

2025-2026 TWA Grant Application

Contact Information

Organization Name:	<u>The Majestic Empire Foundation</u>
Contact Title:	<u>Executive Director</u>
Contact Name:	<u>Jaselyn Blanchard</u>
Address:	<u>222 E Houston St # 640</u>
City:	<u>San Antonio</u>
Email Address:	<u>jaselyn@themajesticempirefdn.org</u>
TWA Sponsor:	<u>Lyn Straus Selig</u>
TWA Sponsor Email:	<u>lynselig53@gmail.com</u>

Artistic Significance & Project Innovation and Creativity: (Question 3)

Organization's Mission:

The Majestic Empire Foundation preserves historic theatres and empowers the next generation by providing accessible arts education, creative opportunities, and life-changing scholarships.

Name of Project/Program to be Funded:

Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute

Project Description:

A free, year-round program delivering advanced theater, technical production, and creative leadership training through high-dosage classes, labs, intensives, and fully student-produced performances.

Project Purpose: What are the goals of the project/program?

The program provides high school students—especially those with limited arts access—over 170 hours of free training in acting, directing, design, and technical production. Through weekly classes, monthly Creative Labs, holiday intensives, and five student-produced performances, youth gain artistic mastery, confidence, leadership skills, and clear pathways into college programs and creative careers.

Is this program offered at a cost to children? If there is a fee for this program, please enter the cost in numerical dollar amount per child to enroll.

No, this is a free opportunity for all children participating.

What is the expected number of children to be directly served by project/program?

2500

What is the age range of children served by this project/program?

Grades 9-12

Identify the artistic discipline(s) included in this project/program: Check all that apply.

Dance, Film/Media Arts, Literary Arts, Music, Musical Theatre, Theatre, Theatre Set-Design, Visual Arts, Performing Arts

Project Innovation and Creativity: (Question 4)

Describe how this program provides arts access for children.

The program removes financial and geographic barriers by offering free, year-round training at the centrally located Josephine Theatre. Students receive weekly after-school classes, Saturday Creative Labs, holiday intensives, school-year showcases, and a full summer season—providing deep, consistent arts access not available in most schools.

Explain what makes this program/project innovative. Program/Project innovation differs for each community. If your program is a traditional arts experience but is unique to your community, please specify. If your program is innovative, relative to traditional arts offerings in your community, please specify.

This is the only free, advanced theater program in South Texas where students lead full productions. Youth direct, design, stage-manage, build, and run shows alongside university and industry mentors. The hands-on, student-led model builds artistic mastery, confidence, and leadership skills rarely available to teens in the region.

What type or level of arts experience do children have as a result of your program? Please select one.

Student Artists: Children observe, are introduced to, and engage in the arts, and practice the artistic process first hand by creating visual and/or performing arts of their own.

Is this a new program? If the answer is NO, how long has the program been in existence?

3 years

Organizational Management and Capability: (Question 5)

The organization has the following human capital. Check all that apply.

Board, Staff, Project Manager/Director, Volunteers

Describe your organization's staffing structure.

Number of full-time employees	3
Number of part-time employees	2
Number of volunteers	100

Describe the qualifications and experience of the individuals who will provide this programming and work directly with children.

