



Photo Credit:

The Free Art Supply Closet

Supporting a beautiful and creative communities in Milwaukee, WI by providing free art supplies.

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THE NEED

Milwaukee has a rich and diverse arts scene, but artists are struggling more than ever. The free art supply closet is here to fill gaps and sustain the local arts community.

Artists are struggling more

The rise of Covid-19 puts artists in a difficult position financially. According to Americans for the Arts 79% of US artists have experienced a decrease in creative work that generates income and 67% are unable to access the supplies and resources they need for creative work. This is especially relevant for BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) artists who are experiencing higher rates of unemployment, and a larger loss of income.

Communities need art

Community art events can have a large economic impact, generating on average \$31.47 per attendee of an event. Art in public spaces and throughout daily life can also increase the happiness and unity within a community. According to Americans for the Arts, 72% of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity.” 73% believe that art “helps me understand other cultures better.” 81% say that the arts are a “positive experience in a troubled world.”

OUR SOLUTION

If we can provide materials to artists in need, we can support them in becoming financially independent and contributing to their community with their creations. Whether it's drawing pencils, oil paints, or buckets of scrap fiber and mixed media materials, our goal is to ensure that access to supplies is a barrier that no artist in Milwaukee needs to face.

Who will we serve?

We will serve Milwaukee artists with demonstrated financial need. As financial need is subjective, this will be done on a person, to person basis. Although we will serve anyone with a demonstrated need, by targeting specific neighborhoods, and partnering with other local non-profit organization, we will aim to serve a population of 70% artists from a marginalized group.

Partner Artists. Partner artists will apply to work with our organization on a consistent basis. We will work with them to ensure we have the supplies they require. Once we open our brick and mortar space, they will be able to sell their art in our gallery and have access to our space for showcases, events and workshops.

Occasional Recipients. Artists who are not part of our partner artist program can also request free supplies from our collection. They can submit a project proposal and we will approve their request and schedule a pick-up. Parents and caregivers can also request supplies for children and teenagers. All non-partner pickups will be limited to \$20 worth of supplies.

OUR GOALS

With your help, our network of free art supplies will several up and coming artists in the Milwaukee area. This will a noticeable expansion to the lively art scene in our local community. This expansion will include new, diverse voices that have previously not had access to the arts community.

Our goals include:

- Partnering with 20-30 artists by the end of year two.
- Donating \$5000 worth of art supplies by the end of phase one.
- Building a volunteer network of 10-20 volunteers by the end of phase one, and
- Developing enough income to cover 30% of our expenses by the end of phase 2.

PROJECT OUTLINE

Phase 1- Establishing Presence in the Community

Initially, art supplies will be collected and distributed by a network of volunteers and full time salaried staff. This phase will be all about establishing connections. We will build a network of both monetary and supply donors while also connecting with artists in the community. During phase one, our project will operate out of the larger Urban Development Milwaukee office. Some of the steps we will be focusing on in this stage are:

- Hiring a team of three full time staff members and creating a network of volunteers.
- Creating a high quality website for donors and artists alike to access important information
- Establishing a social media presence on instagram, TikTok, twitter, and Facebook.
- Creating a donation network for funding and supply donations.

Phase 2- Creating Physical Spaces

Once we start providing our services to artists and feel established in the community, we will work on creating a brick and mortar “store” for our project to operate out of. This will incur more expenses and will require our organization to generate some of its own income while still relying on donors. As such, we will continue distributing supplies through a delivery network while also operating a storefront and studio. Some key steps of this

- Establishing community shopping hours, where community members can purchase an assortment of products created by our local artists partners. We will also partner with local business owners and artisans to increase the variety of products people can purchase. Partner artists will receive all of their proceeds. Local business owners and artisans will donate a portion of their proceeds to our operations.
 - Artists can still get their supplies delivered or they can will be able to make an appointment to shop at our local stores.
 - This will also give us space to explore leading classes, providing studio space, and hosting events on behalf of our partner artists
- Phase One Budget
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BUDGET

Description	Cost
Salaries for 3 Employees	\$150,000
Marketing (attendance at non-profit events, print materials, events, travel) etc.	\$5,000
Supplies and materials to distribute	\$5,000
Gas reimbursement for volunteer delivery drivers	\$3,500
Total	\$163,500

We are asking your foundation to sponsor a significant portion of our budget for phase one. A donation of \$150,000 will ensure that our staffing needs are met for the first year of operation.

THANK YOU!

We appreciate your consideration of this proposal. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Julia at jserra@urbandevelopmentmilwaukee.com.

REFERENCES

Broad Room. "Free Art Supply Closet." N.d. <https://broadroom.org/free-art-supply-closet>

Americans for the Arts. "10 Reasons to Support Artists in 2019." N.d. <https://www.artsactionfund.org/top-10-reasons-support-arts-2019#:~:text=Arts%20unify%20communities.,Arts%20improve%20academic%20performance>.
