

INTRODUCTION

It is well documented that where arts and culture thrive, so do local economies. There are countless examples in cities across America where the performing arts have been the driving force of that cultural and economic growth. Bloomington residents love living here because of the abundance of cultural offerings in this city. We know from the City's 2019 Community Survey that arts and culture are of highest value to this community, and that results in spending. According to a recent study done by Cardinal Stage in conjunction with students from the O'Neill School at IU, the performing arts contribute \$4.6 million to the local economy. In fact, Bloomington patrons are spending *more* per event on things like restaurants, transportation and other ancillary expenditures than the national average for performing arts patrons.

Cultural spaces for people to gather, that are accessible to restaurants, shops and hotels, are hallmarks of a strong community with a thriving arts and culture sector. **We have an opportunity right now to step into Bloomington's future** by capitalizing on the opportunity that has arisen with the coinciding events of the global pandemic and the return of the Waldron Arts Center to the City's ownership. There is a window of opportunity here to do a major renovation and transform the Waldron into a dynamic arts center that serves as a gathering place for community members as well as a showcase for Bloomington's performing and visual arts.

Bloomington Playwrights Project (BPP), Cardinal Stage, and the Pigasus Institute are working together to make this dream a reality. We have the infrastructure, the backing, and the expertise to accomplish this without dependency on City funding. We recognize that while the City of Bloomington values the arts and we want to make sure that Bloomington doesn't miss this opportunity to **"build back better" economically and artistically**. We believe that we can lead that charge.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WALDRON ARTS CENTER

The building known as the John Waldron Arts Center at the corner of Fourth and Walnut Streets was erected in 1915. It was originally intended for use as Bloomington's City Hall before housing the Bloomington Police Department from 1965 – 1985.

In the late 80s and early 90s, the Bloomington Area Arts Council (BAAC) raised funds to renovate the building in 1990. This was accomplished with the help from a major gift from Cecile Waldron in honor of John Waldron, a prominent city politician during the 1800s. At that time, the City of Bloomington transferred ownership to the Arts Council under an agreement that it would be operated as a community arts center. The Council began a major renovation led by G.S. Ridgway and Associates Inc. to create 1) an auditorium performance space on the third floor, 2) an art gallery, offices, concessions and gift shop on the second floor, and 3) a small theater, gallery space, and classrooms on the first floor. In early 1994, local community radio station, WFHB, moved into the connected old firehouse at 108 W 4th St.

The BAAC managed the space for 20 years. In that time, the Council introduced a variety of programming including arts classes, art installations, and a performance series. The organization also served as the state arts granting agency in the region, administering state arts grants to local/regional artists and arts organizations. However, revenue growth from rentals, art classes, art sales, and donations stalled in the mid 00s. Under the weight of high administrative overhead and mounting debt

in 2010, the BAAC returned the Waldron to the City, which then transferred ownership to Ivy Tech Bloomington under a similar operations agreement and the expectation that WFHB would be a permanent tenant of the adjacent firebay space.

Under Ivy Tech's management, the Center underwent substantive improvements to its performing and visual arts spaces, while adding additional arts education programming through its Center for Lifelong Learning (CLL). In the ensuing years, Cardinal Stage grew to become the Center's most consistent renter, occupying its performing arts spaces for 20 – 28 weeks and bringing over 12,000 attendees through the Center's doors to attend Cardinal shows each year. Other performing arts groups (especially Jewish Theatre of Bloomington, Stages Bloomington, and Ivy Tech Student Productions) increased their use of the facility as well over the past decade. However as a unique facility within the Ivy Tech system, high administrative overhead, a change in reserve funding that resulted in growing deferred maintenance costs, a lack of new sustainable revenue strategy (including contributions), and a statewide push to consolidate Ivy Tech's infrastructure and operations around workforce development activities led to the College moving its CLL resources and operations to its main campus and closing the Center in early 2020 and transferring ownership back to the City over the subsequent months.

