
Organization Name **Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre** 09/04/2018
id. 11047409
by **Rachel Witt** in **FY19 Organizational and Professional Development Grant**
rew9w@virginia.edu

Original application 09/04/2018

My organization has an address of record within the geographical boundaries of Fairfax County, the City of Fairfax, or the City of Falls Church. **Yes**

My organization's core mission is the creation, exhibition, presentation, production, or performance of and/or education in, an arts discipline. **Yes**

My organization has regular activity in a minimum of four different months in the year or 120 days of the year. **Yes**

My organization is in compliance with all local, state, and federal laws. **Yes**

My organization holds current or pending status under IRS code 501(c) or operates as a specifically defined arts division or program within a larger nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. **Yes**

My organization received line item funding from Fairfax County in fiscal year 2018, is a school or department of George Mason University or directly supports county government programs and agencies. **No**

My organization has met at least two of these four requirements for the past 12 months. Please see list to the right. **Yes**

My organization has independently prepared financial statements such as an audit or a treasurer's report (audit required for organizations with expenses of \$600,000 and above). **Yes**

If your organization has received funding previously from the ARTSFAIRFAX, all required final reports for any grant(s) received during the previous fiscal year, were submitted by the deadline. **Yes**

Upload Required Eligibility Documents for verification:

[Board_of_Directors_MVCCT_2018.xlsx](#)

[IRS_MVCCT.pdf](#)

[PL_Mount_Vernon_Community_Childrens_Theatre.pdf](#)

FEIN Number **541177510**

Mailing Address **1900 Elkin Street**

Floor/Suite/Apt. *n/a*

City **Alexandria**

State **Virginia**

Zip Code **22308**

Is this mailing address the same as your street address? **Yes**
If not, please complete the following fields for your physical location.

Phone Number **703-360-0686**

Website **www.mvcct.org**

Check the appropriate Fairfax County magisterial district for your organizations street address: **Mount Vernon**

Project Contact First Name **Lexi**

Project Contact Last Name **Keogh**

Project Contact Title **Member of the Board of Directors**

Project Contact Email **admin@mvcct.org**

Project Contact Phone Number **703-360-0686**

Chief Administrator First Name **Pam**

Chief Administrator Last Name **Peckar**

Chief Administrator Title **Office Manager**

Chief Administrator Email **admin@mvcct.org**

Chief Administrator Phone Number **703-360-0686**

Chairman, Board of Directors First Name **Jennifer**

Chairman, Board of Directors Last Name **Collins**

Chairman's Email **jenroadrunner@gmail.com**

Chairman's Phone Number **703-731-9083**

Chairman's Address **8703 Waterford Road**

Floor/Suite/Apt. **n/a**

City **Alexandria**

State **VA**

Zip **22308**

Based upon the most recently completed fiscal year expenses, what is the overall budget size of your organization? **Level 3 - \$100,000-\$250,000**

Has your organization applied to ARTSFAIRFAX in the past? **Yes**

If your organization received funding from ARTSFAIRFAX in the past, when?	2017
Does your organization employ paid full or part-time non-artistic staff?	Yes
If yes, what is the Full Time Equivalent (FTE)?	1.5
How did you hear about the grant program?	Other
Please specify	Received previous funding
1. Describe the applicant organization's history, mission, and goals.	<p>Mount Vernon Community Children's Theatre is a not-for-profit founded in 1980. It began with a dedicated group of parents and volunteers who had a desire to bring opportunities for performing and enrichment to youth in the Mount Vernon community. It started slowly with one production a year, and eventually expanded to multiple shows and camps each season. Over the years, MVCCT has increased its programming to include after-school classes, a variety of workshops, and appearances at community events.</p> <p>The mission of MVCCT is to enhance the cultural life of the Northern Virginia area by offering a stimulating, creative, and supportive outlet for children ages 5 to 18 that helps build self confidence and character, while developing self-expression, independence, and responsibility. There are a number of theatres in Northern Virginia who work with kids, but MVCCT is one of the few focused on youth performing for other children, rather than adults performing for kids. MVCCT's main goal is to offer theatre programs that, as research indicates, foster the emotional, social and educational development of our local youth. MVCCT recognizes and wants to better leverage the unique theatre arts opportunities that it has to offer the community.</p> <p>Each year MVCCT casts over 100 roles (all actors between ages 8 and 18) in two full-length musicals and one teen play, directed and supported by hired professionals and produced by board members. The actors perform six shows for local audiences, reaching over 4,000 audience members per season. MVCCT has an active education program, bringing teaching artists into Fairfax County Public Schools for after-school classes. These teachers, many of whom are local professional actors, use theatre games and mini performance scenarios not only to expose the children to theatre, but to help them build academic, communication, and emotional skills. MVCCT provides at least one free program at a Title I school annually,</p>

