



Creative Spirit Community Arts Center
Phase 1 Renovations 2023

6-8 Raymond St, Potsdam, NY 13676

St. Lawrence County Arts Council, Inc. (SLC Arts)

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Organizational Overview

The St. Lawrence County Arts Council, known as SLC Arts, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that strives to enrich the vibrancy of the North Country community by cultivating arts appreciation and inspiring creative expression. The organization started in 1972 as the Arts and Humanities Council of the St. Lawrence Valley, reincorporated under the Department of Education in 1989 as the Tri-County Arts Council, and amended in 1999 to the St. Lawrence County Arts Council. Over our 51-year history, we have continued to strive to make the arts a pillar of our North Country community.

SLC Arts creates and supports arts initiatives in St. Lawrence County and the surrounding region. In an effort to enrich the lives of the people who live here while encouraging economic development and tourism, SLC Arts brings the arts to the community and supports entrepreneurs in the arts field. Our multifaceted programs bring our region together, attract new people to the area, and assist local artists working across all arts disciplines.

Our office is located in Potsdam, NY, and we primarily serve St. Lawrence County by offering exhibits, classes, networking, and artist meet-up opportunities, performances, and publications, and organizing community festivals and cultural events. SLC Arts is the chosen NYSCA State & Local Partnerships Statewide Community Regrant Partner for St. Lawrence, Jefferson, and Lewis Counties, distributing \$100,000 in state funds for public art projects, and teaching or community arts programming and offering consulting support to artists and community organizers.

SLC Arts is governed by a team of Co-Executive Directors-- Maggie McKenna, Director of Development & Community Engagement, and Kat Dinneen, Director of Production & Communications --and a Board of Directors who bring their diverse perspectives together each month to analyze finances, strategize about programs, and provide overall accountability for the organization. SLC Arts is funded by public and private contributions and supported by in-kind donations and volunteers from our community. We currently have four full-time employees: two directors, a finance manager, and grants and services manager, and following the completion of the final phase of renovations, we intend to increase our staffing to five full-time employees, four part-time employees as well as provide opportunities for internships for local university students and community volunteers. This will improve our capacity to create meaningful programs, enriching resources, effective outreach, and community engagement.

Project Overview

SLC Arts purchased 6-8 Raymond St, an 11,283 square foot, two storefront plus basement building in downtown Potsdam that adjoins directly to the North Country Children's Museum. The building most recently housed a thrift store, The Tile Co, a tile retail store, and the basement's Creative Spirit Katya Greer Memorial Art Gallery, built by the late owner of The Tile Co, Otto Czerepak. Otto was an inspirational community member who believed in the value of the arts. He set up the privately-owned Creative Spirit Art Gallery in the basement of his building when he saw a need for a gallery, performance and makers' space for local artists. He and his business partner Laura Passmore invested time and money to showcase talented artists' work throughout the building by creating an intricate mosaic tile facade on the front of the building, inviting muralists to paint expansive murals along the entire exterior of the building, installing tile flooring throughout the first floor of The Tile Co and another intricate mosaic tile floor in the gallery space in the

basement. It is our intention to keep the history of the building and the memory of Otto in this space that he always dreamed would be a full-fledged arts center.

The new Arts Center will offer the community a central place for the arts in the greater North Country region. While there are some state-of-the-art facilities available across our four neighboring college campuses, our region lacks facilities available to community members. SLC Arts has found a home in Potsdam since its inception in 1972, and we see that Potsdam is the center of arts and culture in the region. We find that the arts offer people from all walks of life the crucial opportunity to explore creative channels, communicate innovatively, and learn to value individual expression. As every part of our world evolves, the arts continue to create harmony out of dissonance, light among shadows, unity despite strife. We see that our work of supporting and creating arts initiatives in the North Country provides a transformative function in community and economic development. We are continually encouraged when we bring the community together to explore creativity in all possible ways. We will create a welcoming sense of place throughout Potsdam and the North Country region.

We will renovate and occupy the entire building to include a performance hall, art consignment and supply retail store and artist incubator storefront, art gallery, office spaces, and basement visual arts education center, which will include classrooms offering specialized equipment including drawing tables, photography lighting, ceramics wheels, and print-making equipment for artists and students. Each individual space is one that is not currently available to the public in our region.

SLC Arts was awarded a generous grant through the Village of Potsdam's 2019 Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant to create the arts center, but with increased costs and inflation, unexpected building updates, and improved scope, the original project costs tripled and we had to break the project into phases:

Phase 1 (funded primarily by DRI): completing work on 6 Raymond St storefront space, including office/meeting space and what will become the professional art gallery, used as store and program space while other spaces are being renovated. Phase 1 includes asbestos abatement, elevator installation, HVAC, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing upgrades. Est. completion by December 2023.

