

APPLICANT INFORMATION:

NAME (INDIVIDUAL OR ORGANIZATION): Coachella Valley Repertory

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP:

CONTACT PERSON: Adam Karsten

TITLE: Executive
Artistic Director

TELEPHONE:

EMAIL:

ORGANIZATION PRESIDENT OR CHAIR (IF APPLICABLE): Doug Moreland

(Legal authority for organization)

IF NON-PROFIT, INCLUDE 501(c)3 number:

PROGRAM / SERVICE / EVENT INFORMATION:

GRANT AMOUNT REQUESTED Minimum \$250 Maximum \$10,000 : \$10,000

TOTAL PROGRAM / SERVICE / EVENT/ART COST: \$45,023

Program/Service/Event Period or Date

From:

Sept 15, 2024

To:

June 20, 2025

*Funding must be expended by 6/20/2025)***Describe How The Requested Funds Will Be Used:** (Include artistic concept, intended audience, community engagement strategies. Do you have community partners that will be involved in implementing this project? If so, please list along with their roles).

1.

Vital funding from the City of Cathedral City supports Coachella Valley Repertory's (CVRep's) accessible Youth Outreach Programs for local youth. The project focuses on the utilization of the arts as a means of social transformation, cultural appreciation, and civic dialogue for youth participants, schools (teachers and administrators), and families. The project focuses on CVReps' Conservatory and Outreach Initiatives with upcoming Youth Productions of: I. The Bully Plays Youth Outreach Production and II. Theatre for Young Audiences, both focused on the engagement of local youth of all ages in critical social dialogue and creative expression.

Research emphasizes the pronounced value of theater for youth and underscores the importance of CVRep's youth focus. In the only longitudinal study of its kind, *New Victory*, a flagship theater for family audiences in New York City, partnered with under-resourced school communities with no arts programming to track children in both treatment and control groups over three consecutive years. The study found that:

- Children exposed to live theater are much more able to imagine the lives of others.
- Children exposed to live theater before the age of eight report that "Theater is for someone like me." (The study found that trend to decline in children who are not exposed to live theater before the age of eight).
- Children demonstrate a range of intrinsic impacts after seeing live theater performances, including personal relevance, social bridging, aesthetic growth, and motivation to action.

Their survey responses and comments suggest that different types of performances elicit different levels of these impacts. An unexpected outcome of this research indicates that children who engaged with the performing arts in a three-year program exhibited a more optimistic outlook toward their future than peers who did not. These children can imagine different futures—ones that include attending college. Speaking metaphorically, young people discover and develop hope through the performing arts.

I. **THE BULLY PLAYS** are Youth Outreach Productions centered around the issue of bullying. It is a life-changing initiative to foster awareness, empathy, and actionable change among local youth through professional oversight and collaboration.

City of Cathedral City funding supports the next production, *Before the Bell*, a riveting drama about a bullying incident on a high school campus. A 60-minute production, *Before the Bell* was written for high school-age actors by award-winning playwright Kerry Kazmierowicztrimm. This play follows the success of the last Bully

Play in 2023, *Ophelia Lives!*, where student actors representing four area High Schools took the region by storm with performances that splashed across local TV news with rave reviews.

Bully Play Program Components:

- **Production Details:** The Bully Plays will be entirely produced and performed by high school students under the mentorship of CVRep professionals who will work alongside student actors (see bios below). This immersive experience empowers young participants to explore and interpret themes of bullying through their artistic talents alongside their peers.
- **Audience Outreach:** Invitations will extend to over 18 local high schools providing students with free access to engage with the production's themes and messages, highlighting the factors contributing to school violence and the pivotal role of student witnesses.
- **Post-Show Dialogue:** Following each performance, Executive Artistic Director, Adam Karsten, will lead a Q&A session with the cast and audience members. This interactive discussion aims to deepen understanding and provoke ongoing conversations about bullying prevention and intervention strategies.
- **Educational Resources:** Each attending student will receive a program containing valuable information on school safety services, including platforms like SPRIGEO and PSSTWorld where students can anonymously report bullying. Additionally, resources from SafeHouse of the Desert will be included to support students in navigating and addressing bullying incidents effectively.

II. Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) is an annual production hosted by CVRep's Conservatory, dedicated to enriching the cultural landscape for young children and their families. Our TYA initiative uniquely serves the Valley as the sole professional theater offering which is designed specifically for young audiences. This year, we proudly presented *Snow White* by Greg Banks, a captivating performance brought to life by two versatile actors portraying over 70 characters.

In our commitment to accessibility, we adopted a 'pay-what-you-can' ticketing model, ensuring that financial constraints do not prevent anyone from experiencing the magic of theater. Following its successful debut in June, the production's overwhelming popularity has led us to extend its run for an additional weekend in July.

Our TYA program is more than just a show—it is an investment in the future of theater. By introducing young people to the performing arts, we foster imagination, enhance divergent thinking, and build self-esteem through interactive and engaging performances. The program also promotes empathy and contributes positively to the mental health of Cathedral City and beyond, aligning with well-documented benefits of early exposure to the arts.

The Youth Outreach Program at CVRep produces original theatrical experiences; youth and adult theatre arts classes; and educational outreach programs specifically developed for Coachella Valley that are culturally and socially relevant in today's complicated world. The Youth Outreach Program promotes inter-generational collaboration through its programming and has most recently introduced a TYA production to debut each summer. The production is designed to enrich the lives of young and old community members, and to continue to develop the next generation of theatre goers.

As award-winning artist Mo Willems emphasizes *"To bring a child to the theater is to allow them to not just witness a special moment but to be part of it, to experience the dialog between playwright and performer, designer and architect, actor and audience. Theater is the conduit of a spark of creativity that does its best work after the play is done, when the audience member is back home remembering, imagining, and re-playing."*

Budget: (Provide a comprehensive budget for your project. Budget should include total grant funds requested, all project expenses including artist fees, materials, installation costs, rentals, advertising, travel costs. Do you have other funding that will be leveraged/used with these funds? If so, please include.)

2. City of Cathedral City – Coachella Valley Repertory Budget (2024-JUNE 2025)
Youth Outreach Production/Bully Plays and Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA)

INCOME/EXPENSE

INCOME

All Ticket Sales Revenue (Bully Plays)	1,023
All Ticket Sales Revenue (TYA)	2,000
Direct Public Support	
Underwriters & Play Sponsors (Bully Plays & TYA)	20,000
Grants (Bully Plays & TYA)	
City of Cathedral City	10,000
Other Grants	12,000
Total Grants	22,000
Total Direct Public Support	42,000
TOTAL INCOME	45,023

GROSS PROFIT 45,023

EXPENSE

Student Bussing	3,000
Conservatory Expenses (Bully Plays)	
Royalties	776
Instructors	1,323
Conservatory Expenses (TYA)	
Royalties	1,250
Instructors	4,000
Total Conservatory Expenses	7,349
Marketing (Bully Plays & TYA)	2,009
Payroll Expenses	
Staff Payroll (Bully Plays)	2,922
<i>(Interns, Publicist, Play Reading, Box Office Agent)</i>	
Performance Payroll (Bully Plays)	3,510
<i>(House Manager, Sound, Set Construction, Run Crew, Assist. Stage Manager)</i>	
Staff Payroll (TYA)	3,182
<i>(Publicist, Box Office Agent)</i>	
Performance Payroll (TYA)	8,465
<i>(House Manager, Sound, Set Construction, Run Crew, Assist. Stage Manager)</i>	
Payroll Tax/Benefit (Bully Plays)	719
Payroll Tax/Benefit (TYA)	1,910
Total Payroll Expenses (Bully Plays & TYA)	20,708

Production Expenses	
Set Construction (Bully & TYA)	2,614
Total Production Expenses	2,614
Events	
Performance Contract Salary (Bully & TYA)	4,100
Other/Events (Bully Plays)	1,750
Other/Events (TYA)	3,493
<i>(Travel stipend, props, food, design, materials, supplies)</i>	
Total Events	9,343
TOTAL EXPENSE	45,023
NET INCOME	0

Briefly Describe Your/Your Organization's Background. (Describe your/your organization's background and experience. Provide examples of any relevant work, images, or links to online portfolios that have relevance to the project being proposed. Describe your/your organization's capacity to execute the proposed activities.)