THE NEXT EVOLUTION OF THE WALDRON ARTS CENTER

The Waldron has a distinctive historic architecture and a very unique history. This adds to the character of downtown and to the legacy of the building. While our organizations acknowledge that prior business models for the operations of the Arts Center have failed, we believe the Waldron has yet to fulfill its full potential as an arts center. Our proposal envisions an *evolved* Waldron Arts Center that establishes the capacity to fulfill the Bloomington community's needs for decades to come.

Specifically, our plan envisions a more:

1. Vibrant and active center where the entirety of the building is in use throughout the year.
2. Inclusive space that reduces financial and technical barriers for new, diverse, and emerging artists and arts groups.
3. Functional space that accommodates more sophisticated live productions.
4. Beautiful and welcoming space where art thrives throughout.
5. Vital space to the local economy that drives downtown visits and growth.

To achieve this vision while promoting operational sustainability, our plan for the Waldron Arts Center is distinct from past business models. Our model would:

1. Not require our organizations to take on any long-term debt when completing our proposed \$3 - 5 million renovation.
2. Enhance the Center's current revenue-generating activities by improving venue and gallery amenities and services for local artists and groups.
3. Introduce new revenue-generating activities with the creation of an art bar/cafe, dedicated box office services, and booking of touring and other non-locally based programming.
4. Dedicate professional theatre staffing and technical support for renters.
5. Receive significant, consistent operational support from Cook Group and other private sources.
6. Partner with BCT Management to expand BCT Box Office's services.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF OUR ORGANIZATIONS

Both Bloomington Playwrights Project and Cardinal Stage have exhibited strong periods of growth in the last 10 years. While still in its nascent stages, the Pigasus Institute has demonstrated operational sustainability and has strong potential for growth with its Bloomington Academy of Film & Theatre (BAFT) and Project Pigasus programs.

Below is a summary of each organization’s mission, recent financial performance, capital assets, and combined financial impact:

	Combined
Revenue	\$1,547,533
<i>Contrib, Grant</i>	42%
<i>Program</i>	45%
Expense	\$1,505,973
<i>Salary +</i>	30%
Gain/Loss	\$41,560

Bloomington Playwrights Project

The Bloomington Playwrights Project is a theater dedicated to new play production. We strive to be a leading artistic force in the production and encouragement of new plays. We provide opportunities for development, education, and production for promising and established writers and theater artists in a professional environment.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	CV-20
Revenue	\$296,481	\$449,107	\$295,974	\$381,632	\$344,087	\$284,476
<i>Contrib, Grant</i>	43%	75%	44%	60%	60%	33%
<i>Program</i>	37%	19%	43%	31%	27%	50%
Expense	\$278,093	\$186,832	\$279,605	\$360,755	\$374,321	\$294,685
<i>Salary +</i>	28%	29%	28%	23%	19%	23%
Gain/Loss	\$18,388	\$186,832	\$16,369	\$20,877	(\$30,234)	(\$10,209)
Assets	\$124,761	\$665,945	\$749,848	\$747,065	\$637,032	
Liabilities	\$1,773	\$356,109	\$423,645	\$399,984	\$320,188	

Office	Own Playhouse (+ mortgage, utilities, etc.)	BPP's 2016 financials reflect both a capital campaign and purchase of its building for \$415,000
Rehearsal	Within Playhouse	
Performance	Within Playhouse	
Equipment	Own, within Playhouse	
Storage	Some within Playhouse + Rented	

Cardinal Stage

Cardinal Stage exists to advance professional theater in Bloomington, Indiana. We produce high-quality professional theater that engages audiences and strengthens the cultural, educational and economic vibrancy of South Central Indiana.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	CV-20
Revenue	\$1,000,676	\$1,217,647	\$1,139,832	\$999,018	\$1,012,507	\$994,623
<i>Contrib, Grant</i>	36%	41%	33%	32%	36%	29%
<i>Program</i>	53%	44%	54%	51%	50%	41%
Expense	\$977,923	\$1,107,980	\$1,230,925	\$1,155,132	\$943,703	\$971,639
<i>Salary +</i>	33%	32%	37%	32%	28%	25%
Gain/Loss	\$25,753	\$109,667	(\$91,093)	(\$156,114)	\$68,804	\$22,984
Assets	\$765,155	\$810,129	\$721,870	\$618,325	\$616,314	
Liabilities	\$580,783	\$517,212	\$533,560	\$586,129	\$521,052	