Phase 1 Expenses: (simplified)

\$530,000 Construction Costs (including contingency)
\$105,000 Asbestos abatement + environmental testing
\$75,000 Elevator purchase + installation
\$35,000 Architecture & Design services
\$33,000 Administration

Total: \$778,000

\$200,000 still needed above DRI

Phase 2: Performance/dance hall (200+ person occupancy), backstage green room, arts store, and an incubator storefront space for a new artist residency program.

Phase 3: Arts education center in the basement, which will include a ceramics studio, printmaking studio, flexible classroom space, kiln room, and educational gallery.

Anticipated cost for phases 2 and 3 together: \$1,600,000

Project Plan

The construction will include various accessibility updates including lowering the structurally inadequate floor for the performance hall and decreasing the need for long ramps, an elevator, and new stairs to the basement along with code-required accessibility upgrades to make the basement fully ADA-compliant, and multiple handicapped restroom facilities. As we will remove the existing back garage for construction access, we will plan to create a unique pocket park at our back entrance as a future community project - this back exit will also comply with code requirements and simplify gear moving into the performance hall.

Phase 1 - 6 Raymond St

Phase 1, not included in this funding request, is funded by Downtown Revitalization Initiative funding and is expected to be completed by December 2023. The project has already included asbestos abatement across the entire building as well as the purchase of the elevator to the basement. The project will include insulation, heating, electrical, and plumbing upgrades and the completion of the art gallery and office spaces in 6 Raymond St. We will utilize the art gallery space as flexible programming and store space until the remainder of the arts center is completed in subsequent combined phases 2 & 3.

Art Gallery

The primary entry to the center will be a professional gallery, one of our primary program spaces. The exhibit space has an eclectic mosaic tile floor throughout. This gallery will allow us to program more exhibits of work from local artists and students, and the space will function as a supplementary performance and gathering space. The existing gallery has been out of operation for at least the past several years but at its height was a well-known community arts space that held regular exhibit events. We received NYSCA Capital Equipment and USDA Rural Development grants to purchase professional gallery lighting for the space, which will be installed following the renovations of this space. While we currently host 5 to 8 exhibits of two-dimensional artwork from local artists in our SLC Arts Gallery at the Potsdam Town Hall each year, that hallway gallery does not allow us to showcase three-dimensional artwork like sculpture and ceramics. We anticipate hosting high-quality group and individual exhibitions throughout the year.

Office Space

The planned office space will contain a private meeting space with secure file storage, break area, and open office space for staff. This type of space works well for our collaborative office culture.

Phase 2 - 8 Raymond St, Main Floor

Artist Incubator Storefront

At the entry to the store, in the primary windows of the center, we will set up a small storefront for an artist to use as we develop a residency program. The artist will be offered the space for a period of 1 to 3 years to build their retail and art-making business up before expanding into their own storefront or studio. We have had conversations already with a violin luthier and a ceramic artist to use the space upon completion and program development.

Retail Store

The retail store at the front of the building will offer local artists, crafters, and producers a brick-and-mortar opportunity to sell their work and wares, including original artwork, art prints, jewelry, greeting cards, books, recordings, and more. We will also carry art supplies and create a buying program once we increase our

operational capacity enough to support this initiative. This will save artists special shipments and visits as far as Syracuse or Boston to purchase the materials they need to create their art.

Performance Hall & Green Room

The performance hall will hold up to 220 people standing and approximately 150 seated. This type of space is not accessible to the general public in the North Country - there is a major lack of performance venues. The hall will be available for classes and rehearsals for dancers, actors, and musicians and the stage will be able to hold a chamber orchestra, jazz band, or small dance or theater troupe. We anticipate being able to host dance classes throughout the space as well as regular performances. We have been awarded NYSCA Capital Equipment and USDA Rural Development funding already to purchase specialized dance flooring throughout the space as well as lighting and sound equipment in the hall, which will be installed with this phase. This dedicated space will include full-length mirrors that SLC Arts already owns. There will also be a green room behind the performance hall where artists can unpack and prepare for performances, and we anticipate setting up the room for recording and classes as well.

Phase 3 - 8 Raymond St, Basement

Visual Arts Education Center

The visual arts education center will include a large maker's space/classroom for visual artists, educational gallery, printmaking studio, and ceramics studio. The center will include drawing tables, print-making equipment donated by a local professional print maker, storage for art supplies, ceramics equipment, and kiln. Artists will also have access to SLC Arts' professional-quality lighting equipment and cameras, a critical resource for visual artists to be able to professionally photograph their work. We will host our own community class programming in these spaces and will make all of these spaces available with open studio hours for artists to create and explore. In the larger maker's space room, we will host multiple weekly Accessible Arts classes, a program of art and music classes for people of all ages with developmental disabilities funded by the NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities.

Many spaces within the center will be used for lectures, receptions, board and committee meetings, as well as community parties and after-school programs. Additional basement amenities include elevator access to the basement, utility room, catering kitchen, and two restrooms.

