Ann Arbor Summer Festival

CASE FOR SUPPORT

Fundraising Priorities & Gift Opportunities
Profile & Overview

The Ann Arbor Summer Festival is an international arts gathering connecting people, exceptional performance, sunshine, and a little something for everyone. For nearly 4 weeks of incredible summer nights, Ann Arbor is transformed into an open celebration, a place where friends, family, neighbors, and visitors can connect and share in a celebration of artistic inspiration, creativity, and community spirit.

Now entering our 36th year, the festival has grown from a summer concert series into a leading multi-arts festival that offers dozens of performances, activities, exhibitions, and screenings representative of the best in music, dance, comedy, film, street arts, and family entertainment. We attract the highest caliber artists working locally, nationally, and internationally—artists who are entertaining and accessible, as well as those that push creative boundaries. From Ray Charles to Mikhail Baryshnikov, from Diana Krall to Al Green, we bring an impressive line-up of luminaries to the stage each season, and our programming continues to expand in exciting directions as we introduce cutting-edge dance, contemporary circus, outdoor spectacles, spoken word, mind/body workshops, and innovative family programming to new audiences each year.

Moving forward, we will seek out bold, relevant programming that engages our community as a creative partner and continue to offer artistic experiences that reflect our time and place, invite audience co-creation, and showcase Ann Arbor’s contemporary, global identity.
We Believe...

We believe that offering local audiences unique and direct experiences of the arts fosters positive community interaction and pride of place. Each season we transform Ann Arbor into a creative gathering place where thousands of people share in social and artistic experiences that speak across economic, social, and generational boundaries. We believe our audiences should reflect the diverse community we serve.

Ninety percent of our programming is admission-free and all activities are designed to be inclusive: all ages, backgrounds, socio-economic groups, and ethnicities. We are committed to excellence, diversity, and relevance. Each season we grow our audiences by presenting a carefully curated mix of world-class artists and cutting-edge performers that are relevant to our diverse audiences. We believe in the power of the arts to inspire and inform. Working with community partners, from the KidZone tent to master classes at the Downtown Library, we provide innovative educational opportunities for all generations. We are an economic engine in Southeastern Michigan, providing employment and performance opportunities to hundreds of talented people each year. Our festival location on Ingalls Mall is highly desirable for the local businesses and organizations that partner with us. We boost the vitality of downtown. Our festival delivers a direct financial impact of over $3.4M+ each season, as we draw 80,000+ people to Ann Arbor. We enhance the quality of life in Ann Arbor, helping attract and retain the best and brightest people to our city. We are an enduring local treasure and a pillar of strength in our community, enriching the cultural, economic, and social vitality of the region. In turn, those we serve keep us thriving. On average, nearly 30% of our annual contributed revenue comes from individual donors and family foundations who believe in our mission and want us to preserve this tradition for future generations.

Our plans for future growth and expansion are crucial to our vision. The only way we can do this is with your philanthropic support.
Highlights of Our 35-Year History

1978
Former U-M Regent Eugene Power envisions a performing arts festival for Ann Arbor during the summer months; soon after, it is named and established as the Ann Arbor Summer Festival, and planning for its inaugural season begins.

1984
The festival premieres its first season.

1991
The Capitol Steps make their first Fourth of July appearance at the festival.

1992
A tradition begins when George Bedard and the Kingpins headline the closing night festivities.

2006
Top of the Park moves from the Fletcher Street parking deck to its current location on the grassy Ingalls Mall.

2007
Australia’s Strange Fruit perform the first large-scale outdoor free spectacle for thousands of community members at Ingalls Mall.

2008
The National Endowment for the Arts recognizes the festival with a major grant.

2010
The festival introduces its Retreat series, offering mind-body wellness workshops on the lawn in addition to the KidZone, providing a wide variety of hands-on activities with different community partners for our youngest concert-goers.

2011
The Grove Stage is born, creating a home for local and national artists to perform solo/duo acoustic sets among the greenery.

2013
The Ann Arbor Summer Festival celebrates its 30th season.

Mission
To present a world-class celebration of arts and entertainment that enriches the cultural, economic and social vitality of the region.

Vision
To be a leading multi-arts festival and an enduring local treasure—a widely anticipated, interactive hub of creative and community energy.
What Sets Us Apart

• While many festivals rely heavily on one source for funding (i.e., corporate or government), a wide collective of supporters invest in our festival, ranging from individual donors, to corporate sponsors, families, local, national, and international government, foundations, and regional supporters.

• Our programming is far more eclectic and our audiences more diverse than many festivals in Michigan and throughout the US.

• More than 200 community volunteers commit more than 4,000 hours a year to the festival.

• Our festival occurs over 24 nights in the heart of the summer, while other festivals typically take place over only one weekend.

• The broad, open space of Ingalls Mall allows us to host grand outdoor spectacles at Top of the Park that can be viewed for free by thousands of spectators at once.

• As a well-known festival in a desirable market, we are a draw for international touring artists and companies.

• Our annual budget and staffing is smaller than most comparable festivals, yet we have managed to do more with less through collaboration.

