



The Regional Arts Commission (RAC), in partnership with the DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the University of Maryland, are pleased to announce a two-year teaching and mentoring program for up to 30 arts and cultural organizations throughout St. Louis, MO, in fall 2020.

In the short term, Capacity Building: St. Louis will stabilize and strengthen participating organizations' artistic planning, financial planning, fundraising, board engagement, and marketing practices. In the long term, the initiative will produce a cadre of thriving, sustainable organizations that serve as models of good governance and financial sustainability for our community, and a class of board members prepared to share that experience with other organizations throughout their career.

Given the impact of COVID-19, cultural organizations are navigating unprecedented circumstances. In response, the program will address strategy for maintaining visibility, relevance and service during this time of uncertainty, as well as creating space for long-term thinking to position organizations for success in the years ahead.

Capacity Building: St. Louis is made possible by the Centene Charitable Foundation.

Program Components

Group Seminars

The program includes a total of five group seminars St. Louis offering support in the following areas:

- The Cycle and Long-Term Artistic Planning
- Institutional and Programmatic Marketing
- Fundraising
- Board Development and Engagement
- Strategic Planning

Seminars are conducted by Michael M. Kaiser, Brett Egan, and DeVos Institute senior consultants. Each organization's executive director, artistic director (or comparable staff member), and board chair (or senior board member) are encouraged to attend each seminar.

Planning Prompts

To support progress between seminars, the Institute has developed a suite of practical planning prompts. These no-nonsense tools will assist managers and their boards in the development of concrete next steps in follow up to each seminar. Ultimately, these planning prompts can be combined to contribute to a strategic plan.

Consultations

Each organization will be paired with an Institute advisor who will provide ongoing, individualized consultation in two forms: one-on-one consultations and a site visit.

One-on-one consultations provide hands-on assistance to organizations as they develop and implement plans in each core competency area. Participants and their advisors convene every four to six weeks via conference calls to track progress, troubleshoot challenges, and refine strategies.

In addition, one in-person site visit is offered to each participating organization to discuss challenges specific to the organization.

The Cycle Audit

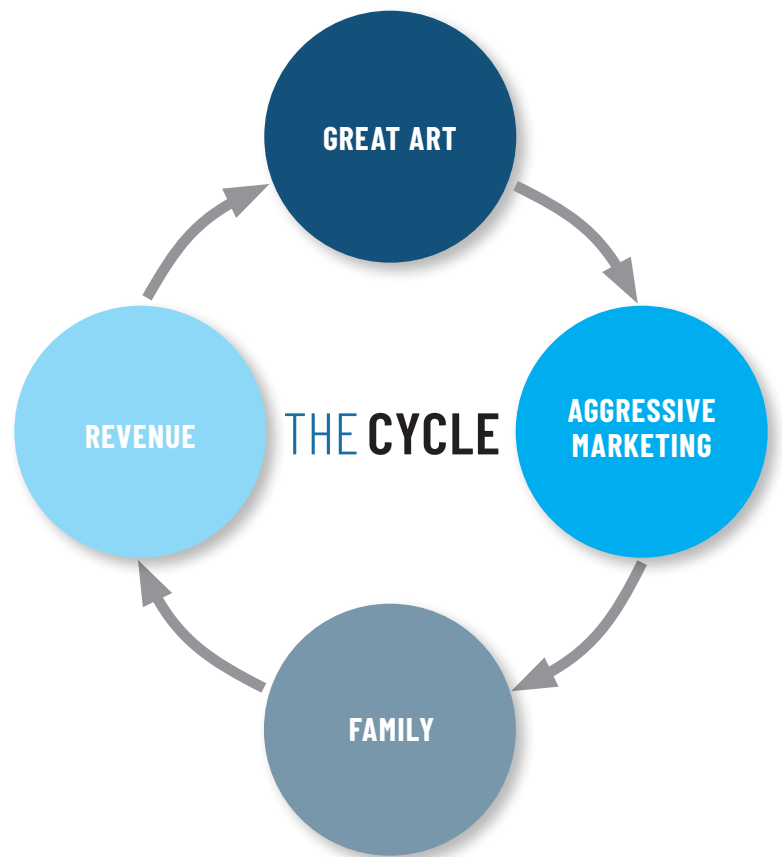
Participating organizations will be asked to evaluate their progress throughout the program using the Institute's Cycle Audit. This self-assessment survey provides a structure for organizations to set goals and report on their status at the beginning and end of the program in key capacity areas.

Since 2001, the DeVos Institute's capacity building programs for managers and their boards have served more than 1,000 organizations in diverse communities throughout the United States and around the world. Capacity Building: St. Louis is modeled on successful initiatives in Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Greater San Jose, Los Angeles, Louisville, Miami, New Orleans, New York City, Orlando, Pittsburgh, Portland, San Francisco, and Washington, DC.

The Cycle

The Institute's approach to management is informed by an observation that, regardless of art form, geography, or size, thriving cultural organizations hold several core characteristics in common:

- Their programming is bold, mission-driven, and balanced;
- They aggressively market that programming, as well as the institution behind it;
- The resulting visibility produces a swell of interest and enthusiasm among a "family" of ticket-buyers, students, board members, donors, funders, and volunteers;
- They make it easy and enjoyable for that family to get more involved—to contribute money, time, or connections; and
- They reinvest revenue produced by that family in necessary infrastructure, as well as ever-more dominant programming that, marketed well, entices a larger, more diverse, generous, and connected family.



When this "cycle" repeats, all stakeholders—staff, board, and family—sense they are part of a strong, successful enterprise. For those with means, this momentum encourages increased generosity and ambassadorship; for those with skill and time, a swell of pride and focus—aligned with mission—drives increased productivity. These organizations grow steadily—donor by donor, patron by patron, ally by ally to build and sustain dominant artistic program and financial health.