Future Project: Pocket Park

We will remove the existing one-car garage to create a unique pocket park at our back entrance. By opening up the enclosed garage, we will be able to add a window for needed natural light in the office space. This park will create an unexpected, inviting park for lunches, meetings, and small performances, plus it will open up more exterior wall space for murals. This park also will create code-compliant exits and simplify gear moving into the performance hall, makers' space, store, or galleries. This space will not be completed at this time but will become a community project following the completion of the remainder of the arts center.

Timeline

September 25, 2023 - January 31, 2024 Phase 1 construction

August - January 2024 Phase 1 capital campaign to raise \$200,000

February 2024 Move staff offices to 6 Raymond - Open retail store in temporary space

Projected Future Project Timeline

Fall 2024 - Summer 2025 Phase 2 construction

Summer 2025 Exterior pocket park development

Fall 2025 Grand Opening of fully-completed Creative Spirit Community Arts Center

Project Goals

Our bold, ambitious, revitalizing plan requires an organization that is planning for the long-term sustainability of the organization. We are developing an endowment for building maintenance costs, and given the financial impact of the pandemic on this project, our capital campaign has expanded dramatically since we began it slowly in 2021. We will be using the remainder of 2023 to raise approximately \$200,000 in funding from additional sources as the match for this grant application and to cover a small amount of cost overruns of phase 1.

We anticipate growing our staff from four full-time to five full-time and four part-time employees over the next three years. This growth will be supported by major donations, grants, and increased operating income from the store, space rental, and program income.

The Village of Potsdam and SLC Arts share similar values and goals. We believe the Creative Spirit Community Arts Center project fulfills portions of each goal laid out by the Village of Potsdam. As we are a regional arts organization, we also like to “think globally and act locally” as the Governor stated in his 2020 State of the State address.

The Village of Potsdam has highlighted the importance of arts and culture for the community. The Village of Potsdam’s 2012-2022 Comprehensive Plan Economic Development Section ED-12 states, “The Village should strive to make Potsdam the center for the arts in Northern New York State by:

- a. Supporting efforts to create a Multi-Arts Center in the Village.
- b. Coordinating with local arts organizations and the universities to promote arts events that occur on campus.
- c. Developing arts festivals.
- d. Developing financial and technical assistance products to assist artists, craftspeople and arts-related businesses in the Village.”

We will address each of these goals by:

A. A Multi-Arts Center in the Village

The new arts center is our number one priority, and clearly the top priority for this aspect of the Village’s comprehensive plan.

B. Coordinating College and Community

While we will continue our promotion of on-campus events, as well as host community arts events on campus, one of the more revolutionary benefits of the Arts Center will be the creation of a downtown venue for campus arts and performances. This holds the dual benefit of bringing the college population downtown while also bringing the local community to support campus arts. This will function as a bridge between these two communities that coexist but often seem separate.

C. Developing Arts Festivals

In 2021 SLC Arts created the North Country Arts Festival, which combined various events including Porchfest and the Ives Park Concert Series as well as art markets and studio tours. As we continue to develop the structure of the festival, we anticipate focusing our efforts on creating a regular downtown Potsdam attraction.

We look forward to the opportunity to host more arts festival events, like art walks or poetry slams, in Potsdam once we create this new arts center.

D. Developing financial and technical assistance products to assist artists, craftspeople and arts-related businesses in the Village.

The NYS Statewide Community Regrant program provides these kinds of resources, and we hope to increase our share of the SCR program each year as we grow and the arts industry in our area flourishes.

Our retail store will create a new option for artists to sell and showcase their work in Potsdam. There is currently no store within a 10-mile radius of Potsdam that sells wares from local artists of any genre or medium. We will use a portion of our retail store and create a buying club to sell professional art supplies, a resource that has been lacking since the local craft supply store closed.

As we increase our capacity and reach, we anticipate creating more technical assistance programs for arts entrepreneurs including professional development and business planning consulting and workshops. We also plan to host a regional arts symposium to bring the arts community of Northern New York to learn and discuss the industry regionally and nationally.

Regional Economic Development Council Goals

SLC Art's vision is to grow as a community arts resource, bringing the arts to the community to enjoy and appreciate. SLC Arts has committed to the Regional Economic Development Council's goals of supporting tourism and entertainment across the region. The arts are a community engagement and economic development catalyst, having the full potential to transform the North Country region into a collection of vibrant and attractive communities. The Village of Potsdam came up with four inspiring words to relay our goals that align perfectly with RED-C goals: the new arts center will Revitalize, Rebuild, Rebound, and Rejoice downtown Potsdam.

REVITALIZE - Downtown Potsdam was once a hotspot for a variety of nightlife options in the region, Potsdam residents and visitors have noted the selection of entertainment options have dwindled over the years. As we increase the entertainment opportunities downtown, there will be a catalytic economic impact on other nearby businesses.

