

Accessibility & Education – Arts Center of Kershaw County

Project Summary

The Arts Center of Kershaw County is requesting \$1,125,000 to support much needed upgrades and modifications to improve accessibility as well as expand, repair, and secure educational facilities. Current facilities do not meet ADA standards and are not adequate to address the increase in demand for educational programming.

Public Benefit: Project Purpose/Need

1) Accessibility Barriers

Improving accessibility ensures that all children and adults in the community, regardless of their abilities, can fully participate in the arts and educational programming offered by the Arts Center. Making modifications to meet ADA standards would remove barriers and create a more inclusive environment for everyone.

2) Expand, Repair, and Secure Facilities

Facilities need to be expanded and repaired to meet an increase in demand for educational programming. These initiatives necessitate the construction and repair of facilities to offer a wider range of classes to provide expanded programming on campus, in schools, and in developing community centers throughout Kershaw County. Additionally, aging facilities, changing demographics, and homelessness have resulted in numerous safety issues which must be addressed.

Description of Project

1) Description of Accessibility Barriers

The Bassett Building, which hosts the majority of the Arts Center's musical, theatrical, and dance performances as well as visual art exhibitions, presents the most challenges. Built in 1983, the facility presents several barriers for people with disabilities.

Four key issues have been identified:

- 1) Restroom facilities are not up to date and are not ADA compliant. The overall space is inadequate. Stalls are not wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and do not have handrails. Plans include renovating and expanding existing restrooms to meet accessibility guidelines.
- 2) Seating in the 284-seat main stage theatre is inadequate for people with mobility assistance devices. They must either sit on the last row or in front of the first row in violation of fire codes. Plans include removing seats to accommodate people with mobility devices and their companions.
- 3) Front doors are awkward, bulky, and overly weighted. They are inoperable for someone using a mobility device – wheelchair, walker, walking cane, etc. Plans include replacing front doors with accessible automated doors.
- 4) Hearing assistance equipment is broken and cannot be repaired. Plans include purchasing new enabled hearing technology and adding appropriate signage.

2) Description of Educational Expansion/Repairs/Security:

The Daniels Education Building is the hub of arts education in Kershaw County. Children and adults take part in a variety of music, art, drama, and dance programs five to seven days a week. Classes are limited as space is not available and demand for services continues to increase from individuals and schools. Aging facilities have become structurally unsound or outdated, which can lead to hazards for participants. Safety issues related to changing area demographics and homelessness must be addressed in order to create a safe and inclusive environment.

Four key needs have been identified:

Expansion

- 1) Build a multi-purpose studio to allow the Arts Center to provide double the number of theater and dance classes; improve the quality of the programming; and provide a versatile space for performances, workshops, and community events.
- 2) Purchase a Tiny House and construct an Artist's Studio to re-establish the Artist-in-Residency program. An artist residency program provides students with an opportunity to work with and learn from professional artists. The Arts Center and Kershaw County School District have maintained a strong partnership for more than 30 years with the Arts Center providing programs to supplement school offerings. Numerous teachers and community members have requested the Artist residency program be re-instated. The residence and adjoining studio would provide space for the artist to live while working in the schools throughout the County and on campus.

Renovation, Repair & Security

- 3) Education Building Renovation & Repair
 - Renovation of the Music studio to include:
 - Soundproofing practice rooms to provide a quiet and private space for students to practice their instrument or vocals without disturbing others. It will also allow three to four students to take classes in the same space at the same time, doubling the current capacity.
 - Replacing the flooring will create a safer and more stable surface.
 - Renovation of the Clay Studio by replacing the flooring and tables will significantly impact the functionality, safety, and overall learning experience for students.
 - Repairing the exterior of the building by replacing or repairing rotted decking and windows will ensure the safety and accessibility of the space.
 - Renovation of the Historic Douglas Reed House kitchen facility will allow the Arts Center to provide culinary art classes as well as improved space for art associations and the general public to gather.
- 4) Security upgrades, including the installation of cameras and additional alarms, are essential to ensure the safety and well-being of students, staff, and visitors to the Arts Center. With a large number of children attending evening classes, it is crucial to have an adequate security system in place to prevent any potential safety threats.

Budget

Accessibility

Bassett Building

Restrooms	\$150,000
Wood Auditorium Accessible Seating	\$3,000
Automatic Doors	\$20,000
Enabled Hearing Technology	\$2,000

Education

Multipurpose theatre/dance facility (2,500 sq ft.)	\$500,000
Artists Residency – Tiny House & Studio	\$200,000
Education Facility Renovations/Repairs	\$225,000
Security Improvements	<u>\$25,000</u>
	\$1,125,000

Summary

The Arts Center of Kershaw County's request for \$1,125,000 to support upgrades and modifications to improve accessibility and expand and repair educational facilities is a crucial investment that will have significant benefits for the Kershaw County community.

Improving accessibility is a necessary step towards making the Arts Center more inclusive and accommodating for all individuals. By upgrading facilities to meet ADA standards, the Arts Center will ensure individuals with disabilities can easily access and enjoy classes and programs.

Expanding, repairing, and securing educational facilities is equally important. As the demand for educational programming grows, it is essential to have adequate facilities for children and adults to learn and develop their artistic skills in a safe and welcoming environment.

Arts Center of Kershaw County Mission

The mission of the Arts Center of Kershaw County is to create an environment that promotes artistic and cultural experiences and provides superior educational, instructional and entertainment opportunities that elevate and enrich the community for all residents of Kershaw County and beyond.

Overview of Organization's Core Programs and Services

For nearly 50 years, the Arts Center has served as the artistic hub for Kershaw County by providing a variety of high quality, educational, life-changing cultural opportunities for children and adults. These programs and events include: gallery exhibits; art classes; music and dance performances; youth, community, and professional theatrical productions; outdoor concerts; and children's summer programs.

The Arts Center's signature education program is the award-winning Arts Arising program, a summer intensive designed for artistically gifted and talented children in third through eighth grade. In partnership with the Kershaw County School District, more than 3,500 children have participated since its inception.

During the 2021-22 fiscal year, despite Covid-19 restrictions for most of the year, more than 10,000 people attended our various events and programs. These signature programs and events have distinguished the Arts Center as a leader in cultural programming across the state.