ORGANIZATION'S BACKGROUND, KEY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

3.

Located in the heart of Cathedral City, Coachella Valley Repertory (CVRep) is a professional not-for-profit theater company, founded in 2008, whose vision is to be a premier arts organization that provides leadership in arts presentations and makes an essential contribution to the cultural vitality of the Coachella Valley community that it serves.

CVRep's Mission Statement emphasizes its commitment to educational outreach: "Coachella Valley Repertory is an educational, dramatic, and musical theatre organization that offers thought-provoking, innovative theater of substance, and a voice to a wide range of artists and visions. CVRep provides productions and outreach programs that positively enrich, enhance, and impact the quality of life for residents and visitors in the Coachella Valley." CVRep's Youth Outreach is a key component of the organization's commitment to providing educational services to young students who are part of the many diverse communities of the region.

CVRep's commitment to local youth engagement and educational outreach aims to enrich our community by providing dynamic, accessible arts education and fostering cultural vitality for the Cathedral City community



and beyond. Extensive programs are provided through CVRep's educational program called The Conservatory, which offers performing arts classes for children and adults of all ages. Students receive professional instruction in acting, writing, scene study, auditioning, voice, and set design and construction.

(Left photograph, Bully Plays Student Outreach and Performance showcases)

CVRep's Youth Outreach Programs and Productions focusing on and creating dialogue around "bullying". CVRep produces an annual Youth Production that is cast and staffed by high school students but overseen by professionals. With a focus on 'Bully' plays CVRep is campaigning to continue working with local High Schools to generate a stage production that is dedicated solely to the youth of today. With outreach to over 18 local High Schools CVRep invites students at no expense, to attend and learn from the art we create.)

In addition to classes, the Conservatory also emphasizes our longstanding commitment to youth outreach programming which provides free access to the desert communities, including youth productions of socially significant plays each year. Local students perform these productions for both youth and adults. Over the past 11 years, more than 14,000 school children have been bussed free of charge to the CVRep theater to experience these plays.



Through this application, CVRep is actively working to continue our valuable collaboration with local high schools, to create a stage production dedicated solely to today's youth. By reaching out to over 18 local high schools, we invite students to attend and learn from our art at no expense, ensuring that young people have the opportunity to engage with and benefit from our theatrical productions.

(CVRep Bully Play from 2023, *Ophelia Lives*, photo features student actors Yahajaira Paz, Sophie Hughes, Iram Huerta.)

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND LEADERSHIP

CVRep possesses a robust capacity to execute the proposed activities, underpinned by our strong leadership and a proven track record of success. Our executive team, led by Executive Artistic Director Adam Karsten, Managing Director Jeniffer Hankinson, and Conservatory Director Howard Shangraw, CVRep brings decades of experience in arts management, programming, and community engagement. Their strategic vision and operational expertise have consistently driven our mission forward, as evidenced by our successful execution of past projects and programs. Our history includes notable achievements that demonstrate our ability to deliver high-quality performances and impactful educational initiatives. With a dedicated staff, a network of passionate volunteers, and a well-established infrastructure, CVRep is well-positioned to effectively carry out the proposed activities, ensuring both artistic excellence and community impact.

ADAM KARSTEN, the Executive Artistic Director for CVRep, will oversee all aspects of the proposed project. Karsten is a distinguished director and producer with over 25 years of professional experience in the performing arts. He has directed and produced stage productions across the country, contributing significantly to both Off-Broadway and Broadway development. His impressive work includes collaborations with the Emmy award-winning performing arts series, *Live From Lincoln Center*, and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). Karsten holds a B.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon University and an M.A. from the State University of New York. He is a respected member of the Society for Directors and Choreographers and the Actor's Equity Association, underscoring his dedication to theatrical excellence. As a former Assistant Professor at Five Towns College in New York, Karsten has a strong background in education, having spent three years mentoring and guiding

future artists. At CVRep, he will be responsible for designing and overseeing hands-on experiences for interns, ensuring they gain valuable insights by working closely with directors, choreographers, actors, stage managers, and designers. His leadership will be instrumental in shaping the next generation of theatre professionals.