Small to medium-sized towns all over the Northeast are known for their arts scene. Potsdam has the potential to be on the map just like Burlington, VT, Woodstock, Saranac Lake, Saratoga Springs, or Ithaca, NY. We are proud of our local arts traditions, and this venue will allow us to define our local culture. The arts center will be a place designed for art that is actually conducive to experiencing art. Our region lacks a space that is devoted to creative expression, designed for people to enjoy the arts as the primary purpose. Artists of all disciplines are craving a venue to share their work. Consumers are desperate to find a place to experience art without disturbance as they are currently going to places where the art is secondary or even an intrusion to regular commerce.

REBUILD - We will renovate the current Tile Co space, an underutilized and partially vacant building that was once an arts hub in this location. While the space was built in the later part of the 20th century and does not represent much of the architectural charm of Potsdam, the heritage of the building will be retained by making Otto Czerepak's tile mosaic facade a more prominent feature when the space becomes usable and more attractive.

The arts center will assist the region in building an arts tourism industry. At this time, the North Country has incredible potential and resources that are worth exploring. As the region's arts service agency, we intend to work closely with chambers of commerce and local government to promote the arts industry in our region as a tourist attraction.

REBOUND - We believe that the transformative nature of this new arts center project will open up new doors for the arts in Northern New York. SLC Arts is an NYS Council on the Arts partner and receives multi-year grants to support our regular operations, but as we grow, we will increase our customer reach and donor base, and we will have more capacity to apply for additional grant opportunities that will bring local, state and federal monies into our region to support the people who live, work, play and learn here.

REJOICE - The arts industry across the country deliberately focuses on creative placemaking. The National Endowment for the Arts defines creative placemaking as "the use of arts and culture by diverse partners to strategically shape the physical and social character of a place in order to spur economic development, promote enduring social change, and improve the physical environment." The arts are a central part of community life, and SLC Arts is the most applicable partner to help in that development.

The creation of this new arts center will not only establish a downtown arts and culture district with our community partner and neighbor the North Country Children's Museum, but it will offer an arts-focused community center for the whole region that will attract residents and visitors downtown.

The arts center will offer a new option for people of all ages to enjoy the arts at any time. Our programming will include a retail store and galleries with extensive open hours for passersby, weekly community classes, presentations and workshops, flexible studio spaces for professionals and amateurs alike, artist meet-ups for retired community members, after-school programming for teens, and regular evening performances for night owls to enjoy including music, theater, poetry, and comedy.

This community and commercial center will be a place where community members will come to develop their own creative endeavors and share their work with residents and tourists. Our region lacks space for a variety of events, so we will offer opportunities to use the space for gatherings, weddings, birthday parties, and other events.

The new arts center will also be an educational hub. Community members will be supported by an organization and have a physical space to teach and take classes and workshops focused on creative expression. Further, artists of all disciplines will have opportunities to collaborate and access practice and studio space, a resource that is desperately lacking in the North Country.

Community Benefits

Quality of Life

Art, in all of its manifestations, is a central part of everyone's lives. Everyone enjoys art in their life, whether they realize it or not: movies, books, comedy, music of any genre, the lovely heart crafted on the top of your latte - art is everywhere, and art makes life more beautiful and enjoyable. We know that access to arts and cultural resources improves social and mental wellbeing in distressed communities. A National Endowment for the Arts study states, "cultural assets are part of a neighborhood ecology that promotes wellbeing."

Community Development

Americans for the Arts agrees that "the arts build healthier, more vibrant and equitable neighborhoods. The arts break down barriers, encourage participation, and spark innovation - all necessary characteristics for a

community to expand and flourish.” The arts are central to community development. The community congregates for musical performances during Summerfest, the Ives Park Concert Series, and even every Friday at Maxfield's Restaurant. Hundreds of pictures are taken in front of the various murals we have in public areas. Dance and theatrical performances can be viewed during Fright Night or the LoKo Arts Festival. And you can often join poetry readings in local coffee shops and libraries. We will create a central place in Potsdam to explore creative expression and celebrate the culture of our regional community all year round.

Economic Development

Establishing a downtown arts and culture district with the new arts center and the North Country Children's Museum will encourage economic development by offering an opportunity for people to visit and enjoy the work of talented artists from near and far. We will be a primary attraction in downtown Potsdam. The catalytic nature of the arts will fill up empty storefronts by propelling future investments from philanthropists and entrepreneurs inspired to create businesses in a dynamic, creative community. There may be additional granting options for public art projects around the Village from state and private investments, but we have to build the walls before we can begin to paint them, figuratively speaking.

Entertainment and Tourism

We will help the Village of Potsdam reach its goals of establishing downtown as a tourist destination. People go out for entertainment, so when we host exhibit openings, concerts, and classes, our event goers will be downtown and spend their money in other local businesses. We will attract visitors from around the region and beyond to our downtown for these entertainment opportunities, which will increase spending in other local establishments such as restaurants and retail stores.

