

Oak Park Tourism Recovery Initiative

The following is an addendum to a joint proposal for ARPA funds from the Oak Park Tourism Recovery Initiative (**OPTRI**) that includes Visit Oak Park, Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park, Unity Temple Restoration Foundation, and Oak Park Area Arts Council. Following the Village Board Meeting on 1/31 and a follow up strategy session with Trustee Parakkat, the OPTRI partners working together have developed an impactful collaborative process engaging time, efforts and resources to support the village's economic recovery. In addition, each partner has affirmed a portioned reallocation of ARPA funds, upwards of \$100,000 (set allocations are noted within each organizational budget breakdown) towards specific objectives and outcomes to be spearheaded by Visit Oak Park. They include but are not limited to:

- **Oak Park Attractions Digital Pass:** The OPTRI partners will create a new digital pass that links ticketing to each of the village's attractions and offers cross-promotion/discount opportunities for small businesses. Visit Oak Park and the Oak Park Area Arts Council will collaborate to create a free, self-guided public art tour that will also be included as part of the digital pass;
- **Digital Advertising:** The OPTRI partners will execute digital advertising campaigns, both specific and broad in scope, in support of tourism attractions, cross promotion with area outlets, and the new digital pass in spring/summer/fall advertising campaigns;
- **Media & Public Relations:** In collaboration with all the OPTRI partners, we will pursue shared resources to support media relations activities to support attractions, cultural programs, and events;
- **Oak Park Tourism Committee:** Collectively, the OPTRI partners will continue to meet throughout the year to facilitate additional efforts for collaboration and to share resources, where available. We will also look to create an atmosphere of collaboration for future tourism and arts organizations' participation and strive to make these plug & play build outs to maximize their impact.

The total updated amount of requested funding is **\$877,000**. A more detailed description of each request is provided, but a brief summary is below:

- **Visit Oak Park:** A total request of \$192,000 over two years, which would be enough to make up for the gap in the Village's hotel/motel tax needed to secure full state funding. Financial support in the amount of \$96,000 for calendar years 2022 and 2023 would enable Visit Oak Park to execute over \$1 million in advertising to support the Village's attractions and small businesses.
- **The Frank Lloyd Wright Trust:** A total request of \$195,000 for website data integration and advertising.
- **Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park:** A total request of \$155,000 over two years for IT infrastructure, capital expenditures, operations, and advertising/marketing.
- **Unity Temple Restoration Foundation:** A total request of \$110,000 over two years for technology upgrades, audience development, programming support, and advertising.
- **Oak Park Area Arts Council (OPAAC):** A total request of \$225,000; \$75,000 for the organization's art walk, and hiring of a part-time administrative assistant. \$150,000 for the OPAAC regrating program for community arts organizations.

In order for the OPTRI partners to prepare efforts to build tourism in Oak Park for the rapidly approaching spring/summer season, a swift response and approval is essential as it will take time to build out many of the outlined components. The Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio, Ernest Hemingway Birthplace, and Unity Temple traditionally have attracted regional, national, and international audiences, and are poised for a significant increase in attendance post-COVID restrictions (the UNESCO World Heritage designation of Unity Temple will attract a global audience), as well as the local and regional visitors awaiting the return of the renowned Oak Park Art Walk. The allocation of ARPA funds for increased marketing, operations, and infrastructure support will encourage tourists and program attendees to patronize other local attractions, restaurants, lodging, and small businesses, positively impacting the residents and business owners of Oak Park.

Frank Lloyd Wright Trust Request: \$195,000

The Frank Lloyd Wright Trust requests \$195,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds allocated to the Village of Oak Park. Funding would help the Trust address negative impact due to the downturn of tourism as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Integration/ Website Security Management: \$130,000

\$130,000 would go toward updating the Drupal content management system of the Trust’s website (which will be obsolete in 2023) as well as revising web pages to work more effectively within the new structure. The Trust’s website, with over 500,000 visits per year, is the primary way that visitors to Oak Park learn about our Village and book their tours and other programs.

Our website is the main information vehicle for our stakeholders. Intermittent site closures and the inability to hold in-person tours during the COVID crisis drove visitors to use our website for increased digital programming and information. We expect this trend to continue.

As it stands, it is imperative that our online ticketing system, as well as educational resources, be supported by an up to date digital infrastructure more than ever before.