Office	Temporary - Pigasus Institute (BAFT)	Cardinal sold its administrative, storage, rehearsal space in 2020 for \$650,000, eliminating debt and ongoing utilities, etc.
Rehearsal	Lease access 5/2021 (\$3,600/mo + utilities)	
Performance	Rent BCT 1/year + Waldron Auditorium	
Equipment	Use what is available in performance spaces	
Storage	Some within BAFT + Rented	

Pigasus Institute

Engage, educate, and elevate Indiana communities through the vehicles of film and theatre. Through Festivals, Academy- Style Training, and, Collaborative Projects, the Pigasus Institute brings together diverse groups of people around common themes and issues, provides tools for self- expression through storytelling on stage and screen, and builds bridges of thought, dialogue, and humanity between its community and the world.

	Inc. 2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Revenue		Project	Project	\$87,431	\$190,939
<i>Contrib, Grant</i>				65%	45%
<i>Program</i>				35%	52%
Expense		Project	Project	\$18,923	\$187,949
<i>Salary +</i>				85%	63%
Gain/Loss				\$68,508	\$2,990
Assets				\$29,828	\$33,309
Liabilities				\$ -	\$ -

Office	Free - Cook Group owned (+ utilities)
Rehearsal	Free - Cook Group owned
Performance	--
Equipment	Free - Cook Group owned
Storage	Free - Cook Group owned

A UNIQUE REGIONAL ARTS ORGANIZATION FOR BLOOMINGTON

While each organization has achieved success fulfilling its mission, their relatively small sizes have prevented each from attaining a level of professionalization that is indicative of major regional

performing arts organizations across the country. Our collective operations, however, are very similar to those of larger organizations that feature professional theatre for young audiences, new play development, and theatre education programs in addition to traditional theatrical production.

In this spirit, Bloomington Playwrights Project, Cardinal Stage, and Pigasus Institute are joining forces. Our three organizations are currently exploring a three-way merger that would create a strong and experienced organization capable of managing an asset like the Waldron Arts Center. We envision a comprehensive and unique regional performing arts organization for South Central Indiana. This new organization (herein referred to with the working title “**The Organization**”) would carry on the missions of each organization and feature a more robust infrastructure, bringing together a variety of theatrical programming under one umbrella, similar to professional performing arts organizations in major metropolitan areas. Furthermore, the establishment of a new work development program combined with a film production and education department will create an innovative synergy that seeks to advance both theatre and film and will serve as a model for other professional arts organizations in non-metropolitan areas nationwide.

Our goals are to:

1. Create a robust and sustainable level of professional operations.
2. Increase capacity in order to attract and retain talent.
3. Enhance our collective artistic identity on a regional and national level.
4. Engage greater numbers of people, of more diverse and multigenerational backgrounds, in the creation and appreciation of film and theatre.
5. Measurably impact the local and regional economy.
6. Foster emerging artists.
7. Manage enhanced and more accessible community arts spaces.

Our three organizations are well-positioned financially to achieve these goals. The Organization recently secured a major pledge of operational support from Cook Group of \$2.05 million to be gifted over a 5-year period, with larger installments in the first few years and gradually declining over the period. This pledge signifies a monumental private investment in the local arts sector. The larger distributions in the early years of the period will allow the Organization to make significant, strategic investments to its operations that will promote long-term growth, including additions to the development/fundraising, education, film production, and new work development department. The Waldron Arts Center is also seen as a key component of the Organization’s success. Growth in revenue from earned sources such as ticket sales, venue rentals, bar/cafe, film distribution, and tuition and contributed sources such as donors and corporate sponsors will allow the Organization to be a capable and sustainable steward of the Waldron Arts Center and an arts and culture leader in the state and region.