Resident recruitment and retention

Potsdam is home to SUNY Potsdam's Performing Arts Center, Gibson Art Gallery, Community Performance Series, and the Crane School of Music along with hundreds of visual artists, musicians, thespians, dancers, and writers. All four local universities will benefit from our new arts center by rebuilding a vibrant downtown for new students, faculty, and staff. These recruits will find that their creative powers are stimulated in our community and will envision a thriving life here.

The new arts center will help retain professionals and families in the community. With our four world-class universities within a 10-mile radius, the North Country is excellent at training professionals, but we have not yet mastered the art of retaining those professionals. Part of this retention will come from creating a culture of creativity, innovation, and community participation at the arts center.

Job Growth and Creation

We currently have four full-time employees and by the completion of the final phase of development, we intend to increase our staffing to five full-time employees, four part-time employees, and an independent cleaner. This will improve our capacity to create meaningful programs, enriching and accessible resources, effective outreach, and community engagement.

Volunteer and Internship Opportunities

The new arts center will allow SLC Arts to establish robust volunteer positions for community members of all ages and abilities and internships for high school and college students. We anticipate that these opportunities will open doors for disadvantaged youth in our region who likely would not have the ability to pursue work experience in the arts industry.

Arts Entrepreneur Support

This space will allow us to support the work of arts entrepreneurs in our region by not only selling their work in the store but also offering space to teach in our classroom areas, create in our makers' spaces, and showcase their work in our galleries or performance hall. Our store would help develop arts businesses by providing an equitable share of profits from sold artwork. The Village of Potsdam and SLC Arts have worked together on Artist Microenterprise Grant program and may explore reestablishing that program again.

Economic Impact of Event-Related Audience Spending

The arts, unlike most industries, leverage significant amounts of event-related spending by their audiences. For example, part of the arts experience may include dining out, paying for parking, shopping in local retail stores, enjoying dessert after the show, and returning home to pay the babysitter. Based on the 212,691 audience-intercept surveys conducted for an [Americans for the Arts study](#), the typical arts attendee spends \$31.47 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission. Nationally, total event-related spending was an estimated \$102.5 billion during 2015. This spending supported 2.3 million jobs, provided \$46.6 billion in household income, and generated \$15.7 billion in total government revenue.

Current Programs

North Country Arts Festival - The North Country Arts Festival brings the North Country community together to celebrate the arts. This 10-day event creates a powerful, coordinated marketing effort, encouraging tourism and economic activity throughout St. Lawrence County by showcasing our arts industry, a critical component of our regional identity.

We will embrace the beauty of autumn and consolidate several existing annual programs. The festival will include multi-disciplinary arts experiences across St. Lawrence County. Events organized by SLC Arts will include:

- Ives Park Concert Series, a weekly concert series in a downtown Potsdam village park
- Porchfest, a musical event on individuals' porches in Potsdam residential neighborhoods
- Regional Arts Celebration, which recognizes decentralization regrant recipients and arts organizations and offers a current analysis of the region's arts industry
- Art After Dark fundraiser with dance and theatrical performances
- Plein Air painting festival in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension with farms around the region
- Events from partner organizations including the Remington Art Museum, TAUNY, North Country Children's Museum, Cinema 10, and more

Artists' Studio Tour & Art Walk is a community tour visiting artists' home studios across the county, an event we have organized for the last 36 years. In 2023, SLC Arts is adding an Art Walk in downtown Potsdam to amplify the event and offer spaces for artists who do not want to host in their own studios.

Community Classes - We run regular educational classes for individuals of all disciplines and skill levels in the community to learn new skills and hone their craft.

Teen Summer Arts Camp - With funding from the St Lawrence County's Youth Bureau from 2022 to 2024, SLC Arts runs a multi-week arts camp for children ages 11 to 18 over the summer where students can explore a wide variety of arts disciplines. The camp includes visual, performing, and literary arts classes.

Accessible Arts - Accessible Arts is public programming for teens and adults with developmental disabilities. Tracy Wanamaker is a board-certified music therapist; she has led the workshops since they began in 2010. The

current series of virtual and hands-on workshops incorporates visual arts, vocal music, percussion music, and basic movement. The NYS Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) funds workshop participation for individuals who are Family Support Services enrolled.

Professional Development Bootcamps & Workshops for Artists & Arts Organizers - With funding from NEA and NYSCA, we have begun broadening our professional development opportunities for the regional arts field to include a boot camp for artists and networking and learning opportunities for arts organizers.

Creative Partner Showcase - This exhibit includes a juried selection of 2D and 3D local artwork in a broad range of mediums. Each artist member receives space for at least one piece of artwork in the show, and they may apply to include up to five pieces. The opening event for this exhibit is a grand celebration of all of SLC Arts' creative partners. We look forward to bringing this event back in the completed arts center.