Improving upon our current web pages and web structure will optimize and streamline the tourist experience and our data collection capabilities. The entire Village of Oak Park will continue to benefit from the Trust online presence as a robust tourist attraction. The importance of high-quality online systems and structures designed for ease of use are our top priority.

Digital Marketing/Advertising: \$65,000

\$65,000 would be applied toward the Trust’s 2022-2023 plans for digital advertising and marketing, which will focus on getting visitors back to Oak Park. This campaign would act as a springboard to encourage and expand existing audiences to participate in educational programming and tours. Rebounding visitation to the Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio in Oak Park is vital to the surrounding community.

Oak Park Tourism Recovery Initiative allocations by FLW Trust

Commitment to a collaborative, team effort to maximize tourism dollar ROI by OPTRI organizations through the establishment of a tourism committee and allocation of funds received to the following (but not limited to):

Marketing & Advertising	(\$15,000)
Digital Group Village Pass & Infrastructure	(\$10,000)
PR NewsWire/Content Services	<u>(\$5,000)</u>
Total Collaborative Reinvestment	\$30,000

Ernest Hemingway Foundation of Oak Park Request: \$155,000

The Hemingway Foundation is grateful for this opportunity to receive ARPA funding through the village of Oak Park. As both a literary arts and educational organization, it is our goal, in addition to serving as a tourist attraction, to also continue our rise as a community cornerstone for the arts and other arts organizations. Working together to bring local, regional and international visitors to the area to spend their dollars on various programming and patronage of neighboring attractions, restaurants and outlets. As we strive to recover from pandemic-related expenses/revenue loss and as part of a community-wide effort as a tourism partner to rebuild future audiences, the Hemingway Foundation respectfully submits our request for \$155,000.00 over a two-year period. (\$77,500.00/year)

IT Infrastructure: \$40,000
Investment in new platforms and digital applications for ticketing, translation, marketing, compliance, data analytics and growth. Equipment, software and hardware upgrades as deemed necessary for compatibility and expansion. Audience and membership development to increase reach and ensure sustainability.

Capital Expenditures \$50,000
Renovate current structure/expand exhibit and meeting space to assist in enhanced foundational programming and non-related foundation events/traveling exhibits in support of artists, teachers, students and attracting additional audiences. Upgrades to ADA compliant equipment and code compliance.

Operations \$35,000
Offset costs to hire a part-time program services manager to assist with responsibilities to meet the additional demands and community outreach. Development of a new training platform for docents.

Marketing & Advertising \$30,000
Marketing initiatives through other channels to reach diverse audiences inclusive of social media and co-branded opportunities. Program supplies and new signage.

Total two-year request \$155,000

Oak Park Tourism Recovery Initiative allocations by EHFOP

Commitment to a collaborative, team effort to maximize tourism dollar ROI by OPTRI organizations through the establishment of a tourism committee and allocation of funds received to the following (but not limited to):

Marketing & Advertising	(\$15,000)
Digital Group Village Pass & Infrastructure	(\$10,000)
PR NewsWire/Content Services	<u>(\$5,000)</u>
Total Collaborative Reinvestment	\$30,000

Unity Temple Request: \$110,000

The Unity Temple Restoration Foundation is a secular, non-profit organization founded in 1973 that is privately funded and responsible for the preservation of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Unity Temple while providing artistic and educational public programming. Unity Temple had been closed to the public until this past September; during the closure, over twenty planned programs were canceled, severely reducing our budgeted income. Since 2018, UTRF had been staffed solely with one FT employee, and had intended on hiring two more staff members within the past two years to assist with program management, donor development and audience outreach; however, in order to manage expenses and mitigate the loss of revenue, only one part-time staff was added this past July. As a National Historic Landmark and one of only three UNESCO World Heritage sites in the state of Illinois, Unity Temple is well-regarded internationally and has the potential to attract tens of thousands of visitors to Oak Park per year, resulting in increased patronage of neighboring restaurants, stores, and hotels. In order to recoup expenses related to the pandemic and to support efforts to rebuild future national and international audiences, UTRF respectfully requests \$110,000 as part of the tourism industry ARPA funds request.

