program or project you are proposing. Please include the group of persons you plan to serve and the number of expected participants, the activities or services you will provide and location.

Youth Programs include:

Arts Mentorship Academy - weeklong summer intensives for 60 students who participate in interactive creativity sessions with instructors, work in smaller groups with master teaching artists, and create collaborative art.

Youth Arts Fellowship - arts-based education for 15 teens who meet once a month for nine months for an all-day retreat to explore the power of music, poetry, dance, and visual arts as a means of building life and employability skills. Students receive SAT tutoring, coaching, mentoring and are required to write a resume and present an employment road map developed with their mentor.

Arts Ambassadors - 12-15 middle school students meet once a week during the school year to learn and practice world percussion, modern and traditional dance, and vocal music. Weekly sessions include a study period that incorporates homework help and goal setting instruction. Performances at schools, retirement homes, and nursing homes.

Afterschool Arts Club - twice weekly sessions for 25 elementary school students from the nearby low-income housing neighborhood (Harbor House/Eastport Terrace). Activities include cooking, muraling, mask-making, reading aloud, literary-based art work, outdoor discovery walks, self-portraiture, and art history lessons that are based on the National Core Arts Standards.

Middle School Residency – These programs take place during the school day and consist of arts-integrated activities in math, language arts or social studies. A Creating Communities instructor works side by side with the classroom teacher to strengthen and illuminate the curriculum by providing hands-on, experiential arts activities. For example, math concepts are fused with art skills by using the piano keyboard and songs to teach the number line, box plots, ratios, and positive-negative integers and creating Kandinsky-inspired paintings to teach geometric shapes, angle bisects, and interior/exterior angles. Residencies typically serve 150 students.

Describe the methodology (or approach) for the proposed program/project, e.g., the procedures, tasks, techniques, or tools you will use to develop the program

Creating Communities utilizes Harvard's Thinking Routines, the P21 Framework, Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS), STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, ARTS and Mathematics) and the National Core Art Standards to best deliver skill-building activities.

All program activities are aligned with the National Core Arts Standards that aim to shape student learning and achievement in the arts with standards related to creating, presenting, responding and connecting. Harvard University's renowned educational think tank Project Zero's Thinking Routines, researched-based methods that "scaffold" thinking while simultaneously teaching children how to be organized while building creativity, also provide a foundation for all our Youth Programs. Additionally, we have recently adopted the "Respect, Responsibility, Civility and Hope" model that is based on the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) approach of using proactive, research-based strategies to teach clearly defined behavioral expectations and establish ongoing behavior supports. PBIS is currently used throughout the Anne Arundel County Public School system. Creating Communities has also adopted the P21 framework to track the development of 21st Century skills in our students. Programmatically, all Youth Programs aim to fuse Art & Design into the STEM curriculum (to create STEAM) using robotics and "green" art as the vehicle. Further, throughout the school year, high school age Creating Communities students receive SAT tutoring, workplace skills training, coaching, and mentoring. All participants are required to write a resume and present an employment road map that they develop with their mentor. Our mentors and Executive Director help match students with paid summer jobs and internships.

Explain how this proposal relates to the organization's mission, goals and/or strategic plan, and other activities planned for this year.

Creating Communities is wholly dedicated to using art as a force for developing skills and behaviors that contribute to young people's success in and out of the classroom. Our Youth Program provide high-quality arts-based educational programming to young people who need different modalities of learning to reach their individual potential. All program activities are aligned with the National Core Arts Standards that aim to shape student learning and achievement in the arts with standards related to creating, presenting, responding and connecting. We are also committed to capturing outcome data that will provide a data-driven picture of our successes and needs in order to better serve our students by making informed decisions in the areas of resource and program development.

In 2015, we effectively and efficiently delivered the Youth Programs and demonstrated significant impact in the lives of young community members. Instructor observation indicates that all participants increased their art competencies and life skills. Parent surveys demonstrate positive behavioral health and increased academic competencies among the students:

- \* 94% of parents said their child had a broader knowledge of the arts after attending Creating Communities programs
- \* 83% of parents said the experience will help their child succeed in school
- \* 89% of parents said their child's confidence increased

Students also recognized the acquisition of new skills when completing a self-assessment. For example:

- \* Students identified an increase in academic and employment skills such as writing (62%), collaboration (19%), working in a team (15%), communication (10%), and listening (9%)
- \* Students identified an increase in artistic skills such as drama (40%), movement (36%), music (12%), and visual arts (7%). Forty-seven percent of students said that the programs made them more confident performing in front of a group

### TIMELINE (10 Points)

Provide a timeline for implementation and all program/project activities for the project.

Date	Activity
Summer 2016	Deliver at least two sessions of Arts Mentorship Academy
SY 2016-17	Deliver at least 10 sessions of Youth Arts Fellowship, 20 sessions of Arts Ambassadors, two sessions per week of the After School Arts Club, and one Middle School Residency
November 2016	Thanksgiving Jam for Youth Program students, families, guardians and caregivers

Please indicate how you have determined that the timeline is achievable.

We are confident in our ability to achieve the above timeline based on our past performance of successfully growing and delivering the Youth Programs on time and on or under budget. We are supported by a talented, caring, and capable network of teachers, social workers, master artists and mentors who, over the past eight years, have helped ensure positive outcomes for all Youth Program students.

Rob Levit is the day-to-day manager of all Youth Programs and will ensure that the above timeline is achieved. He hires instructors to lead each program as well as enlists working artists to teach at individual sessions.

Describe the organization's ability to implement the request.