Satellite Gallery Exhibits at Potsdam Town Hall - In partnership with the Town of Potsdam, SLC Arts established an exhibit space in the hallway of the Town Hall in 2013. Additionally, SLC Arts recently reconnected with the Ogdensburg International Airport to hold individual artist exhibits in the airport. In 2023, SLC Arts worked with Creatives Rebuild NY artist Sharon Cheng to amplify our satellite gallery program in both spaces including group exhibits in the Potsdam Town Hall and solo exhibitions in the airport. Exhibit opening events provide community members We will also host each of these exhibits virtually.

Local Re grants - SLC Arts is the chosen NYSCA State & Local Partnerships Statewide Community Re grant Partner for St. Lawrence, Jefferson and Lewis Counties, distributing \$100,000 in state funds for public art projects, and teaching and community arts programming and offering consulting support to artists and community organizers. Free information and training workshops are offered ahead of the grant deadline at public locations around the three counties for individuals and organizations interested in applying for these grants. One-on-one technical assistance is free to applicants. These grant opportunities are funded by the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of the Governor's office and the New York State Legislature. SLC Arts also distributed \$100,000 in National Endowment for the Arts ARPA subgrants to the region and we anticipate applying for subgranting funds in the near future to provide additional arts funding to our region.

Arts Store - The arts store offers an opportunity for artists to sell their work on consignment; we earn a 30% commission on artwork sales. We will also sell branded merchandise and art supplies. We are currently running the arts store in a temporary location during renovations.

Future Program/Service Opportunities

Arts Incubator - The arts center will function as an incubator for arts entrepreneurs. Our store, arts education center and makers' space, performance hall, and galleries will allow artists of all disciplines to build their arts business by removing barriers that make starting a self-owned business unreachable for many. We will provide resources and training to help bring artists' ideas to market. Visual artists will be able to create their work and sell it, performers will have a space to rehearse and record or hold performances. The arts center will become the central place for art creation and arts product distribution in the region.

Artist Residency - At the entry to the store, in the primary windows of the center, we will set up a small storefront for an artist to use as we develop a residency program. The artist will be offered the space for a period of 1 to 3 years to build their retail and art-making business up before expanding into their own storefront or studio. We have had conversations already with a violin luthier and a ceramic artist to use the space upon completion and program development.

Visual Arts Education Center - The printmaking studio, ceramics studio, and makers' space will offer specialized and flexible spaces for visual artists to create. We will have pottery equipment, an entire studio of printmaking equipment donated, photography and lighting equipment, as well as drawing tables and cleaning

sinks. We will hold regular community classes in this space. We will have monthly, weekly, daily and hourly artist plans for the use of these spaces. The space will be used for meetings and classes. We will charge varying class fees and allow outside organizations to rent the space for an hourly rate.

Performance Hall & Green Room - We will use the performance hall to hold regular ticketed performances including, but not limited to, musical concerts, small plays, open mics, and poetry readings. We will host dance classes, performances, and rehearsals as well as meetings and events in the hall. The green room or performance hall can both be used for classes, meetings, and recordings. We will have monthly, weekly, daily and hourly rates for the use of this space.

Food & Drink Sales - We plan to sell food and beverage in the store and for events, including alcoholic beverages and coffee/tea options during the day. The intention is to create a space that community members choose to spend significant time in, so we believe this is vital to creating that atmosphere. We anticipate partnering with a local coffee shop to build a store-within-store, supporting another local business in the center.

Teen After-school Programs - Arts programming for teens is non-existent in our area, and the St Lawrence County Youth Needs Assessment survey clearly displayed the lack of recreational activities for students after school or during the summer, and students ranked the arts as #2 in their subjects of interest. We will offer space and activities for our community's youth.

Contributed Income

Annual Campaign - SLC Arts historically raised a very small portion of the annual budget from the annual campaign and ongoing outreach to community members to provide financial contributions. Since 2019, SLC Arts has increased donations each year dramatically and expanded the donor base. With increased staff and technological upgrades, we have been able to continue that trend while working to simplify the donor management process.

Artist Membership - SLC Arts supports the local community of artists by providing a wide variety of programs and services. With that, we offer an annual membership program to raise funds for the organization and provide benefits to interested artists.

Capital Campaign - In 2023, SLC Arts is focusing on raising funds needed to complete the building and we have adjusted our budget to accommodate that fundraising goal. With the expansion of scope and estimated construction costs, we have had to significantly increase our capital campaign funding needs. SLC Arts received a grant to support additional training and resources to ensure the success of the campaign throughout the year.

Corporate Sponsorship

Accessible Pricing Model for Community Classes - Earlier this year, our board of directors created a Values Statement, and one of our values is Inclusion:

We believe access to art and the ability to creatively express oneself is fundamental to the human spirit. Therefore, we believe that all people should have fair and equitable access to the tools and resources to realize their creative and community endeavors. We believe all people should have fair access to opportunities to explore, consume, and appreciate art and artistic expression. We know structural inequities exist and we strive to counter and dismantle those inequities.

