



I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

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Date: 7/21/2026

Contact Information

Organization Name: ArtsQuest

Address: 101 Founders Way Bethlehem, Pa. 18015

Phone: 610-332-1300

Website: www.artsquest.org

Year Incorporated: 1984

FEIN: 23-2280560

ED/CEO Name: Kassie Hilgert

ED/CEO E-mail: khilgert@artsquest.org

Board Chair Name: Joseph Bergstein

Board Chair Approval (check here): ☒

Primary Contact Name: April McGovern

Primary Contact E-mail: amcgovern@artsquest.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

☒	Arts, Culture, Heritage	☐	Education, Library	☐	Environment, Animals
☐	Health	☐	Human Services	☐	Social Justice, Civic Engagement
☐	Religion	If other, please describe:			

Mission: ArtsQuest is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide access to exceptional artistic, cultural, and educational experiences using arts and culture as key elements of economic development for our urban communities. ArtsQuest supports this mission via the presentation of performing and visual arts, film, arts education classes and outreach, youth programming and cultural events. ArtsQuest's visual and performing arts programs, arts education, youth programming and outreach, and numerous cultural events and festivals nurture an appreciation and understanding of the arts. Of the more than 4,500 classes, concerts, festivals, and events offered annually, nearly 40% of these dynamic experiences are free for the community to attend.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served): ArtsQuest is located in South Bethlehem, and serves patrons from the entire Lehigh Valley region and beyond.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served. (Include Chester County # &/or % served.)

ArtsQuest serves the eastern Pennsylvania city of Bethlehem and the entire Lehigh Valley region, including the cities of Allentown and Easton. Bethlehem, a City of the Third Class, is a diverse community where 14.8% of residents live below the poverty level, a number that is higher than the national average of 12.8%, and 60% of Bethlehem Area School District students qualify for free or reduced lunch programs.

Annual Budget	\$30,341,160	77	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
27	% of budget for program expenses	18	# of Board Volunteers
8	% of budget for administrative expenses	750	# of Active Non-Board Volunteers
15	% of budget for fundraising expenses	1,082	# of Volunteer Hours

100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources: County of Northampton, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Levitt Family Foundation, TWG Security, Lehigh Valley Community Foundation

This grant proposal is for: ___x___ Direct Service Programs & General Operating &/or ___ Capacity Building

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

☐	Contingency Planning	☐	Partnerships, Collaborations	☐	Merger, Closure
☐	Mission, Vision, Strategy	☐	Board Engagement & Leadership	☐	Marketing, Communication
☐	Resource Development	☐	Operations	☐	Technology
☐	If other, please describe: _____				

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:\$5,000

Proposal Summary: *(a few sentences, please)* **THIS PROJECT WILL ENGAGE 5,000 STUDENTS IN GRADES K-12 WHOSE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE AND PARTICIPATE IN THE ARTS MAY BE LIMITED. THROUGH HANDS-ON ARTS EDUCATION EXPERIENCES LED BY PROFESSIONAL TEACHING ARTISTS, STUDENTS WILL DEVELOP ARTISTIC SKILLS, EXPERIMENT WITH VARIOUS MEDIA, DISCOVER NEW INTERESTS AND FUTURE CAREERS, AND BUILD MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHING ARTISTS.**

Grant Proposal Narrative

ArtsQuest is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide access to exceptional artistic, cultural, and educational experiences using arts and culture as key elements of economic development for our urban communities. ArtsQuest supports this mission via the presentation of performing and visual arts, film, arts education classes and outreach, youth programming and cultural events. ArtsQuest presents a wide variety of performances, workshops, classes, and programs that nurture an appreciation and understanding of the arts. These dynamic experiences are available to audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

For over four decades, ArtsQuest has provided impactful arts and cultural programming, education and outreach programs, cultural events, and festivals to engage community members and visitors and to support our mission of providing access to art, culture and educational programs for the residents of the Lehigh Valley and others who seek access to our community.

Each year nearly 2 million people attend ArtsQuest's annual Musikfest festival, Oktoberfest celebration, and Christkindlmarkt holiday market to support local and regional performing artists, artisans, and local small businesses.

