History in the making!

10 years of powering community through the arts
The Workhouse Arts Center is one of the largest and most innovative adaptive re-use arts projects in the nation.

The Workhouse Arts Center is:

- a vibrant arts center that fosters innovative collaborations between the visual and performing arts, education, community engagement and personal enrichment for students of all ages and of all walks of life, with the goal of encouraging art making, providing therapeutic art experiences, supporting health and wellness through art of movement and culinary education, and engaging our community through arts and events.

- an educational resource dedicated to providing equal access to arts education and promoting intellectual growth. As the only multi-disciplinary arts center in Fairfax County, the Workhouse Arts Center is uniquely positioned to drive the artistic and cultural identity of the surrounding region, the Northern Virginia, and the nation. The Workhouse offers experiences that simply are not available elsewhere.

- a catalyst for economic development in the region, laying a strong foundation for new business investment, housing development and a major player in reshaping public perception of arts in our region. The Workhouse emboldens the economic health and resilience of our community by providing space and freedom for the artists to create, inspire, and transform the world around them.

- a venue that is preserving the history of our former identity as a prison which housed suffragists and civil rights protesters, launched the musical and broadcast careers of Chuck Brown and Petey Greene, and presented prison concerts with Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, and Duke Ellington to name a few.

- a truly unique site providing opportunities in a culturally underserved region to experience visual and performing arts talent, and come together for festivals, celebrations, and community building.
The Occoquan Workhouse, a federal prison, is established in Lorton, VA. A self-sustaining industrial farm at first, the prison operated for 91 years serving as a reformatory, penitentiary, and youth center. The imprisonment of 72 suffragists in 1917 was an incredibly important point in history pivoting women’s right to vote.

2001
Prison closes and 2,342 acres are purchased by Fairfax County, VA.

2002
A massive adaptive reuse project begins and changes the face of the region forever.

2006
Site is placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

2007
“It’s a wonderful irony that a minimum correctional facility will become a maximum creative facility.”

— Mikhail Baryshnikov, during a fundraising appearance at which the famous ballet dancer dazzled the crowd with a 15-minute performance.

2008
The Workhouse Arts Center opens to the public.

2018
The Workhouse Arts Center celebrates its 10th anniversary!
What we do

Enrich our community
The Workhouse strives to provide access to experiential arts to our community while supporting emerging and established artists, local or otherwise, which is not otherwise offered.

Bring people together
The campus is a regional destination of choice for arts, entertainment, history, and unique event programming, bringing communities together to enjoy shared experiences including fabulous fireworks shows, beer and music festivals, fundraisers, haunted attractions, and more.

Teach, heal, educate
Workhouse’s Education Program provides a broad selection of learning opportunities to develop and master art skills while promoting intellectual growth and creative self-expression including offerings in Clay, Ceramics, Drawing, Painting, Metal Working, Fiber Arts, Mixed Media, Art of Movement, Dance, Theater, Music, Culinary Arts, and History, serving students of all ages and backgrounds. The Workhouse endeavors to seek out contributions in support of scholarships for students and children in need. 800 classes and workshops offered annually.

The Workhouse Performing Arts Program offers a wonderful selection of performances throughout the year, indoors and outdoors, enriching our community and bringing first-rate productions to this previously underserved region. Productions include music, theater, comedy, and dance. Tickets are low-cost or free to allow participation by those from all socioeconomic levels. Workhouse performing arts programming has received critical acclaim, positive media, and outstanding guest reviews from around the DC region. 300+ performances offered annually.

The Workhouse Military Arts Initiative (WMAI) is rooted in Workhouse’s desire to address the needs and improve the lives of military service members, veterans, their families, and caregivers through the arts. Workhouse supports WMAI with 100% contributed funds to cover scholarships, veteran-centered activities, and art therapy.
Support artists
Studio and Arches Gallery Artists: Home to 65 studio artists and 25 associate artists, the Workhouse provides a unique, community-centered workspace to create art, grow within a diverse community of artists, enhance skills in the “business of art,” gain professional visibility, and exhibit and sell works of art.

Preserve history
The Lucy Burns Museum located on campus preserves and highlights the history, stories, and artifacts associated with the site’s nearly century-long role as Progressive-era prison while also honoring the Suffragists who were imprisoned at the Workhouse for seeking women’s right to vote.
Reasons to support

- You share the Workhouse Arts Center’s vision for economic growth by investing in our local community and economy, generating income for artists, and creative place-making.

- You believe that equal access to experiential arts for community provides mental and physical health benefits to individuals and has the power to change lives.

- You know that supporting the creative workforce enriches and enhances lives and communities.

- You see this as a unique opportunity for a long-lasting legacy through arts and adaptive reuse and renovation.

- You understand that art is more important now than ever; it makes us better people.

- You know that giving is the best feeling ever!
How you can support
Workhouse Arts Center

Dream big with us!

Each sponsorship and contribution is unique
The Workhouse is flexible in working with our donors and sponsors; we want to ensure you receive the recognition and benefits that are most valuable to you or your business.

Where It Is Needed Most
Give a Gift of Art to your community by fueling Workhouse activities.

Legacy Sponsorships
Sponsorships can include your company or individual name on buildings, galleries, classrooms, studios, and theater seats. These sponsorships help to fulfill and grow the legacy of the Workhouse Arts Center campus and as a result you will be part of the legacy with permanent placement of your name on campus projects.

Event Sponsorships
Sponsorships can include your company or individual name on all digital and print collateral for specific performances, events, exhibitions, and education programs in return for advertising exposure to thousands of visitors.

Program Support
Contributions in this category comprise the most direct way to benefit community members. Funds will support education programs and provide scholarships, help with the Workhouse Military In The Arts Initiative, enhance performing arts programming, and help with the production of first-rate art exhibitions in our beautiful galleries.

Friends of the Workhouse
Contributions to our membership program, Friends of the Workhouse, provide many benefits including: VIP access opportunities, early admission and ticket purchase options. These are important annual contributions that support general operating funds desperately needed for the Workhouse to fulfill its mission.
Ways to give

Online or by credit card
It is easy and convenient. Please visit http://www.workhousearts.org/support/give/ or call us at 703-584-2908.

By check
Please send the check to Workhouse Arts Center/ATTN: Development; 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, VA 22079

Stocks and securities
We gladly accept gifts of stocks and securities, please call 703-584-2908 to make your gift. These gifts can ensure the future of the Workhouse in a lasting way.

Planned giving
This is a meaningful way to contribute to the Workhouse Arts Center’s future stability and to give beyond your current assets. By adding the Workhouse to your will or insurance policy, you are ensuring that our mission will be sustained for years to come. If you are interested in Planned Giving opportunities or Bequests and wish to discuss in more detail, please contact us.

For all philanthropic and sponsorship inquiries, please contact:
Elena Romanova
Development Director
elenaromanova@workhousearts.org
703.548.2908