The accomplishments of our students and our solid organizational growth demonstrate our ability to implement the Youth Programs. Many of our students now attend the competitive Performing and Visual Arts magnet school in the County. Several students have received arts and music scholarships for private vocal lessons and art classes at Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts. All recent high school graduates of the Youth Arts Fellowship are attending college. Alumni of our programs often return as interns to work closely with our staff and mentors and become role models for younger students.

Executive Director Rob Levit completed Maryland Nonprofit's rigorous Standards for Excellence Institute in 2015. We are also proud to have completed our ninth consecutive year of the summer Arts Mentorship Academy and to have become a well-respected organization that dependably meets the needs of vulnerable young people in our community.

As always, we derive the most joy and satisfaction when we hear from parents about how their child has benefited from our programs as demonstrated in the following note from a program participant's mother:

*"This program has opened a wonderful door of knowledge, experience and opportunities that I as a parent could not do alone. It has helped him to grow socially and artistically, and as a parent, that is so important to have your child in a positive and nurturing environment. I feel very much at ease when he is in the program because I know he is in a safe and cultivating atmosphere."*

## EVALUATION (20 Points)

Clearly state the specific, goals, objectives, and measurable outcomes of the project/program.

Goals	Objectives	Measurable Outcomes
265 students will receive high-quality arts-based educational programming for vulnerable young people from low income families in order to motivate them to succeed in school and beyond.	(1) Increase academic and employment skills (2) Increase artistic skills (3) Increase behavioral health	(1) improvement in writing, collaboration, teamwork, communications, listening skills (2) demonstration of drama, movement, music, visual arts skills (3) improvement in school attendance, community service, and self-confidence

Describe the impact (long-term effects) you expect will be produced by program/project outcomes.

Expected impacts among our Youth Program students include:

- \* 90% of our AMA, YAF, and Arts Ambassador students are expected to demonstrate positive teamwork, communications skills, critical thinking, evaluation, problem solving, oral presentations and writing assignments that are linked to the National Core Arts Standards,
- \* 95% of Wednesday Arts Club students will participate in a reading assessment,
- \* 70% or more of YAF students will raise their overall grade point average by .5,
- \* 70% or more of YAF students will have no discipline reports at school during the program year,
- \* 80% or more of YAF students will attend school regularly during the program year, and
- \* 95% of YAF, Arts Ambassadors, and Wednesday Arts Club students will participate in a community service activity.

Currently, Executive Director Rob Levit collects quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate success of the programs. Data is frequently analyzed to determine if programmatic changes need to be made during the year or if academic or psychiatric supports need to be put into place for individual students. At the conclusion of the program, data is used to design the program for the following year and make recommendations for further study or assistance to individual students. Parents and students are encouraged to give permission to allow the student's academic performance to be monitored during the program period.

Additionally, students keep a journal that details their perceived personal and academic progress and challenges. Impact information that informs our assessment of the program and participants is: student attendance, mentor and guest artist reports/observations, parental observations, and pre- and post-surveys of students and parents.

## BUDGET DOCUMENTS (20 Points)

Include a detailed program budget that includes expenses, city funds requested and pending sources of support. **Please use the attached Program/Project Budget Format.**

Outline the organizations plans for securing funding from sources other than those provided by the City of Annapolis and indicate how City of Annapolis' funds will be used to leverage a request for, or use of, other grant funds.

Funding totaling \$19,500 has been secured for CY2016 Youth Program from the following corporations and foundations:

Anne Arundel County Arts Council - \$7,000  
Community Foundation of Anne Arundel County - \$14,000  
Helena Foundation - \$7,000  
Inovalon - \$2,000  
Olivia Constants Foundation - \$1,000  
Severn Savings Bank - \$3,500  
Wells Fargo - \$5,000

Pending grant applications include:

Annapolis Rotary - \$5,000  
Anne Arundel County - \$10,000  
Severn Town Club - \$2,000

When requesting funds from other funders, Creating Communities makes the strongest case when we are able to show a diversified stream of income for our Youth Programs, including public and private funds, along with individual donations. The City's continued investment in the Youth Arts Program will allow us to leverage additional funds. We are sincerely grateful for the City's \$4,000 grant in City FY16.

\*\* In the budget below, grant funds will only be used for compensation for guest artists and instructors who work with students in all our Youth Programs (listed under "Contract Services").



## PROJECT BUDGET

Please complete the following budget chart for this project, including all budget items, the total budget for each item, and the funds that are being requested for each line item.

Budget item	City funds requested	Other funds	Source of Other funds (Federal, State, Private)	Is "Other funding" committed or requested?	Total project cost
Salaries/Benefits (list each position)					
Executive Director	\$	\$ 12,000.00	\$12k priv	Cmtd	\$ 12,000.00
Contract Services	8,500.00	16,000.00	\$9k pub/\$7k priv	Req/Cmtd	24,500.00
Rent/Leasing Costs		4,000.00	\$4k priv	Cmtd	4,000.00
Utilities/Telephone (please specify)					
Telephone/Internet		500.00	\$500 priv	Cmtd	500.00
Equipment					
Insurance		2,500.00	\$3500 priv	Cmtd	2,500.00
Office Supplies		3,000.00	\$3k priv	Cmtd	3,000.00
Printing/Postage		500.00	\$500 priv	Cmtd	500.00
Audit/Accounting		1,000.00	\$1k priv	Cmtd	1,000.00
Other (please describe)					
Food and Thanksgiving Jam		3,000.00	\$3k priv	Cmtd	3,000.00
Field Trips/Student Trans.		4,000.00	\$4k priv	Cmtd	4,000.00
Evaluation of Programs		1,000.00	\$1k priv	Cmtd	1,000.00
<b>Total Budget</b>	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 47,500.00			\$ 56,000.00