Technology (one year)

\$8,300

While Unity Temple was closed to the public, UTRF pivoted to virtual programming requiring unplanned expenses including equipment and technology upgrades. Now that programs are back on site, UTRF purchased new, more sophisticated ticketing software to accommodate assigned seating and digital proof of purchase. UTRF will continue to offer programming virtually for those who are unable or uncomfortable attending, requiring additional expenses for video recording and production.

IDOT Tourism Signage (one year)

\$1,700

UTRF built a relationship with the Illinois Department of Transportation to increase awareness of Unity Temple’s Oak Park location. Given its new World Heritage status, increased visitation is expected as this designation is internationally celebrated. UTRF purchased the new signage, located at the Harlem exits on I-290, paving the way for more Oak Park destinations to be included on the sign.

Audience Development(two year, \$25,000 per year)

\$50,000

In addition to the expenses incurred over the past two years, the biggest impact to UTRF from the pandemic is not only lost revenue from canceled programs, but also lost financial supporters. UTRF is in dire need of rebuilding its audience and donor base, requiring a contractual marketing and development professional and targeted development in the form of marketing, advertising, data analysis, and outreach.

Marketing & Advertising (two year, \$25,000 per year)

\$50,000

UTRF is investing in new branding initiatives (\$10,000) to better represent the organization and the building itself. Focusing on targeted print ads, social media campaigns, and other forms of advertising and outreach will greatly enhance the visibility of Oak Park, encouraging more visitation and patronage of local businesses.

Total two-year request

\$110,000

Oak Park Tourism Recovery Initiative allocations of Funds by UTRF

Commitment to a collaborative, team effort to maximize tourism dollar ROI by OPTRI organizations through the establishment of a tourism committee and allocation of funds received to the following: (but not limited to):

Marketing & Advertising	(\$15,000)
Digital Group Village Pass & Infrastructure	(\$10,000)
PR NewsWire/Content Services	<u>(\$5,000)</u>
Total	\$30,000

Oak Park Area Arts Council Total Request: \$225,000

Regranting

\$150,000

The Oak Park Area Arts Council (OPAAC) is the local arts council for the Oak Park community. OPAAC offers a host of programs and services. One of the services is e-ART, the bi-monthly listing of arts happenings, cultural events, audition opportunities, calls for artists, employment and studio/workspace postings that keep the community informed all year long. Three “gallery spaces” showcase local artists’ work, not to mention the performances that go on throughout the year, funded in part by OPAAC. If you have been to a play, heard a chorus, attended a concert, seen dancers perform, visited a gallery, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Home & Studio or Wonderworks-Children’s Museum, you have been somewhere that is connected to or funded by OPAAC. Take a look at the program when you attend a performance or an art exhibit. Chances are you will find that OPAAC is listed as a funding sponsor. Last year OPAAC supported 34 arts groups around town including 2 social service agencies for their art therapy programs for developmentally disabled children and adults. ArtsFunds, is a regranting program that has supported most of our community’s not for profit arts organizations and patrons of all ages since 1979. ArtsFunds has awarded grants for either general operating support or special arts programming. Many organizations have received their very first grant from OPAAC. That stamp of approval has successfully positioned them to apply to other agencies and funders such as the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Following are the recipients of ArtsFunds grants in 2021:

- Chicago a cappella
- Chicago West Community Music Center
- Choreospace
- Church of Beethoven
- Dominican University Performing Arts Center
- Ernest Hemingway Foundation
- Expressions Studios, formerly Expressions Graphics
- Forest Park Arts Alliance
- Frank Lloyd Wright Trust
- Habakkuk Theatre
- Handel Week
- Heritage Chorale
- Illinois Storytelling Inc
- Madison Street Theatre
- Michael Teolis Singers
- MOMENTA
- Nineteenth Century Charitable Association
- Oak Park Art League
- Oak Park Concert Chorale
- Oak Park Education Foundation
- Oak Park Festival Theatre
- Oak Leyden Developmental Services
- Open Door Repertory Co
- Oriana Singers
- PING!
- Pleasant Home Foundation
- Pro Musica Youth Chorus
- Speculative Literature Foundation
- Unity Temple Restoration Foundation Performing Arts Series
- Winifred Haun Dancers
- Wonder Works-Children’s Museum
- UCP Seguin