and seeks partnerships with organizations such as Artspire and Ft. Belvoir to bring teachers to after-school programs at Creekside Community Center and the base.

Every year MVCCT works with over 200 kids in its camps, including a one-week spring break camp and four summer camp sessions. MVCCT provides opportunities for youth to attend audition workshops before each musical production. Refer to SM_MVCCT_03 for 2018-2019 theater offerings. MVCCT youth have performed for audiences at a local retirement home and at Signature Theatre for a public “Hamiltunes” sing-along.

MVCCT is committed to making its programs accessible to all and offers need-based scholarships to underserved youth who may not be able to afford tuition for productions, classes, workshops and camps. Each year, the organization also provides one \$1,000 college scholarship. All of this is accomplished by a volunteer Board of Directors with the support of only two part-time paid staff members, professional employees, and a host of parent volunteers. The “community” in the name of the organization is truly reflective of how MVCCT functions.

2. Organization's Total Audience **7150**

3. Annual Number of Exhibitions **0**

4. Annual Number of Performances **26**

5. Total Number of Annual Events **33**

6. Which category best describes the primary activity of your organization? **Arts Education**

Project Title **Technology and Financial Management Improvements for Mount Vernon Community Children’s Theatre**

Start Date **01/31/2019**

End Date **6/30/2019**

Amount Requested **1875**

1. Provide a brief overview of the project, describing the specific project, not the organization. Describe the **MVCCT seeks funding to pay for upgrades to technology and training to improve the organization’s ability to grow financially and expand audience. Funds would cover the purchase of a new desktop computer to replace the organization’s only and outdated computer; cloud storage capacity and wireless router for the office to make files easily accessible to staff and board members; and a basic laptop for**

organizational and professional need to be funded. What will the grant be used for?

offsite programs that would also run the lightboard. We seek support for video editing software and related training to increase marketing and fundraising capacity, and financial management training to support the organization's growth. These items will improve the organization's functionality and expand its capability to meet its goals.

For over 6 years the organization has relied on a donated Dell Optiplex 390 computer for all of its operations (see SM_MVCCT_04). The computer's limited storage and speed makes it difficult to keep up with current marketing strategies, growing its network, and collaboration. It is not a reliable tool for work or safely storing the organization's archive files. The computer will reach its end in the near future so proactively want to secure a replacement. As MVCCT has expanded revenue-generating and outreach efforts, more resources need to be easily accessible to the staff and board members and they need the ability to archive work in a common space. Cloud storage and a wireless router will make it possible for groups to work remotely and in the office. The organization currently has no shared storage and has only a router provided by the internet provider that operates about 50% of the time and has no capacity to connect wirelessly to other computers.

A laptop will give the organization a method for managing registration, curriculum, resources and family information; and be used to run lights at our camps and workshops. It would also be used at performances to process ticketing and online donations. Currently, camp staff rely on a laptop that has limited functionality with no capacity to run lights in our camp space, and board members use their personal phones at shows. A common use laptop will ensure that staff and board members have reliable access to information, tools, and programs, which will improve efficiency and help the organization standardize tracking and recording information at offsite locations. This machine will enable staff to create videos for both marketing and archival purposes.

As the organization plans for its growth, an increased emphasis on financial planning and marketing necessitates the need for staff training and a software upgrades. MVCCT requests funds to pay for a budget training course from MindEdge called "Budgeting in a Nonprofit Organization" for our current board Treasurer and two administrative staff along with a basic video editing software called CyberLink PowerDirector and training to use it (see SM_MVCCT_02). These items will provide a solid foundation so that the organization can further build off of the project that ArtsFairfax funded last year (see SM_MVCCT_01).