• We are well-established and anchored by our founding partnerships with the City of Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan, entities provide a portion of financial support and provide our unique indoor and outdoor festival venues.
Our Vision for the Future

As we enter our fourth decade, the Ann Arbor Summer Festival aspires to be one of the top North American multidisciplinary arts festivals—global in scope, but local in flavor. Building upon an already successful model of mixing the indoors with the outdoors, the free with the ticketed, the festival looks to expand its scale and scope by introducing an even greater variety of attractions, venues, program partners, and engagement opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

Our vision is to increase the festival’s impact by engaging our diverse community within a broader global context. From the latest shows touring the international festival circuit, to cutting-edge interactive experiences, to large-scale community arts projects, we look to present more opportunities that actively engage the community as creative partner and co-collaborator, and that explore the intersection of arts, culture, connectivity, and engagement.

We will seek out bold programming that forges new creative territories, reflects our time and place, and is relevant to our constituents. We will pursue exciting engagement concepts that incorporate new media collaborations and crossbred, interdisciplinary experiments. We will explore how art and public space interact as well as our connections to the fields of innovation, technology, entrepreneurship, and creative placemaking. As festival curators, we will search the globe for intriguing, site-specific cultural experiences that will showcase Ann Arbor’s contemporary, global identity.

With the green of Ingalls Mall continuing to serve as the nucleus of festival activity, we bring Ann Arbor to life by transforming our streets, parks, buildings, riverfront, and even sky into stages, canvases, and exhibition spaces. For nearly 4 weeks each summer, the festival will enliven and animate our city with unique performances, installations, spectacles, and eye candy of all sizes.

To make this vision a reality, the continued philanthropic investment of a broad community of supporters is essential to our growth and success.
Why Support the Ann Arbor Summer Festival?

The festival is a pillar of quality of life in the broader Ann Arbor area and serves as a vibrant catalyst for community strength and economic development through:

**Artistic Excellence**
The festival attracts innovative artists and visionaries. We carefully curate programming and deliver high quality patron experiences.

**Diverse Programming**
The festival presents, produces, and promotes a wide variety of cross-cultural and multiethnic work. We believe that experiences in the arts can provide us with a common language for understanding our differences, as well as the values we share.

**Community Accessibility**
With 92% of our 140+ events free to the public, our impact is far-reaching. We engage people of all ages, backgrounds, socio-economic groups, and ethnicities.

**Cultural Participation**
We partner with individuals and local organizations on innovative outreach opportunities that foster community engagement with the arts.

**Educational Impact**
We offer free workshops, master classes, and children’s activities that provide imaginative ways for the public to discover and appreciate the performing arts.

**Economic Development**
Our direct, local impact is $1M+, as we draw 80,000+ people to downtown Ann Arbor annually. We engage local food vendors, employ hundreds of seasonal staff, and contract with regional artists.
How You Can Make a Difference

Since our founding in 1984, the Ann Arbor Summer Festival has weathered many tests. Today, the festival is much stronger, more confident, and more dynamic than ever. Our charge for the years ahead is to sustain our organization while testing and presenting new experiences for our community that encourage and develop a sense of place and ownership for all audiences. The opportunity belongs to all of us.

To support our mission, the festival invites philanthropic partnerships with individuals, corporations, and organizations to ensure we have essential working capital and creative development funds to finance new initiatives and implement the goals outlined in our strategic plan. Please review and consider the adjacent funding opportunities.

To discuss ways to give, please contact the festival at (734) 994-5999. For more information about the Ann Arbor Summer Festival, please visit a2sf.org.

**Annual Fund**
This fund supports general operating expenses and sustains a spectacular array of artistic programs, including admission-free concerts and movies at Top of the Park.

**Imagination Fund**
This sub-fund supports international street arts, outdoor spectacles, and large-scale community arts projects at Top of the Park and beyond. Requires a gift of $7,500 or more, with a minimum of $2,500 over three years.

**Enrichment Fund**
This sub-fund supports capacity-building and capital investment programs that are identified to strengthen the organization and enhance the festival-going experience.

**Endowment Fund**
This restricted permanent endowment provides continuity of purpose and supports existing and new initiatives, creates and sustains new resources for the festival, and stabilizes funding for the organization.

Thanks to the generosity of an anonymous donor, endowment gifts will be matched up to $50,000 until 2019. Gifts can be made via cash, a bequest, stock, or insurance for generations to come. Your gift leaves a lasting impression of your personal beliefs for the organization and your family and friends.

**Rainy Day Fund**
This unrestricted quasi-endowment provides flexibility to meet ever-changing, sometimes unexpected needs and seed funds to explore emerging opportunities. This fund will grow primarily through investment, unrestricted bequests, and annual operating surpluses.
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Leadership

Mike Michelon
Executive Director

Mike has been a part of the senior leadership of the festival since 2014. Prior to the festival, Mike worked in the programming and production departments at the University Musical Society. Additionally, Mike has extensive experience in freelance Production Management, is active in student leadership development at the University and is a member of the Ann Arbor Rotary Club. Mike is a graduate of the University of Michigan.
92% OF EVENTS ARE FREE

23 DAYS, 6 VENUES
208 CONCERTS & EVENTS

150K+ FESTIVAL REACH
80K IN PERSON + 70K VIRTUAL

Data from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation Nonprofit Arts Economic Calculator

$3,554,229
REVENUE

EXPENSES

Based on data from 10/1/16 - 9/30/17 & FY17 cash operations