OPAAC is requesting \$150,000 in ARPA funding to provide more substantial grants to the aforementioned organizations. They need a lifeline to help them survive this struggle. The pandemic forced arts orgs to be the first to shut down and many have not reopened yet. Their losses have been devastating! Open Door Repertory Co that delighted audiences for 23 years with wonderful, diverse productions, diverse actors and musicians and even opened a theater in the heart of the Oak Park Arts District is closing. This local treasure could not hang on long enough to receive needed funding. Not only have they closed their doors, they will also close down their entire organization. The struggle is real and Open Door has been Oak Park's first casualty. The ARPA funding will help so that future closings can be stopped. Artists, arts organizations need help now. These arts organizations and artists have given much to Oak Park. They have helped this village become known for its arts. They now need Oak Park to lend them a hand. Artists need to put food on the table, pay their rent, and take care of their families like everyone else in the world. OPAAC has been and will always be an advocate for the rich and diverse arts organizations we enjoy. The ARPA dollars will go a long way to help keep the arts alive in our *uncommon arts community*.

ArtWalk

\$50,000

The OPAAC coordinates all public art for the Village of Oak Park. The Village of Oak Park's Community Mini Mural Project has been in place since 2010. OPAAC has worked to expand the murals along South Blvd from Humphrey to Marion and on North Blvd from Austin to Harlem. Each mural has its own story as does each mosaic tile mural. This summer 20 more adult artists who have been selected by a juried panel will be commissioned to paint a mural. They will sign a contract with the Village and receive an honorarium of \$1,000 to purchase paint and supplies as well as payment for their services. OPAAC also runs an 8 week summer arts employment program for 16-22 year olds, called *Off the Wall*. Student artists are interviewed and are hired into the program. They work under the guidance of a professional master artist learning the art of mosaic tile. The master artist leads the program with a nurturing and caring hand. The *Off the Wall* program has put teens to work for 16 years. It is a fantastic way to spend the summer, work, create art and earn a paycheck. Make no mistake, it is a summer job and it is challenging but rewarding work.

The mini mural and the mosaic murals have garnered much attention. OPAAC receives calls from other suburbs, individuals and organizations from all over the state. People are very interested in both programs. There is nothing like *Off the Wall* in Illinois. Last fall a professor from Concordia University called to inquire about viewing the mini murals. She wanted to have her freshman English Literature class see the murals. There are also sculptures installed around town that will be included. OPAAC's Executive Director and Visit Oak Park's President and CEO have had many conversations about celebrating a "Year of Art" in the village. They have also talked and started envisioning an ArtWalk for Oak Park. The ArtWalk will be a community wide, engaging ArtWalk experience! The walk could be expanded to include historical buildings and museums. OPAAC will use the Otocast app that was used for the last two Village of Oak Park Sculpture walks. The ArtWalk is free to everyone, simply load the Otocast app onto a smartphone. Otocast provides a platform for narrated audio guides. The app will show the user a map with all of the public art locations in the area. Otocast will connect visitors to sculpture or art walks in other parts of the city or state to Oak Park. There are activities such as a scavenger hunt, digital badges and chances to win prizes that will drive engagement. The walk will bring tourists to emerge themselves in the public art history of Oak Park. Of course, there will be economic benefits that will come with the tourists to the village. They will shop, dine, take museum tours or maybe see a movie at the Lake Theatre. Visit Oak Park will also work to push the information out to other communities in the region.

This request includes costs for all Otocast setup, as well as social media campaigns, advertising in newspapers and magazines, signage, update to OPAAC website, and a part time project manager.

Part time Assistant **\$25,000**
Hiring of a part time assistant to the Executive Director. OPAAC needs and should have a succession plan. This person will learn every aspect of the organization.

Total **\$225,000**

Oak Park Tourism Recovery Initiative allocations by OPAAC

Commitment to a collaborative, team effort to maximize tourism dollar ROI by OPTRI organizations through the establishment of a tourism committee and allocations of funds received to the following (but not limited to):

Marketing and Advertising	(\$5,000)
Digital Group Village Pass & Infrastructure	(\$3,000)
PR NewsWire/Content Services	<u>(\$2,000)</u>
Total Collaborative Reinvestment	\$10,000

The Oak Park Area Arts Council is very grateful for this extraordinary and generous ARPA funding opportunity. OPAAC is deeply appreciative for the support from the Village of Oak Park and your consideration of this request. Thank you!

Oak Park Area Arts Council...Always there for the Arts!