The 10-acre SteelStacks arts and cultural campus, located on the site of the country's largest brownfield at the abandoned Bethlehem Steel plant, features the outdoor Levitt Pavilion at SteelStacks concert venue and The ArtsQuest Center which hosts the indoor Musikfest Café music venue, the outdoor Town Square music stage, and the area's only full-time arts cinema.

ArtsQuest's education and outreach programming reaches over 5,000 students annually with after-school arts enrichment programs, in-school artist residences, student field trips, artist workshops, cinema programs, immersive experiences, and more.

ArtsQuest's Creative Aging, Healing Arts & Music and Accessible Arts programs engage patrons of all ages and abilities in educational, interpretive, and experiential arts programs and exhibitions designed to encourage community art appreciation, art making, and engagement with the arts.

In 2025 ArtsQuest delivered nearly 4,000 events, classes, performances and workshops throughout the year with nearly 40% offered free to attend. ArtsQuest's 2025 festivals and programs generated a record \$192.7 million in economic impact for the region, a 34% year-over-year increase, while supporting more than 1,500 full-time equivalent jobs across events, production, retail, hospitality and the creative economy.

In spring 2025 ArtsQuest began construction of the Creative Factory powered by PPL, an 80,000-square-foot, five-story arts and cultural hub. This state-of-the-art facility will become the new home for ArtsQuest's visual arts programs, education programming, artist studios, and creative partnerships. Expanded space at the new building will allow ArtsQuest to double student participation and expand opportunities for learners of all ages. Current estimates have the new facility opening at the end of 2026/beginning of 2027.

ArtsQuest's **Free Arts Education and Outreach Programs** will engage 5,000 students in grades K-12 whose opportunities to participate in the arts may be limited by geography, race or ethnicity,

economics, or disability. Free arts education programs led by professional Teaching Artists will include mosaics, ceramics, printmaking, jewelry making, photography, fiber arts, and glassmaking. Theater Education programs will include instruction in spoken word, movement, improv, storytelling, music and dance.

ArtsQuest and Bethlehem Area School District (BASD) have established an Arts & Communications high school career pathways program. The Creative Factory will serve as a community resource for students to engage authentically in performance, media programming, music production, and other creative enterprises. Students will access resources and expertise that go well beyond school walls, introducing potential careers in the arts through job shadowing, internships, service-learning projects, and community-based projects tied to each Career Pathway. Students will learn podcasting skills and art and technology skills in the new Digital Production Lab and Digital Arts classrooms.

To increase access to high-quality arts education, ArtsQuest will offer an Art Educator Lab program for art teachers, Teaching Artists, and art education students. The Lab will serve as an interdisciplinary space for professional development and collaboration. In partnership with BASD, training will be offered in areas such as trauma-informed practices, mindfulness, culturally responsive teaching, and restorative practices.

This project aims to increase education and career development for students and supports arts educators. Success of programs will be measured by tracking program attendance, student participation rates, and the number of collaborative partnerships formed with local schools and organizations. ArtsQuest will assess improvements in students' creative skills and confidence through post-program surveys and feedback.

Success of ArtsQuest's free Arts Education and Outreach programs at the new Creative Factory powered by PPL is measured by the number of students who take part in high-quality, hands-on arts education, build creative skills and confidence, connect with professional Teaching Artists, and explore future pathways in the arts, and also by assessing the quality of programs offered. The goals for this program include helping students develop artistic skills, confidence, self-expression, and interest in creative careers; strengthening mentoring relationships between students and professional Teaching Artists; building meaningful school and community partnerships; supporting educators through professional development in trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and restorative practices; and creating sustainable pathways from arts exposure to deeper learning, job shadowing, internships, and creative career exploration.

Impact can be tracked through attendance and enrollment records, student participation rates and repeat engagement, demographic and access-related data where appropriate, number of workshops, classes, residencies, and school-based programs delivered, and the number of school/community partnerships formed or expanded. Post-program student surveys will measure confidence, creative skill development, sense of belonging, and interest in future arts participation. Feedback from teachers, families, Teaching Artists, and community partners, documentation of student work, performances, exhibitions, or culminating projects, and tracking participation in career pathway activities such as internships, job shadowing, service-learning, and media/production experiences will allow ArtsQuest to ensure programs are meeting student and educator expectations.