2. Explain how you developed this project design.

Last year, MVCCT began the process of reviewing its programs, audiences, and organizational structure in the context of two questions:

How can MVCCT better serve the community by broadening and diversifying its audiences?

2. How can MVCCT create a financial plan that supports the broadening of its audience?

With the generous support of a grant from the Fairfax Arts Council, MVCCT hired consultant Beth Hauptle to conduct board and staff interviews to assess the capacity and desire of the organization to expand services and evaluate the financial feasibility of expansion. The report provided a series of recommendations that Hauptle helped the Board evaluate and prioritize, resulting in the decision to pursue camp expansion as a solid first step to reach the two goals (see SM_MVCCT_01 for the full report).

As the board reviewed operations to determine how to best move forward on this work, it was determined that out-of-date technology and lack of financial training were holding MVCCT back and are essential for the organization.

Key Milestones:

Upon receipt of the funding, the organization will purchase the hardware described in this proposal in February 2018 and set up by April 2019. Upon receipt of the funding, the Board Treasurer and Office Staff Manager will take the budget training course so that they can draft proposed recommendations for discussion with the Board of Directors at the March 2019 meeting. The Treasurer will take the lead on creating a financial strategy, with input from the board so that a FY20 budget is approved by June 2019. During March and April 2019 the Marketing Director will complete the video editing training and produce a video production strategy document for review of the board at the April meeting. Videos will then be increasingly used to promote the organization.

3. How will the grant funds improve and sustain the operation of your organization?

These grant funds will allow MVCCT to make significant upgrades to technology and add to the organization's knowledge base to become a stronger organization. This project will ensure that MVCCT will have a solid base from which it can move forward with future growth.

The purchase new technology, including a new computer with additional video editing software, Cloud storage, wireless router and a laptop will provide a better sense of stability for the organization as well as increase the the capacity of MVCCT's daily functioning, marketing and finances moving forward. The current computer is old and increasingly unreliable; and if it fails MVCCT would be hampered in its ongoing operations. Cloud storage would give staff and board additional assurance that organization data is secure and backed up and accessible to all staff and Board members. A new laptop will greatly expand operational efficiency at our camps and workshops, provide a reliable tool for ticket sales and expand the ability to take donations at any of our events.

Obtaining additional training would help the organization make the best use of the new software as well as building a solid financial base for organizational growth. The board is very focused on ensuring the financial stability of the organization and is exploring several possible strategies to strengthen the organization. One priority is camp expansion, but the board is also looking at developing a multi-source fundraising strategy and determining what is needed to hire additional staff. In order to move ahead with these goals, the board understands that the organization needs to have the infrastructure and expertise in place to support it.

4. What effect will this project have on your programming or activities?

Upgrading technology and getting the skills to use it better will give MVCCT a strong foundation that will position the organization for future growth. A new computer will give MVCCT a reliable and efficient way to manage the day-to-day activities of the organization; including organizing programs; producing marketing materials; managing show logistics; and tracking finances.

Cloud storage will enhance collaboration among staff and board. As an example, in the last year, board members oversaw the creation and implementation of seven new programs that resulted in audience expansion and increased income. These included three workshops and two ticket raffles. Planning logistics and developing and finalizing marketing materials among staff and board members was at times a slow and duplicative process. Similar programs and activities are planned for FY19, so being able to access a shared space will make the organization of these events easier and more efficient.

Video editing software and training will allow for better and faster editing of video to be used for marketing and fundraising efforts. Videos of kids in action during camp, rehearsals, workshops, and after school programs will help document our successes and help us expand our audience. The organization currently has no consistent means of capturing and producing small clips of our work.

A lack of appropriate and reliable technology prevents teachers and managers from supporting programming as they would like. A new laptop would give staff the ability to track, access resources, and support their creative decisions while they are out of the office. The laptop will give staff the ability to create and edit videos for use on social media, and on the website.

Budget training will increase professionalism of financial management and ensure MVCCT is following best practices. This will be particularly relevant as the FY20 budget is developed.