To encourage the Organization to increase contributed revenue capacity by nearly \$600,000 by FYE26, an equal portion of Cook’s pledged contribution will be issued as a challenge 1:1 match to the community. This challenge will form the basis for a comprehensive artistic capital campaign that secures new 5-year pledges of support from individuals and corporations across the region. A recent analysis of each organizations’ recent donor history shows approximately 10% of individual households giving to 2 or more organizations, indicating that the Organization will have a large pool of existing donor prospects. This campaign would supplant our organizations’ existing annual campaigns in the first couple years of operations, however, the Organization would still execute typical fundraising activities (e.g. mailed appeals, special event programming, etc.). **Attached is a recent donor analysis conducted by our organizations.**

The Organization will produce a wide variety of plays and musicals, both new and established, each season. The core programming that has led to success for BPP and Cardinal will be retained, including theater for young audiences. The film program will add a truly unique component to the Organization's public offerings, with an annual high school screenwriting competition and production, as well as biennial feature film production. The new works program will develop projects for stage and screen, including film adaptations of theatrical pieces. A robust education program, housed at the Bloomington Academy of Film & Theater building (411 E 7th St), will include classes for all ages, subsidized student matinees and teaching artist placement in area schools. Additionally, we are actively seeking ways to expand accessibility to our theatrical productions, including offering sensory-friendly performances and investing in assisted hearing devices.

Attached is a comprehensive 5-year pro forma budget for The Organization, including anticipated operational and capital expenditures for the Waldron Arts Center.

ARTS CENTER OWNERSHIP

The Organization sees the value in maintaining the City's current ownership of the Waldron Arts Center under any new management agreement. This would allow our partnership to secure a civic alcohol permit for the building that would facilitate the operation of the art bar/cafe, making the space more attractive to renters and patrons. It would also insure that a private owner is not shouldered with a property tax burden that could further hinder operations, and the stewardship of a public asset would further encourage our Organization to maintain its stated community access and engagement goals.

The Organization is ready to take on most of the deferred maintenance (see next section) and ongoing maintenance costs under a lease with the City. We are also open to a variety of lease scenarios, but ask that the lease payments remain minimal at \$1/year in the near term as the Organization works to reach sustainability.

DEFERRED MAINTENANCE & REOPENING THE WALDRON

Our organizations have reviewed the documentation provided by the City and Task Force regarding the current deferred maintenance that the building requires to reopen the Arts Center to the public safely. We have also toured the facility multiple times with Carl Cook, George Ridgway (architect of the original Arts Center renovation), and other Cook Group architects to discuss the feasibility of additional renovations that would be necessary to support our proposed business model.

If the City were to grant the Organization a long-term lease to the facility under the operational model outlined in this proposal, a private entity close to our organizations will cover *most* of the estimated \$500,000 in deferred maintenance costs immediately. To support this effort, we are respectfully requesting **a one-off allotment of \$150,000 from the City** to support the remaining deferred maintenance costs in FYE22 & FYE23.

By completing this maintenance, our Organization will be able to return the Waldron to its original level of operations prior to the pandemic. Our goal would be to complete all of the necessary deferred maintenance by Spring 2022 for an official Waldron reopening.

RENOVATION

Upon completing the deferred maintenance, our Organization would immediately prioritize a number of renovations that will provide the necessary infrastructure to promote the new revenue-generating

activities that will promote long-term sustainability. These include the necessary renovations to the Main Floor space to accommodate the Art Bar/Cafe and Box Office.

Additionally, we envision a strategic partnership with Cook Group and CFC Properties to tie the Waldron into a larger vision for this important city block in the Bloomington Entertainment & Arts District. Additional renovations and improvements will pursue a shared strategy with CFC's vision for Fountain Square Mall and the surrounding structures that will promote the integration of services.

Furthermore, there are some crucial improvements that need to be made to both theater spaces in order to make them functional before reopening. Both spaces need to have the flooring completely replaced, as it is currently damaged and unsafe. New seating in both spaces would also be a priority for reopening so that all users will be able to easily accommodate any continued or future social distancing requirements.

