

Application: Art of Me

Stephanie Lassiter
Project Support

Summary

ID: PS2023-00000000537

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Labels: PS 2023

Organizational Overview - PS 2023

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Organizational Overview - 2023 PS

This section will be pre-populated from the Eligibility form, but you may update or correct any information here.

Organization Name

Art of Me Productions

Publicly Known As

Art of Me

Date Organization Formed

01/01/2018

Website

www.ArtofMe.org

Mission statement

Work with youth to challenge stereotypes through writing, filmmaking and art.

Organizational history

Stephanie Lassiter, Cleveland native, was the National Director of Education for Scenarios USA a nonprofit, where she implemented the national and local education program for 9 years. Stephanie supported and inspired Cleveland youth to realize their full potential through the power of education, media, and storytelling. Over 15,000 Cleveland youth were served 1,100 educators trained in 5 curricula, 10 winning stories written by youth- made into films and screened locally and The Showtime Channel. When Scenarios USA ceased operations in 2017 Clevelanders requested to continue to address the need. A funders group was formed and Stephanie, expanded the work by deepening the impact in Cleveland. The annual "What is Power & Community?" Story to Film Contest asks Cleveland youth in 6th-12 grade to write a story that identifies and solves a problem that impacts their community and health. The winning story is made into a movie with local filmmakers, their school and neighborhood community.

Grant Contact Information

Grant Contact Name	Stephanie Wahome
Title	Executive Director
Email Address	
Phone	

Financial Snapshot

Enter your organization's total budget (expenses) for the 2022 fiscal year.

\$ 225000

Project Basics Form - PS 2023

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Project Basics

Use the fields in this section to provide basic project details.

1. Project Title

This should be the title, not a summary of the project.

Storytelling through animation & filmmaking

2. Project Summary

Briefly describe the project in a sentence or two.

We work with Cleveland youth in 6th-12th grade through storytelling, visual arts and media literacy to help them to identify who they are and who they want to be in their community. Students identify a problem in their community and write a short story or a short film on how to solve it through community engagement, beautification and building relationships. They are mentored by artist and film professionals. The winning story is made into a film with the youth storyteller and local community.

3. Total Project Expenses

What you will spend on this project.

\$ 100,000

4. Amount Requested from CAC

The requested amount cannot be more than 50% of the proposed project's total expenses. See your eligibility email from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture for your maximum allowable request amount.

\$ 5,000

5. Project Dates

The start and end dates should not be the entire grant period. All events must begin and end within the grant period (January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023).

Start Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	03/01/2023
End Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	11/30/2023

6. Public Event Location(s) Where will the events posted on ClevelandArtsEvents.com be hosted?

The story will be filmed in the neighborhood of the winning Cleveland writer. We will work with the local film school, casting director, actors and film professionals to create this film. In addition, we will engage local community leaders who are connected to the topic of the short film to raise awareness and create a study guide to accompany the film. In the past we premiered the winning story to film during the Cleveland International Film Festival(CIFF).

7. Total number of expected participants and/or audience members

700

8. Will the event/activity be free or fee-based? How was this decision made?

The story to film storytelling program is free for participants. This decision has been made because we serve youth who are living at or below the poverty level in Cleveland schools. We understand that this opportunity of mentorship, training and career development has a cost but it is also a unique opportunity for our youth to work with local and national film professionals. Our goal is to continue to seek funding support to make the annual storytelling program free for youth and families.

Application Narrative Form - PS 2023

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Application Narrative Form - PS

The narrative is an important part of your application. It is your opportunity to communicate to the panel the specific details of your proposed project. Keep in mind that panelists are from outside the region and likely not familiar with your organization and/or community. It is important that you communicate all relevant information necessary for a person unfamiliar with your organization to fully understand your project. Before starting your responses to the narrative section, review the Funding Criteria definitions on page 6 of the [Project Support guidelines](#).

We recommend that you prepare your answers offline in a word processing program and copy/paste your responses into the appropriate text box in the online application. Please note that your application can be saved at any point and you may return to the application to continue work.

1. Describe your project. Include an overview of planning process, project activities, implementation and when and where your project takes place.