Starting in October 2022, we moved to a pay-what-you-can community class pricing model. The discussions around developing our values statement illuminated this actionable idea. We want our community classes and

programs to be accessible to all people in our community, and we do not want to create financial barriers to exploring creative expression and encouraging arts appreciation.

We invite local businesses to promote their business and express support of the arts and economic vitality of the region by sponsoring class series and monthly class programming. This has resulted in an overall increase in revenue for classes from participants as well as an increase in business connections and support for our organization.

North Country Arts Festival Sponsorship - The North Country Arts Festival was developed with a fundraising model in mind. In 2022, SLC Arts was able to raise over \$25,000 in corporate sponsorships, a major increase in corporate contributions, and we will continue to reach a similar goal each year following the completion of the arts center building renovation.

Market Analysis

Potsdam, NY has a diverse group of inhabitants that have a wide variety of views and interests. Between the students of the local universities and staff that work at them, employees of local businesses and tourists visiting the Adirondacks, many people have a keen interest in the arts and a space that showcases the local talent of the rural region.

The Arts Council's programming and ongoing operations provide services and products that are of interest to multiple target market segments in our area, including:

1. Artists: Visual arts & performing arts. Artists themselves are a key target market for this expansion project. As SLC Arts will be providing services, including consignment, and rental spaces for these artists, they are some of our key constituents.
 - a. Professional artists in need of selling their work and professional/business learning opportunities
 - b. Young artists, 12-25 year olds in need of skill building, business learning or technical assistance
 - c. Amateur artists interested in the social aspect of arts and skill building for fun, often retired professionals

Currently, the SLC Arts Council's partner program includes approximately 150 artists of varying disciplines. We also have a patron list of approximately 150 non-artists who support the arts on an annual basis. We are developing a large list of artists in the region through a robust outreach plan. This new arts center will give us a massive stepping stone to reach back out to artists who have previously been on our membership list and who aren't currently members, and reach younger artists who will be excited about our new services.

2. Patrons of the arts and shoppers are a secondary market segment for our expansion project. Of our services listed above, patrons and shoppers will be the primary market for the store, exhibits, performances, and classes.
 - a. Ages 18-35 - would enjoy participatory programs, and would potentially buy less expensive items
 - b. Ages 36-65 - tend to buy more expensive items, participatory for kids and themselves, but have less time availability
 - c. Age 65+ - will buy some expensive items, more passive participation. This population is looking for easy engagement opportunities

There are a number of people from quite a large radius that came up to Potsdam, including parents of students and family members of faculty and staff who might come from far and wide. In addition to St.

Lawrence County, our services draw people from as far as Malone, Watertown, Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake.

Our events reach a wide audience of both artists and community members interested in the arts. Public programs such as Artist Studio Tour and Ives Park Concert Series among others draw between 4,000-6,000 participants per year. We have an active class schedule and arts shows which have in the past drawn nearly 10,000 people in a year. For our Statewide Community Re-grants program, we saw a record 39 applicant organizations for 2023 grants. According to grantee reports, funded programs impact over 150,000 people each year.

When we opened the store again in the Tile Co building pre-renovations in December 2021, we made over \$10,000 in sales in our first month. From 2008 to 2012, when the downtown store was open and at its height, SLC Arts brought in an average of \$52,229 per year in sales revenue from the store. Our historical data and anecdotal records show that there were significant marketing dollars spent during this time, but increases in marketing did not have a huge impact on sales increases, except from 2007 to 2008, indicating that the return on investment for those marketing initiatives, especially the printed newsletter, was relatively low. We use free or inexpensive marketing to spread awareness of the store, and will analyze every marketing dollar to increase return on investment. Additionally, marketing strategies in general have changed significantly in the last 10 years, making social media a more key component of marketing plans for all kinds of businesses. Email content marketing also continues to be an effective low-cost marketing strategy.

According to our website analytics, our website gets approximately 3200 visitors per month, though we expect considerable growth as we upgrade our website and expand the online webstore offerings. We have over 3,400 followers on Facebook and over 1,100 followers on Instagram, and our posts frequently have high engagement. Our email newsletter is sent to over 2000 addresses, and we have a 41% open rate, above industry average. While this data shows we have a solid online presence and an active group of local artists and arts-interested customers, we also know we can build our online presence through an increased focus on online and social media marketing.

As SLC Arts grows by providing a wider range of services to local artists and arts-interested consumers, we expect our reach into the local and broader market to grow, as there are former customers who we could reach and engage again, as well as new potential customers and artists in the wider area who may not yet know what services we provide.

Marketing Plan

We are optimizing our marketing strategy by using our diverse channels to reach our regional audience. Our marketing strategy aims to increase awareness and program reach while increasing returns on investment by analyzing the potential impact of every marketing initiative.