We will continue to meet with architects and other experts in the near future to determine accurate estimates for all of the proposed improvements below, but as of now, the Organization estimates a total renovation cost in the range of \$2.5 - 4.5 million by 2027. These renovations may include the following:

Renovated Performance Spaces

- Auditorium: new modular risers; new seating; improved backstage, dressing rooms, and storage; new energy-efficient lighting and sound equipment; improved grid system; sound-proofing; dance-friendly flooring
- Firebay: new energy-efficient lighting and sound equipment; new seating; user-friendly lighting and sound operating system; upgraded electric wiring; improved dressing and bathroom
- Overall: Simplified setup to make space as turnkey as possible for renters who do not have dedicated technical support staffing

Art Cafe/Bar & Box Office

- Main Floor: remove most interior walls and vaults; rearrange stairs; extend western floor, lighting; art gallery improvements; dedicated box office

Enhanced Accessibility & Community Amenities

- Upper Level: Renovated lobby, public restrooms
- Lower Level: Improved handicap accessible entrance and elevator access
- Assistive Listening Devices for theaters

Dedicated Visual Arts Spaces & Other Visual Arts Amenities

- 3rd floor lobby curated as Gallery space
- Lower Level: Dedicated Art Gallery (rentable on its own or with other spaces)
- Lower Level: Classroom / Rehearsal / Conference Room for rent

General:

- Security improvements: security cameras; code key locks for all venues/classroom
- New entryways
- Exterior improvements to the WFHB space

Other Improvements:

- Exterior lift in alleyway to facilitate the load-in and out of materials for the Auditorium

- Walkway/Breezeway from Main Level into Fountain Square Mall with additional hanging space for visual art

OPERATIONS AT THE NEW WALDRON ARTS CENTER

RESIDENT COMPANY PROGRAMMING & ADMINISTRATION

The Organization will be deemed the “Resident Company” of the Waldron Arts Center and the building will provide a home base of operations with a majority of the Organization’s staff utilizing the building’s existing administrative offices. The Organization would prioritize the scheduling of its own programming in the venues before releasing the remaining venue availability to the subsequent tier of users (see more below). It is important to note that the Organization is not planning to occupy more weeks at the Waldron than Cardinal Stage has *historically* booked (up to 28 out of 52 weeks, primarily in the Auditorium).

The Organization would plan to produce 5 shows a year in the Waldron Auditorium with other shows being produced at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater and Ted Jones Playhouse. These shows would include three Mainstage and two Theatre for Young Audiences productions. The Waldron Auditorium is essential to the Organization’s commitment to presenting live professional theatre to area students and educators as it has sufficient capacity to accommodate school field trips.

WFHB

The Organization will maintain the commitment to WFHB Community Radio as a permanent tenant of the facility, while working with the station to negotiate a fair long-term lease and helping to manage upgrades and improvements to their current space.

VENUE MANAGEMENT & AVAILABILITY

The Organization would manage the following venues available to the community:

1. The Waldron John & Linda Whitehart Auditorium
 - a. Seats: ~150 - 200 (Flexible)
 - b. Approx. 50% available*
2. The Waldron Rose Firebay Theatre
 - a. Seats: ~80 (Flexible)
 - b. 100% available
3. The Waldron Art Bar/Cafe & Gallery Space
 - a. Seats: TBD
 - b. >90% available*
4. The Ted Jones Playhouse (107 W 9th)
 - a. Seats: 85 (Permanent)
 - b. >50% available*

**after anticipated Resident Company use*

RENTALS, BOOKINGS & BOX OFFICE/TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

With a professional staff and multiple performance venues, the Organization will be able to provide regular access to multiple performance spaces (Waldron Auditorium, Waldron Firebay, and the Ted Jones Playhouse) as well as technical support for renting organizations. Additionally, since construction of the sets for the BPP shows would take place at the Organization’s production and rehearsal studio (off-site location TBD), the Ted Jones Playhouse (TJP) will be more available to community groups moving forward, providing an additional option for organizations in need of venues.

Cross-promotion for productions and the increased foot-traffic created by the Waldron cafe will help smaller organizations raise awareness about their shows and build their audiences.