The annual "What is Power & Community?" Story to Film Contest is for Cleveland youth in 6th-12 grade. We ask youth to identify who they are and who they want to be in their community through creatively writing a story that identifies and solves a problem that impacts their community, safety, family or friends. Cleveland youth creatively write stories with unique outcomes that explores topics critical to them such as teen relationships, bullying, drug use, gun violence, immigration, mental illness and identity. In the fall of 2021 over 100 Cleveland teachers will attend our What is Power and Community professional development curriculum workshop. Teachers use these lessons to help youth critical think about the challenges that prevent them for living longer and safer lives. In December 2022, youth submit their 1-5 page story to our contest. Our 50 member selection committee of community volunteers read and rate stories and the winning story is selected to be made into a film in the Fall of 2023. All youth who submitted their stories will be invited to be interns on the 50 member film set and have the opportunity to be mentored by film professionals to help make the film. They will also work with the local film school to make the film's behind the scenes. During Spring of 2023, the winning writer will work with an accomplished film director and writer to expand their short story into a 15 page shooting script. They will also work with the Cleveland coalition who are community leaders selected because they are most connected to the themes explored in the story. The Cleveland coalition will provide advice and insight for the characters and story. The preproduction of the film and behind the scenes film will take place in Spring of 2023 and production will happen in the Fall of 2023. In partnership with the Cleveland community and Cleveland Metropolitan School District the film will be produced in the community of the winning writer.

2a. Define your community. How will you engage your community to carry out your project?

***Tip:** A community may be defined by geography (place), identity (attributes) or affinity (what we like). The best way to demonstrate your project's public benefit is to demonstrate that you share power with your community by understanding, respecting, working with, and responding to them.*

We serve youth, grades 4-12 throughout the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Students who participate in our program reflect the diversity of this region. Census data from students' zip codes indicate the majority came from neighborhoods where the median income is under \$30,000; 11% of residents are college graduates. 53% of family households are led by single parents; 18% of neighborhood housing units are vacant. According to the 2015 Census, more than half of all people under 18 in Greater Cleveland live in poverty. During the preproduction and production stage we communicate frequently with the team of community, school and Cleveland coalition of volunteers who are experienced in the topics of the story to carry out the project. They also help recruit actors, crew members and provide locations for the production. We also meet with the writer's teacher, parents and school leaders to ensure everyone is involved in the process.

2b. How will your project build and strengthen meaningful relationships with your community, residents, and audiences including through efforts to be inclusive and to engage diverse populations?

All youth, especially in BIPOC communities are growing up in a society in which inequity is all too real and the extraordinary, including extreme levels of oppression, is becoming all too ordinary. Youth at the margins of society are often reduced to statistics based on zip code and are commonly defined by dominant cultural narratives that don't reflect their reality. Art of Me elevates their narratives, which are often silenced or overlooked, making them part of local and national dialogue. The Cleveland coalition, winning writer and teacher of the winning writer will work with Art of Me staff to create lessons and a study guide for viewers to use to better navigate the challenges explored in the film. The film will also be shown at film festivals and online for classroom use. The film will be used as a tool and beacon of light to present a new idea to the world of What Power and Community is and to inspire others to think creatively to solve issues impacting our community.

3. Describe how your organization will create a quality project that inspires and challenges your community.

Youth have the answers to improve our present and future. Our work creates opportunities for these answers to be shared through their authentic voice with the support of the local community. Our story to film program isn't focused on the best writer but the best story that challenges social norms while giving creative insight on how we can solve issues most impacting our young people, specifically BIPOC. Recent research states that youth in Cleveland have the highest rates of depression and suicide along with feelings of isolation, hopelessness and neglect. Our project challenges these social norms to inspire youth to write the future they would like to see in their community. The power of storytelling and filmmaking creates a living visual for others to see the steps on how they can also catalyze change. We also train our youth in public speaking while creating platforms for their stories to be seen at local film festivals, churches, schools and through our online streaming platforms.

Organizational Capacity

4a. Describe your team. Include who will be involved and how they are qualified to complete your project.

Our leadership team for this project includes Art of Me staff and many community partners including Cleveland Metropolitan School District (provide volunteers and staff for classroom support), and Cuyahoga Community College Creative Arts and Digital Filmmaking Department (provide film crew and film mentorship for youth).