Our marketing strategy includes sharing and creating relevant content that will help our community better connect to and understand our work. We are constantly updating our website to be a central resource, including artist and business directories and the webstore. We use our website as the primary method of sharing the most complete and up-to-date information with our community. The most effective method for communicating with and retaining our supporters is through regular email with supporters. We distribute press releases to the local media to maintain visibility in the broader community. We use Facebook and Instagram social media platforms to promote programs and events, share content, and directly engage with individuals and other organizations across our community. We are also developing a printed art zine and poetry newsletter.

Our primary communications goals include improving SLC Arts' overall brand image, increasing brand awareness, and maintaining a broad audience appeal while identifying and developing new strategies to attract under-engaged demographics. In light of the major organizational changes SLC Arts has undergone in the last year, it is essential for our messaging to convey that we are relevant, approachable, and inclusive of all people and art forms. In general, area residents are aware of the existence of SLC Arts. However, they are often unaware of the full scope of programs and opportunities we offer to the community. Due to the wide scope of our mission, the current marketing strategy is designed to appeal to a wide audience. To increase impact and promote deeper engagement we also endeavor to clearly define individual marketing segments in order to develop more appealing content and distribute it effectively.

Website -The website is our primary method of sharing the most complete and up-to-date information with our community. All marketing materials and media releases refer the reader to our website. It is also a means of collecting payment and/or information from users who wish to submit artwork, sign-up for programs, make a donation, or sign-up for our partnership program. We have started an online store, and we are working to develop artist and business directories.

Email marketing - The most effective method for communicating with and retaining our supporters is through email. We send weekly e-newsletters that are delivered to an opt-in audience primarily consisting of donors and partners. In addition to the e-newsletter, reminders about upcoming programs are regularly emailed.

Press Releases - Distributing press releases to the local media is one way of maintaining visibility in the broader community. While these readers and listeners may not be directly involved in our organization, they are at least aware of our existence and that the majority of our events are free and open to the public.

Social Media - The social media platforms currently used by SLC Arts are Facebook and Instagram. Facebook is primarily used to promote programs and events, share content, and directly engage with individuals and other organizations across our community. Our Instagram content is far less promotional, but adds value to our social media presence as a way to share more visual, behind-the-scenes, content.

Competitive Comparison

SLC Arts is the only arts council run by paid staff in St. Lawrence County; there are a few volunteer-run entities serving individual municipalities within the county. St. Lawrence County is geographically the largest county in New York State; located at the northern tip of the state and bordering with Canada, the county is a rural mix of farms, forests, and small towns. Almost one-third of the County falls within the Adirondack Forest Preserve--the largest publicly protected area in the contiguous US. Challenges in this county include: high unemployment and high poverty rates (15% in comparison with 13.9% poverty rate in NYS); lack of mass transit services (no passenger trains, and limited bus routes and direct flights); and population dispersed across a large geographic area, which is isolated from the rest of the state due to travel limitations and distance. The North Country is also one of the least racial diverse places in NYS (92% white), so our work always encourages diversity and inclusion.

The closest organizations that provide a similar range of services are the Thousand Islands Arts Center in Clayton (76 miles), the Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts in Blue Mountain Lake (83 miles) and the all-volunteer North Country Arts Council in Watertown (71 miles). Our organizations create a network of arts services across this large geographic region, and in cases where those organizations offer unique services, some community members travel long distances to access those programs.

The other arts organizations in St. Lawrence County are presenting organizations (i.e. Ogdensburg Command Performances, Community Performance Series, Cinema 10, and the Orchestra of Northern NY), have a very specific mission focus (i.e. North Country Children's Museum, Traditional Arts in Upstate NY and the Frederic Remington Art Museum), or operate on a much smaller scale with a less formal organizational structure (i.e. North Country Arts Council in Watertown, Arts Association of Northern NY in Sackets Harbor, Massena Artists' Association, and Lake St Lawrence Arts in Waddington). We act as a fiscal sponsor for the North Country Art Teachers Association and occasionally individual artists for grants. We differ from these organizations with our broader mission, consulting services, and multi-disciplinary arts focus; we function as a central agency that offers an opportunity for collaboration among all of the arts organizations in our region. Since 2019, we have developed stronger relationships with each of these organizations and have actively encouraged collaboration with the development of the North Country Arts Festival.

Future Growth

The arts center will allow SLC Arts to increase program and service offerings dramatically. We continue to shift our business model to increase earned income and decrease our reliance on contributed income and grants for general operating expenses. Earned income sources include sales from the store, ticketed events, food and beverage sales, space use rentals, and class fees. We are working towards the arts center being as self-sustaining as possible, with the revenue generated from these programs and services nearly fully covering operating expenses as well as building upkeep. We do not expect to completely move away from grants and contributions.

We intend to increase our staff to manage the space and additional programs. We will hire a full-time store manager and part-time bar manager, teaching artists, and gallerist. We will evaluate additional staff needs annually as we assess our financial growth each year. Following the completion of the renovations, we will work towards building an endowment to cover staff salaries, to the greatest extent possible, so we can use our resources to improve our programs, through an endowment contribution campaign over the course of three to five years.