HOWARD SHANGRAW is the Conservatory Director. He is an award-winning actor, director, and teacher, his professional acting career includes productions off-Broadway, summer stock, feature films, episodic television, daytime soap operas, and regional theatre productions for South Coast Repertory Theatre, the Mark Taper Forum, Laguna Playhouse, Grove Shakespeare Festival, and various equity waiver theatres in the Los Angeles area. His directing resume includes productions of classical and contemporary repertoire and musicals for professional theatres, community theatres, colleges, and high schools. He has directed shows at the Orange County Performing Arts Center, Matrix Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Stella Adler Theatre, and over thirty productions for the American Academy of Dramatic Arts acting company. He directed internationally for Theatre Mediterranean in Barcelona, Spain. Also, a playwright and composer, his original musical, *The People Versus B. B. Wolfe*, was produced by South Coast Repertory and toured Orange County under a special grant from Target Stores. Howard has been a teacher of acting for over thirty years with the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, South Coast Repertory's adult and youth conservatory programs, and the Pasadena Youth Conservatory, and chaired the Theatre department at the Idyllwild Arts Academy from 2004 – 2014.

Timeline: (Provide a timeline outlining key project milestones and activities from conception to completion.)

Project Timeline and Key Milestones for Youth Outreach at CVRep:

4. 2024 Bully Plays:

- **September:** Following August auditions, finalize project plans for Bully Plays, including outreach and promotion, key personnel, and resources.
- **September/early October:** Rehearsals held, production details honed, promotion launched.
- **September/October:** Invitations extended to over 18 local high schools providing students with free access to engage with the production's themes and messages, highlighting the factors contributing to school violence and the pivotal role of student witnesses.
- **October:** Bully Plays production of *Before the Bell* (four nights) opens to the public. Begin audience engagement and feedback collection.
- **October - December:** Conduct evaluation and reporting of the project outcomes, including audience feedback and performance metrics. Identify areas for improvement for 2025.

2025 Theatre for Young Audiences:

- **January - March:** Planning for Theatre for Young Audiences productions, including concept development and communication with key stakeholders and educational partners.
- **April:** Auditions/rehearsals, promotional campaigns, and outreach initiatives for Theatre for Young Audiences. Finalize production schedules and secure necessary resources.
- **May:** Rehearse/prepare for Theatre for Young Audiences production. Continue community engagement and educational outreach. Launch Theatre for Young Audiences productions.
- **June:** Analyze audience response and feedback. Complete evaluation and reporting for Theatre for Young Audiences. Review project outcomes and plan for future enhancements.

This timeline ensures structured execution and evaluation of both projects, facilitating thorough planning, effective implementation, and continuous improvement.

What Do You Ultimately Hope To Accomplish Through Your Proposed Art/Program/Event? How Will It Enrich Cathedral City? (Describe your goals and objectives and how many people you hope to impact as a result of your project.)

5.

The Bully Plays and Theatre for Young Audiences Productions at CVRep enrich the quality of life for Cathedral City youth, families, and the audience, in several impactful ways including:

- **Empowerment Through Expression:** By involving high school students in all aspects of the production, from performance to behind-the-scenes work, the project fosters a sense of empowerment and self-expression. This involvement not only builds confidence but also provides a constructive outlet for students to explore and communicate their experiences as well as emotions related to bullying.
- **Building Self-Esteem Through Theatre:** Participation in drama courses and performances offers far-reaching benefits beyond the development of social and communication skills. Engaging in theatre not only enhances students' self-esteem and confidence in their academic abilities but also cultivates essential public speaking skills. Moreover, the dynamic nature of theatrical activities helps students adapt swiftly to change, equipping them with life-long abilities that are valuable in both personal and professional contexts. Through this immersive experience, students gain a profound sense of self-worth and resilience, setting a strong foundation for future success.
- **Access to Art - Broad Educational Outreach:** The project includes outreach to over 18 local high schools, inviting students to attend performances at no cost. This access introduces young audiences to important themes around bullying, promoting empathy, understanding, and awareness. Through professional oversight and mentorship, participants learn valuable skills in theater arts, communication, and teamwork, enhancing their personal and academic development.
- **Community Dialogue and Support:** Each performance concludes with a facilitated Q&A session led by professionals, encouraging open dialogue among cast members, audience members, and community stakeholders. This dialogue helps break down stigmas, encourages proactive discussions on bullying prevention, and supports those affected by bullying by providing resources and avenues for support.
- **Practical Resources:** Attendees receive educational materials that include information on school safety services and anonymous reporting platforms. These resources empower students with practical tools to address bullying incidents effectively, fostering safer school environments and enhancing overall well-being.
- **Long-Term Impact:** By nurturing empathy and promoting active participation in bullying prevention, The Bully Plays Production contributes to creating a culture of respect and inclusivity within schools and communities. This long-term impact extends beyond the performances, influencing attitudes and behaviors toward bullying and promoting a healthier social environment for all individuals involved.

Impact and Sustainability:

- **Immediate Impact:** The Bully Plays will directly reach hundreds of high school students, encouraging empathy and proactive measures against bullying within their schools and communities. The productions have a goal of reducing bullying and violent behavior in schools.
- **Long-term Engagement:** By equipping students with resources and facilitating open dialogue, CVRep aims to catalyze lasting change in attitudes and behaviors surrounding bullying, fostering safer and more inclusive environments across participating schools.

If Your Art/Program/Event Costs More Than You Are Requesting From The Community Arts Grant Program, How Do You Plan To Pay For The Additional Costs? (What Steps Have You Already Taken To Get Additional Funds Or In-Kind Support If Necessary?)

6. Support from the City of Cathedral City would not only provide significant financial security, but would enable CVRep to carry out its vision of providing educational opportunities and outreach to its community with expanded enthusiasm and success.

In addition to funding through this grant, CVRep strategizes a diversified funding base through a mix of Grant Income (private and government), Individual Donors, Business Sponsors, and Earned Income.

Do You Plan To Continue This Art/Program/Event Beyond The Period For Which You Have Requested The Funds? If So, How Do You Plan To Continue Paying For It? (Describe the types of efforts you will undertake to raise funds as well as your/your organization's history of maintaining services/programs.)

7. We plan to continue both the Bully Plays and Theatre for Young Audiences programs beyond the period for which we have requested funding. To sustain these initiatives, we will implement a multifaceted strategy to secure ongoing support.

Funding Strategy:

1. **Grant Applications:** We will apply for additional grants from arts foundations, local government, and educational institutions, targeting those with a focus on youth and community arts.
2. **Corporate Sponsorships:** We will seek partnerships with local and regional businesses for sponsorships and in-kind donations, aligning their brand with our impactful programs.
3. **Individual Donors:** We will enhance our donor engagement efforts through targeted campaigns, membership programs, and personalized outreach, encouraging sustained contributions from individuals passionate about our mission.

History of Financial Sustainability: CVRep has a strong history of maintaining and expanding our programs. For example, our successful Main Stage productions and previous educational outreach initiatives have been consistently funded through a combination of grants, sponsorships, and community support. Our track record demonstrates our capability to deliver and sustain high-quality arts programming. By leveraging these strategies and our established network, we are confident in our ability to continue and grow these vital programs.

(OPTIONAL) Is There Anything That You Would Like To Add? If So, Please Tell Us Here:

8. We appreciate the City of Cathedral City and your support of Cultural Vitality and artistic experiences for artists, cultural organizations and community members. Thank you for your consideration of this application and support of opportunities for our youth.