Art of Me leadership staff includes Stephanie Lassiter(executive director, executive producer and workshop instructor), Chanda Bynum(professional writer and workshop instructor), Rosemary Gramajo, (filmmaker, workshop instructor and marketing associate), Malcolm Lott (filmmaker and editor) and volunteers. During the film's pre-production, this team meets up weekly until the completion of the film. The production team of 50 people are lead by Stephanie, it is directed by a volunteer acclaimed director. The film is edited by a professional editor and led by Stephanie and the director.

4b. Set one project goal. In addition to completing this project, what goal does your organization want to accomplish within this project?

Tip: Institutional goals are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-targeted, inclusive, and equitable ([SMARTIE](#)) aims that an organization develops to achieve its mission.

Goal	It is important for us to engage the community with this film to inspire change through the youth's storytelling. We will engage 75 community members in the creation of the film that answers, What is Power & Community.
How will you know you have accomplished or made progress towards your goal?	We will collect contact information for each member and communicate with them through the filming process and ask for their feedback.

5. Optional: Is there any additional information about your project or organization that may be helpful to an outside panelist reviewing your application?

Tip: CAC recruits panelists from outside of the region. What might be important information to share with someone who is unfamiliar with Cuyahoga County or your work? i.e. demographic information, project location descriptions, historical context., etc.

Cleveland native Stephanie Wahome-Lassiter, founded AOM in 2018. She was the National Director of Education for Scenarios USA a nonprofit, in which she implemented the national education program for 9 years. Stephanie also implemented Cleveland based programming that supported, engaged, and inspired youth to realize their full potential through the power of education, media, and storytelling. Over 15,000 Cleveland youth were served 1,100 educators trained in 5 curricula, 10 winning stories written by youth were made into films and screened at film festivals, schools and The Showtime Channel. When the national organization ceased all operations in 2017 Clevelanders requested to continue to address the need. A funders group was formed and Stephanie, expanded the work by deepening the impact in Cleveland, Ohio. Since 2017, AOM has produced 4 youth films, 27 podcast and published 9 youth story magazines. AOM has also provided social impact & storytelling workshops for over 100 schools, 400 educators, 12,500 students and 100 filmmakers in Cleveland and NYC.

Project Budget and Financials Form - PS 2023

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Project Budget and Financials Form - 2023 PS

Complete the following project budget tables.

Income

Please describe your sources of income and their amounts in the table below. NOTE: Use the first row for your CAC Request. Please do not include any commas and only whole numbers.

	Income Source (text)	Income Amount (\$)
1 - Enter "CAC Request" in the Income Source field to the right	CAC Request	5000
2 - Enter another source of income and the amount to the right	St. Luke's Foundation	25000
3 - Enter another source of income and the amount to the right	Gund Foundation	35000
4 - Enter another source of income and the amount to the right	Cleveland Metropolitan School District	20000
5 - Enter another source of income and the amount to the right	Family & Children's First Council	15000
Total		100000.0

Expenses

Please describe your expense categories and their amounts in the table below. NOTE: Please do not include any commas and only whole numbers.

	Expense Category (text)	Expense Amount (\$)
1- Enter "Administrative Personnel" in the Expense Category field to the right	Administrative Personnel	10000
2 -Enter "Arts and Cultural Professionals" in the Expense Category field to the right	Art & Cultural Professionals	20000
3 - Enter "Marketing/Publicity" in the Expense Category field to the right	Marketing/Publicity	15000
4 - Enter "Production/Event" in the Expense Category field to the right	Production Event	45000
5 - Enter "Other" in the Expense Category field to the right	Workshops, curriculum & materials	10000
Total		100000.0

These questions correspond to the budget and support material sections as appropriate.

1. How will you spend CAC funds?

Tip: Indicate how CAC funds will be used. See list of prohibited uses of CAC funds on page #12 of the [guidelines](#)

The CAC funds will be used to pay for the services and supplies needed for experts in the fields of visual arts, storytelling, filmmaking, marketing and distribution for the 6-12th grade storytellers. They will be used for marketing and services provided during the storytelling workshops, film pre-production, film production, film post production and study guide development with youth and educators of the winning story to film.