Our guiding principles for the management of the performance venues are:

- Retain our current use of Waldron performance spaces as a foundation of activity and revenue
- Prioritize community performing arts access for all remaining capacity
- Price rental tiers and supports to encourage local community access
- Partner with BCT Management to provide
 - Technical support services for non-theatre renters
 - Box office services for all renters and bookings
- Maximize performance venue use throughout the year

A vital aspect of community building will be building bridges and creating opportunities for emerging artists and arts organizations, especially those that serve BIPOC communities, the socio-economically disadvantaged, and persons with disabilities. As we move through the formal merger process and lay out a strategic plan for the new organization, we will be engaging various constituents to understand how to best serve these groups with venue access, and possibly technical or marketing support. There is an opportunity for the City to support these emerging artists and arts organizations with grants administered by the Bloomington Arts Commission for activities taking place at local venues such as the BCT, Waldron, and TJP. We call on the Mayor and City Council to commit \$25,000/year in *new* annual arts grant support for the Bloomington Arts Commission to establish and administer a Performing Arts Venue Grant program by 2023.

Priority of Venue Use

Tier 1 – Resident Company (The Organization)

Tier 2 – Community Commitment

- Local Community Performing Arts Groups & Emerging Local Artists
- Loyal, consistent renters who occupy multiple days/weeks each year
- Prioritize access for emerging artists and target groups including (but not limited to) BIPOC communities, the socio-economically disadvantaged, and persons with disabilities

The Organization will establish rental rates and contract terms for this tier. Renters will be required to utilize the Waldron Arts Center box office services, managed in partnership with the BCT Box Office. The Organization will explore offering additional amenities such as technical support services and the ability to “hold” one additional week (per production) to accommodate a potential run extension for shows that are successful.

We recently surveyed local arts groups, such as Jewish Theater of Bloomington and Stages, that we anticipate would fall into the Tier 2 category for annual rental. According to their estimated needs, these groups would regularly utilize 36 days in the Auditorium and 60 days in the Firebay with a mix of weekly, weekend and daily rental periods.

Tier 3 – Full Activation & Economic Potential

- All remaining renters:

- Private Events
- Lectures, Trainings & Corporate Events
- Parties, Weddings & Fundraisers
- Small touring acts (musical or otherwise)
- Higher pricing levels for corporate and private events
- Partner with BCT Management to book non-local and touring productions at remaining available times

The Organization would partner with BCT Management to establish rental rates, contract terms and structure for this tier of renters.

After securing dates for the Organization and local Tier 2 renters, the remaining venue capacity will be open to BCT Management event bookings where the Organization would negotiate a fair “stage fee” for the use of the Waldron facility. The Organization and BCT Management would agree on a time frame whereupon any un-booked or unrented venue dates by BCT Management would revert back to the Organization to use at its discretion. We are also working with BCT Management to explore options on how it might share technical support services for any and all renters.

We would ensure there is always a site supervisor present for any and all rentals and bookings that fall outside of normal business hours. Technical support staff would be present for all technical rehearsals, and house managers and box office staff would be present for all public performances

VISUAL ARTS GALLERY & PRESENTATION

Upon securing a lease for the Waldron, the Organization will establish a Visual Arts Committee composed of local visual arts experts to aid in the design, policies, and management/curation of the dedicated gallery space and other displays throughout the building. The Waldron has been a cornerstone of Gallery Walk and an important showcase for the visual arts throughout its life as an arts center. Under the new business model, the Waldron may not continue to serve as a space for visual arts education, but it is crucial that it continue to showcase the work of local artists. We recognize that we lack the necessary expertise to conceive and execute the curation of the gallery spaces and will work with partners who are established in this field.

The addition of the Art Bar/Cafe and the increased occupancy generated by partnership with BCT Management will bring more foot-traffic to the Waldron during the day and night. This will increase exposure for artists with work on display in the lower and upper-level gallery spaces. There is also an opportunity to take a more holistic and integrated approach to the curation of the gallery spaces so that the performing arts and visual arts works on offer at any given time are in conversation with each other, rather than simply existing alongside each other. We currently do not have a schematic or map to offer detailing how these spaces might be organized, but we can prioritize this at the request of the City or Task Force.