5. Why is this project appropriate for your organization at this time?

MVCCT would like to build on its 40-year history and preserve the momentum from our recently completed report that previous ArtsFairfax funding helped to make possible. With ArtsFairfax funding, MVCCT commissioned a report that surveyed board and staff about the state of the organization and collected possible tactics to move forward with the organization's aspirations to become financially sustainable, reach new audiences and expand programming (see SM_MVCCT_01). Technology upgrades and training opportunities will help provide a solid foundation to pursue many of these tactics.

As an example, one of the specific recommendations generated from this report is to expand our camp, not only in numbers but also to a new location that will attract a new audience. This necessitates having reliable technology and additional expertise that all of the elements requested in this proposal would offer.

Additionally, MVCCT has a committed and reliable board Treasurer who is excited to receive additional training so she can better guide the board on financial planning and decisions. Better financial literacy will help the board overall with the day-to-day running of the organization as well as assess expansion opportunities.

6. If your organization receives funding, what tangible outcomes will be achieved? How will you measure the success of the grant? Identify three metrics/goals that you will use to evaluate success.

As a result of this grant, MVCCT will see three outcomes: The purchase and operation of a new computer, collaborative use of cloud storage, ability for any staff or Board member to connect to the internet when in the office, and a common-use laptop for camps, workshops, shows, and video editing. Budget training will be attended by board Treasurer and administrative staff, resulting in a more professional proposed budget plan for FY20 that gets further developed by the board. Video software training attended by one staff member and one board member to make efficient use of the new video editing software.

MVCCT will measure the success of the grant by the following: All board and staff members will have access from home and the MVCCT office to working and archival files stored on the new computer and in the cloud. A budget plan for FY20 that incorporates up to date strategies and approaches acquired through the budget training. At least 4 promotional video clips for the winter play; 4 promotional video clips for the spring musical; one spring session after school promotional video and 2 summer camp videos will be produced by trained video-editing staff and featured on Facebook and other social media. A subset of these videos will be featured on the organization's website.

Budget Narrative

The budget for these technology upgrades and training is attached. Efforts have been made to price out the most affordable technology that will serve the needs of the organization and last for as long as possible.

Desktop computer would be an Dell Inspiron or similar - 8GB memory, 1TB hard drive, including MS Office subscription. Funds for a new monitor, keyboard and speakers is included as well.

Laptop computer would be a Dell Inspiron 15 3000 or similar - 4GB memory, 1TB hard drive, including MS Office subscription

Complete listings for both the nonprofit budget and video trainings are available in Supplemental Material 2.

A subscription to cloud storage (using a service such as Sync.com) would be purchased for one year. MVCCT would budget for ongoing years out of operating funds.

A new router that can more reliably handle our internet connection will be purchased.

Is the Project feasible at less than full funding, and if so, how would the budget be adjusted?

The project is still feasible at less than full funding. Computer specifics and software could be adjusted. Our top priority for funding is the new computer and training in financial training.

Required Tables

[FY19_Required_Tables_Organizational_Professional_Dev.xlsx](#)

Resumes for key project staff

[Resume_01_MVCCT.pdf](#)

[Resume-02_MVCCT.pdf](#)

[Resume-03_MVCCT.pdf](#)

Fiscal Year to Date Budget

[MVCCT_FY19_Budget_Approved.xlsx](#)

Most recent IRS 990

[MVCCT_990_2017.pdf](#)

Supplemental Materials

[SM_Cover_Sheet.docx](#)

[SM_MVCCT_03.pdf](#)

[SM_MVCCT_04.pdf](#)

[SM_MVCCT_01.pdf](#)

[SM_MVCCT_02.pdf](#)

Upload Checklist

IRS Letter of Determination (see eligibility section)
Treasurer's Report or Audit for most recently completed fiscal year (see eligibility section)
Board List with addresses (see eligibility section)
Required Tables
Fiscal Year to Date Budget
Resumes for key project staff
Most recent IRS 990 (do not include schedules)
Supplemental materials (brochures, articles, testimonials, programs, letters of support, flyers, etc.)
Coversheet for supplementary materials

Project Contact Name **Lexi Keogh**

Chief Administrator Title **Office Manager**

Chief Administrator Name **Pam Pekar**

Board Member Title **Chair of the Board**

Board Member Name **Jennifer Collins**

Date of Submission **09/04/2018**