2. How will you proceed with your project if your project doesn't receive the full amount of funding requested from CAC?

***Tip:** Most applicants to Project Support receive a portion of the funds they request based on their score. CAC does not expect any organization to carry out their full project on only a partial budget.*

If we don't receive the full amount we would have to combine roles of staff and contractors to provide the services needed to complete the youth workshops and production of the winning film. Completing the youth written film that answers What is Power & Community?, and making it ready for distribution for the world is our priority. We will also seek more funding opportunities and donations.

Upload your SMU| DataArts Funder Report - PS

Incomplete

For organizations whose maximum grant amount is \$5,000 this section is optional.

Required for organizations requesting more than \$5,000. The [SMU|DataArts Cultural Data Profile](#) will have brief narrative fields that appear at the end of the Revenue, Expenses, Balance Sheet, and Program Activity & Audiences sections. Please use the narrative fields for annotations and explanations of the data in your report.

Upload your CDP CAC Funder Report including your two most recently completed fiscal years. For most organizations that will be 2020 and 2021.

Upload Board of Directors List - PS

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Include affiliations and their roles in the project (If applicable).

[AOM BoardMembers2021_List](#)

Filename: AOM_BoardMembers2021__List_CNyMGjs.pdf **Size:** 79.1 kB

Upload Arts and Cultural Support Materials - PS

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Support materials play a critical role in helping panelists evaluate your application by bringing to life your organization's mission and programs. For more information on selecting and uploading support materials to your online application, please refer to the [Support Materials Guide](#).

Include at least 1 but no more than three (3) total uploads and/or web-based support materials:

- Upload items of your choice that demonstrate your Public Benefit, Artistic and Cultural Vibrancy and Organizational Capacity.
- Include web-based support material links here:
- Photos, videos, audio, and other documents do not necessarily need to be professionally produced to demonstrate vibrant programming.
- All audio and visual materials should be cued to immediately begin with relevant activity.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit quality support materials that are current (within the last 24 months) and relevant to the application.

Please note: CAC does not own, collect royalties on or hold copyrights to artistic products resulting from its grants, nor will it take any action on behalf of the Grant Recipient to protect the Grant Recipient's intellectual property rights. CAC does, however, have legal authority to reproduce and use submitted documentation (electronically and in print) of such artistic products for educational, promotional, official or noncommercial purposes.

[The Effects: Written by 16 year old Rosemary Gramajo](#)

This story was inspired by Rosemary's experience of her family's bond being challenged by deportation. Here is her behind the scenes interview: https://vimeo.com/623533185?fbclid=IwAR1Yc2kmEXkNfB_cmlgeIVvwjS8cvt2dbWlX4r6QWDAAjxJ-uQriPBWjt4

<https://vimeo.com/475348640/17d85525e9>

OPTIONAL - Provide Links (URLs) to Online Support Materials

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Panelists will not review materials in excess of the three optional support materials.

Please note: CAC does not own, collect royalties on or hold copyrights to artistic products resulting from its grants, nor will it take any action on behalf of the cultural partner to protect the cultural partner's intellectual property rights. CAC does, however, have legal authority to reproduce and use submitted documentation (electronically and in print) of such artistic products for educational, promotional, official or noncommercial purposes.

OPTIONAL - Provide Links (URLs) to Online Support Materials

Provide any optional links (URLs) to websites for your support materials.

OPTIONAL - Link 1	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZn5DCSmJ2s
OPTIONAL - Link 2	https://vimeo.com/623533185?fbclid=IwAR1Yc2kmEXkNfB_cmlgeIVvwjS8cvt2dbWlX4r6QWDAAjxJ-uQriPBWjt4
OPTIONAL - Link 3	https://www.artofme.org/projects

Statement of Assurances Form - PS 2023

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Statement of Assurances Form

This section certifies that you are authorized to submit the application on behalf of the organization. All information in the report is true and correct to the best of your knowledge.

Responses Selected:

I Agree

Name

Stephanie Wahome-Lassiter

Title

Executive Director

Date

Aug 4 2022