ART BAR/CAFE

A key component of our financial sustainability will be the creation of an Art Bar/Cafe on the Main Level of the Waldron. This cafe will serve customers day and night, driving more activity to building at all times. It will also provide a welcoming experience for all patrons attending shows at the Waldron. The Organization will establish a Food & Beverage Committee to identify the right vendor to manage the cafe and oversee the ongoing partnership between the vendor and the Organization.

The design and food/beverage concept will be created in partnership with the vendor. The intent is that this will *not* be a full-service restaurant, but rather a coffee shop that converts to a bar in the evening. All food will be prepared offsite and delivered on a daily basis.

The vendor will pay the Organization a percentage of revenue in lieu of rent, as well as a percentage of utilities. We anticipate modeling the revenue sharing structure on similar arrangements at other performing arts facilities, with different revenue splits for food/non-alcoholic beverage sales and alcoholic beverage sales. We have made conservative estimates in the pro-forma budget for cafe revenue, but there is a big upside to this venture as the building increases its occupancy in the coming years.

CLASSROOM / CONFERENCE ROOM

The Lower Level of the building will include at least one classroom/conference room. This will be a multi-purpose room suitable for rehearsals, auditions, meetings and classes. It will be available for rental by the hour, day or week and include lockers for overnight storage. This space will also be available to visual or performing arts instructors for regular classes.

Ivy Tech's Center for Lifelong Learning will continue to offer most of its fine arts curricula on Ivy Tech's main campus, preventing a service gap in the community, but it has expressed an interest in periodically offering courses at the Waldron as a renter.

With the stewardship of a major venue, comes the responsibility to make sure that venue is truly serving the community. The Organization takes that responsibility seriously and has **the support of many stakeholders, listed below in Appendix A.**

RESULTING ECONOMIC IMPACT

Our partnership will continue to strengthen the growing economic impact of the arts in Bloomington by improving our performance venues to allow for increased and varied programming. [A recent study](#) found that Cardinal Stage, the John Waldron Arts Center, and the Buskirk-Chumley Theater combined for an annual economic impact of \$4.6 Million, making the performing arts one of the largest drivers of Bloomington's cultural economy.

We recognize that we are not going to be operating at pre-pandemic levels right out of the gate, but the reopening and renovation of the Waldron Arts Center is going to play a major role in the recovery of Downtown Bloomington. The addition of the Art Bar/Cafe and the partnership with the BCT to grow the event calendar will result in increased activity and spending at the Waldron, which will have a ripple effect to the surrounding business. Increased activity at the Waldron also means increased revenue for the City, through parking as well as food and beverage tax.

In communities across the country, the arts have been a proven driver of economic recovery and community revitalization and that's exactly what Bloomington is going to need coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

OUR REQUEST

We are asking the City of Bloomington to provide:

- the Organization with a lease (terms negotiable) on the Waldron Arts Center so we may begin work on deferred maintenance in Summer 2021.
- the Organization with a one-off allotment of \$150,000 to support some deferred maintenance costs in FYE22 & FYE23.
- \$25,000/year in new annual arts funding for the Bloomington Arts Commission to establish and administer a Performing Arts Venue Grant program subsidizing venue-related expenses for local, emerging artists and organizations by 2023.

We have the opportunity to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis in the coming year with a new asset that can invigorate and excite the community and jump start the City's economic recovery as only arts organizations can do. In the process, we promise to build a strong and capable steward of the Waldron Arts Center and usher in a new era of sustainability.

SIGNED

John Armstrong, Executive Director (Pigasus Institute)

Kate Galvin, Artistic Director (Cardinal Stage)

Gabe Gloden, Managing Director (Cardinal Stage)

Chad Rabinovitz, Producing Artistic Director (Bloomington Playwrights Project)

Appendix A

The following community stakeholders are in support of this proposal for the Waldron Arts Center:

Buskirk-Chumley Theater Management
WFHB
Gallery Walk
Arts Forward Bloomington
Lotus Festival
Jewish Theater of Bloomington
Monroe County Community Theater
Stages Bloomington
Windfall Dancers
FlowMotion
Hudsucker Posse
Aeriology
Artisan Alley
Pete Yonkman, Carl Cook, and Cook Group,
Inc.