

**Applicant (GMS): City of Dubuque Iowa, Dubuque, IA**

**Project: Arts in the District**

**City of Dubuque/Dubuque Main Street Project Narrative**

**a. Budget** – The City of Dubuque, in partnership with nonprofit organization Dubuque Main Street/Downtown Dubuque Cultural Corridor (DMS/DDCC), requests \$250,000 in NEA funding to support the \$873,421 Arts in the District community livability project. While Dubuque and partners have effectively demonstrated an ability to generate and leverage arts funding in the city and activate community support for the Historic Millwork District (HMD), this particular funding from the NEA is essential to enable us to take the next step: engaging arts groups in planning and designing space for performance and visual arts and studio and live/work space. The project budget includes \$265,000 to implement new and enhance existing arts in the HMD; \$80,000 to effectively engage artists/arts organizations in design and place-based planning; and \$200,000 to plan/design for significant renovation, restoration and adaptive re-use of existing structures to develop cultural facilities and artist live/work space.

**b. Major Project Activities** – Dubuque’s top ten priorities and Downtown Master Plan call for the sustainable revitalization of the HMD, with arts and culture as the key to vitality in the district. The HMD is central to Dubuque’s rich history. It is also a keystone to the region’s premier sustainability vision and aggressive economic development strategy. With one million square feet of historic warehouse space ideal for urban mixed-use development, the HMD is perfectly suited to accommodate and showcase Dubuque’s active arts and cultural community. Four major private property developers in partnership with the City of Dubuque and DMS/DDCC have begun the transformation of the HMD into a mixed-use, live/work environment that embraces arts and sustainability. Over 60 million people live within 500 miles of the HMD and the district is embraced by Dubuque community members – many of whom are connected to ancestors who shaped the district more than a century ago through the “lost arts” of millwork, craftsmanship and metalwork.

Arts groups were the first to reclaim this disconnected “urban core” district as a home for the burgeoning creative class. Now, DMS/DDCC, as the manager of the cultural corridor, will lead and facilitate these arts organizations in the vital planning/engagement process to create a livable and vibrant district, home to cultural organizations, residential space including artists’ live work studios, exhibitions and special events. Two main buildings: Caradco Complex and the “Alamo” building have been identified, with owner commitment, as the main spaces in which a majority of planning/design for a central arts complex will take place. Three supporting structures: The “Voices,” “Betty,” and “Mabusth” buildings are included as additional spaces in which artists and partners can plan for studio and live/work space. DMS/DDCC has identified eight long-term partners that will work together to create an urban arts center and continue to ignite the HMD as the “cultural hub” in the region.

Arts in the District will: 1. Work with property developers and architects to pre-assess buildings for historic significance and, through schematics and renderings, repurpose a central HMD building or buildings to create performance and visual art space.

2. Engage a diverse, active arts population in a minimum of bi-monthly place based planning/development sessions to identify space needs/demands in order to plan for the creation of supporting spaces and studios.

3. Engage and work with long-term partners to build current HMD success and momentum by creating long term-exhibits and special events that will attract people year-round. Partners have already identified six key events and activities to implement in the HMD in 2011-2012.

4. Engage all partners, in cooperation with PLACE, to build a financially sustained central arts center in the HMD led by arts and cultural organizations. Dynamic public/private partnerships are committed to making the HMD a model sustainable, livable community, able to be replicated in communities across the country as we provide economic and arts opportunities in addition to connection from our historic neighborhood to our prosperous downtown and Port of Dubuque.

