

## COMMUNITY CAPITAL FACILITIES PROGRAMS COMPETITIVE GRANTS RECOMMENDATION SURVEY

**The Washington Center for the Performing Arts** has applied for a **\$840,000** grant from the Washington State Department of Commerce. You've been selected by the applicant to fill out a recommendation survey. Please *type* answers into this form and return it to the applicant, who will include your survey in their application packet. If you have any questions, contact Community Capital Facilities at 360-725-3075 or [caprograms@commerce.wa.gov](mailto:caprograms@commerce.wa.gov).

### **1. What is your relationship with the applicant, and how well do you understand the applicant's mission and their proposed project?**

The Washington Center for the Performing Arts (WCPA) is a private, not-for-profit organization that is part of a public/private partnership with the City of Olympia. The City owns the facility and the WCPA has a long-term contract to operate the performing arts center. The primary mission of the WCPA is to operate a quality and financially sound performing arts center to be enjoyed and supported by the entire community.

The performing arts center is a key community asset located in the heart of downtown Olympia and is a regional landmark, which provides a venue for over 45 local performing groups. WCPA brings high quality, national performing arts and cultural events to the South Sound area. However, their primary focus is to provide an affordable venue for local theater and art groups. This regional performing arts center attracts over 110,000 people every year into downtown Olympia.

### **2. Why do you think the need addressed by the applicant's proposed project is important?**

The performing arts center is the principal performing arts resource in the South Puget Sound region. The proposed project will reinvigorate enthusiasm in the WCPA and downtown Olympia. More importantly, the improved entrance, glass doors and window, marquee/banners, new ticket booth, and brick/stone siding will transform the building from a "vanilla shell" to a more vibrant and inviting performing arts center.

Completing this project will enhance the operation, create and maintain jobs for construction workers, artists, and employees at the WCPA. The continued operation and success of the performing arts center will also provide economic growth to surrounding shops, restaurants, hotels, and galleries.

### **3. Describe how the applicant has collaborated with stakeholders to create a well-thought-out project.**

When the City Council directed staff to remove all of the siding and to repair it with new finish materials, it created an opportunity to change the entire look of the building. Knowing this would trigger broad public interest, City staff and the WCPA collaborated to develop a Public Involvement Plan. The first step was the formation of a Design Advisory Committee, chaired by the City. The purpose of the committee was to engage interest groups/public, provide guidance to the architects, and to make a final design recommendation to City Council. The seven-member committee was comprised of representatives from the WCPA

Board, Olympia Downtown Association, Heritage Commission, and a City Public Arts Advisory.

The Committee held three public meetings throughout February to solicit issues and priorities in four key areas:

- Aesthetics
- Promotion
- Public Spaces
- Construction Impacts

If people were unable to attend a meeting, they could provide feedback by visiting the City's website or emailing [wcer@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:wcer@ci.olympia.wa.us). Comments were accepted through March 1, 2012.

Over 200 comments were received. The top comments received are incorporated into the final design. They include: larger, lighted building signage; awnings along Washington Street; a grander, more inviting entrance; lighted box office with entry signage; a façade with a base, middle, and top to tie into the adjacent buildings; and the use of brick and stone as the siding material.

**4. Why do you think the applicant has the managerial and financial capacity to effectively run the facility once completed?**

The WCPA has operated the Center for more than 25 years. A committed Board of Directors recently completed a Business Plan which will guide the Center's future operations. The City Council is committed to the performing arts center's success and recently appointed a liaison to the WCPA Board of Directors (Councilmember Jim Cooper) to enhance communication and to maintain a high level of engagement.

**5. Any other comments?**

The Washington Center is a treasured and unique community asset. It is the only performing arts center in the region. It provides a venue for 45 local performing groups and draws audiences from as far as Mason, Lewis and Pierce Counties. They successfully bring in nationally acclaimed performers to our region making the arts more accessible to our local/regional community. The Center provides an opportunity for the community to experience art and performances in their own community without having to travel to a large metropolitan area.

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