

Fairfax County FY22 Budget Hearing
April 14, 2021
Testimony of Linda S. Sullivan, President & CEO,
ARTSFAIRFAX

Thank you, Chairman McKay and members of the Board of Supervisors. As President & CEO of ArtsFairfax I want to express our appreciation for your leadership and service in these difficult times.

ArtsFairfax works to strengthen and make accessible arts and culture to Fairfax's 1.2M residents. The County's strategic goals are our strategic goals: to create strong, equitable, diverse and lively communities where people want to live, work and play. The arts are systemic in meeting these goals.

ArtsFairfax has been allocated a flat budget for FY22. We understand the County's financial position and its many needs. The arts are one of those needs. The Fairfax County arts community shut down 98% of programming in March 2020, and will be one of the last sectors to fully reopen. Partial re-openings are a difficult economic model to deliver. You cannot put on a play or a concert with only 30-50% of your actors and musicians because you have only 30-50% of your ticket sales.

If the arts are to survive, to robustly assist in pandemic recovery, and to help meet the County's strategic goals, a new funding mechanism, or mechanisms, must be identified. The time and effort it takes to raise private support will not get us to our goals in any timely or equitable way. A dedicated stream of income is needed, whether it is a dedicated tax for the support of arts and culture, a proffered fund, or whatever mechanisms are best available to the County.

If ArtsFairfax is to support the arts to a level that enables community reach and programming in venues that accommodate expanding audiences, a significant influx of grant funds is needed. If ArtsFairfax is to meet the growing demand for its services in the areas of arts promotion, education and information services, and advisory services across a range of civic sectors, we need increased funding.

If we are to provide public art services we will need to staff this function and the art itself will need to be funded. As an example, our counter-part to the north has a \$6M budget compared to our \$1.5M budget.

We know the County values the role the arts play in community engagement, enhancement, and economic development. We hope the mechanisms to fund the arts can be found soon to reach our strategic and collective goals.

The video you are about to see illustrates our arts community's creativity and dedication to serve. The narrator, Tammarrah Addison, is a Fairfax resident, school-teacher, teaching artist, poet, and an ArtsFairfax Artist Resident.

Thank you.

Linda S. Sullivan
President & CEO