**c. Outcome(s) and Measurements.** Arts in the District will strengthen the livability of the Dubuque community by engaging 100+ local artists, at least 10 arts organizations, and thousands of citizens in a variety of diverse arts activities. The project will also facilitate the connection of artists, arts organizations, architects and property developers through place-based planning for arts and property expansion in the HMD. Project activities will build new cultural opportunities and increase economic impact and arts funding leverage in the community. Outcomes measurements include: event data, participant data, and data from both the Americans for the Arts Economic Impact Study and Americans for the Arts Local Arts Index. d. Schedule of key project dates by month or quarter. Nov. 2011 – Jan. 2012: DMS/DDCC will begin facilitation/engagement/design and place-based planning process with local arts organizations, property owners, PLACE and architects. Feb. 2012 – April 2012: DMS/DDCC will continue engagement process with arts organizations; organizations will finalize plans for arts and culture events, performances and exhibits. Jan 2012 – July 2012: Property owners and architects will use place-based planning sessions to create schematic drawings of cultural facilities; free arts education courses will begin; DMS/DDCC will begin collection and analysis of project data and outcomes. Aug. 2012 – Oct. 2012: Arts and Culture partners will complete remaining arts engagement activities; DMC/DDCC will finalize data collection and analysis and submit final reports to NEA; analysis data will be made available to public via print and online media.

**e. Partners, key organizations, individuals, and works of art.** Committed lead partners City of Dubuque and DMS/DDCC will commit funding and staff resources to coordinate and manage the place based planning components of the project and secure additional funding sources. The remaining committed partners were selected because of their highly successful project histories and commitment to making the HMD a vibrant, livable arts community. All partners have previously participated in arts and cultural engagement or project development in the HMD.

Gronen Restoration – a company specializing in historic rehabilitation. Owners are HMD property owners committed to developing space for artists and cultural organizations.

Jeffrey Morton Associates – an architectural firm specializing in historic building rehabilitation and adaptive reuse; committed to sharing expertise in rehab and appropriate design.

PLACE – Projects Linking Art, Community & Environment, a 501c3 led by Chris Valesco, committed to assisting property owners and arts organizations in creating a framework for sustainability of a central arts center in the HMD and assisting partners in developing strategies to increase role of ownership of arts nonprofits.

Dubuque Museum of Art – Executive Director of the Dubuque Museum of Art, Mark Wahlert, and former director, arts consultant Geri Shafer, will serve in an advisory capacity for project. Dubuque County Fine Arts Society – a 501c3 arts organization eager to present the 7th annual Voices from the Warehouse art exhibition featuring the work of 15 national and regional artists. Voices also features live music, theater, free family arts activities, downtown tours and art lectures.

Fly-By-Night Productions – a 501c3 theater company, committed to presenting the Millwork Storytelling Series featuring live interpretive storytelling celebrating the history of the HMD.

Dubuque Art Center – a 501c3 arts education organization committed to providing free arts courses/programming for 1200 citizens, an artist in residence program and the “Faces of the District” visual dialogue project. The Julien International Film Festival, an Indie film company committed to showcasing international films in the district in partnership with the acclaimed Beloit International Film Festival.

**f. The target community.** Dubuque, a major metropolitan city in the tri-state area, is the primary cultural hub for of dozens of rural communities in the Tri-state region. With this extended community in mind, we estimate that our activities will engage hundreds of professional artists & designers, dozens of arts organizations, and 20,000 participants directly, with another 150,000 viewing activity documentaries on cable access. The partners’ collective vision of the HMD makes art accessible to all. The HMD’s close proximity to the at-risk Washington Street Neighborhood and to Prescott, an arts charter elementary school, will enable Arts in the District to reach under-served and low-income populations.

**g. National Historic Preservation Act.** The City of Dubuque is the oldest city in Iowa and is home to five designated historic districts, nine local and two national historic landmarks, and 45 structures listed on the historic register. In addition, Dubuque has aggressively surveyed nearly 5,000 structures in our historic and conservation districts to inventory their significance. Our community is committed to honoring and preserving our history and the environment. Documentation showing NEPA and NHPA compliance is included in part two of attachment 10.

**h. Plans for promoting, publicizing, and/or disseminating project activities.** We will promote and publicize this project using digital media, the internet and social media channels, traditional print media, local and regional billboards, and local television outlets.

**i. Plans for documenting, evaluating, and disseminating the project results.** A final report, prepared in collaboration with DMS/DCCC and core partners, will document outcomes in artist engagement, square feet of cultural space created, visitor counts and livability scores. These results will be distributed to all

participating partners and city leadership and made available to the public through print and digital media.