The programming is delivered by a highly qualified team of educators, directors, university faculty, and arts professionals from the Majestic Empire Foundation (MEF), Broadway touring productions, ATG Entertainment, Texas State University, UTSA Arts, and leading teaching artists from across San Antonio. Students receive rigorous, inspiring instruction grounded in professional practice, higher education, and youth development. Key Contributors Include: Jason Barrera, Director of Advanced Education & Training A distinguished theater educator and director with extensive experience leading award-winning secondary and collegiate programs. Formerly the Director of Theatre at a leading fine-arts high school, Jason has mentored hundreds of students into competitive university programs and into professional careers, including on Broadway and the West End. His expertise in directing, acting, stagecraft, curriculum development, and arts leadership shapes the instructional vision and rigor of the Institute. Jaselyn Blanchard, Executive Director A producer, performer, playwright, and nonprofit leader with more than 20 years of experience in arts and education. Jaselyn holds a Bachelor of Music from New York University and a Master of Fine Arts from Brown University. She is a member of Actors' Equity Association, Texas Women for the Arts, and the Broadway League. She oversees strategic direction, program quality, partnerships, and curriculum integration across MEF's education pipeline. Maddie Ellwood Speer, Programs Manager Holds a BA in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Sciences with a specialization in youth development. Maddie manages operations, enrollment, student communication, logistics, and evaluation efforts, ensuring smooth implementation of all classes, labs, intensives, and productions. University Faculty Partners Texas State University Tom Delbello, Director – Professional director and faculty member specializing in directing technique, stage composition, rehearsal processes, and new works development. Holds a master's degree in Directing from Texas State University, where he serves as Co-Head of Musical Theatre and Head of Production and New Works. Julio Cataño, Dance – Accomplished dancer and choreographer with a BFA in Dance from The Ailey School/Fordham University and an MFA in Musical Theatre from San Diego State University. Specializes in movement, dance technique, and choreographic storytelling. Jackson Perrin, Voice – Vocal coach and faculty instructor specializing in musical theatre vocal technique, interpretation, and audition preparation. Holds a BFA from Texas State University. Kate Glesshan, Acting/Voice – Holds an MFA in Voice from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London and serves as Head of the BFA Acting Program at Texas State University. UTSA Arts Dr. Emilie Amrein – A respected arts educator whose interdisciplinary approach emphasizes creativity, collaboration, and youth-centered artistic practice. ATG Creative

Learning Alexandra Snell – Program Lead for ATG’s national creative learning division. Specializes in industry-connected arts training and student development within large-scale touring productions. Teaching Artists and Creative Team Tim Hedgebeth, Teaching Artist – MFA in Theater from the University of Wisconsin–Madison; BA from Trinity University. Veteran educator with extensive experience in acting, directing, design, and arts advocacy, including more than a decade teaching at Northwest Vista College. Kim Bianco, Teaching Artist – Bachelor of Music Education from Texas Tech University; Master of Music from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Specialist in vocal pedagogy and musical theatre performance. Kellie Hodges, Teaching Artist – BFA in Dance from Point Park University. Experienced performer, educator, and choreographer specializing in movement training, dance technique, and performance preparation. Richard Cerato, Director – Professional director experienced in guiding youth and emerging artists through the complete creative and production process. Andre Martin, Acting Teacher – MFA in Acting from the University of Delaware’s Professional Theatre Training Program. Specializes in scene study, monologue coaching, and building performance confidence in young artists. Jenny Lavery, Director/Educator – MFA in Directing from the University of Texas at Austin; BFA in Acting from New York University; M.Ed. from the Boston Teacher Residency/UMass; Executive Strategy for Nonprofit Management Certification from the University of Pennsylvania. Director and educator with extensive experience in artistic process and youth development. Christopher Littlefield, Music Director and Coach – Experienced music director, vocal coach, arranger, and pianist with extensive professional credits, including Broadway (“SpongeBob SquarePants”), Off-Broadway productions, national tours, film, television, and multiple studio recordings. Together, this multidisciplinary team delivers exceptional artistic, technical, and leadership training. Their collective expertise—spanning professional theater, higher education, Broadway-level production, and youth development—ensures that students receive transformative, high-dosage arts education aligned with the highest standards of the field.

Race and Ethnicity

Describe the race proportion of your:	Staff	Board
African American	0	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0
Asian	0	5
Black or African American	0	6
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0
White	40	80
Two or More Races	60	0
Other	0	9

Describe the ethnicity of your:	Staff	Board
Hispanic/Latino	40	9
Not Hispanic/Latino	60	91

Outside Support: (Question 5 continued)

List community partners supporting the program:

University of Texas San Antonio; Texas State University; IATSE Local 76; ATG Entertainment; ATG Creative Learning; Broadway Across America; Youth Orchestras of San Antonio; Joffrey Workshop; Alamo Colleges; LaunchLine

Organizational Funding: (Question 5 continued)

Has the organization received a TWA Grant in the past? If so, which years?

No

Budget at a Glance

Total Organization Budget Amount	1367907
Total Program/Project Budget	359500
TWA Grant Request	30000
Grant request's percentage of total organization budget. Cannot exceed 25%.	2

If awarded the full grant request, what amount of TWA funding would support the following categories? Please provide a numerical dollar amount for each area.

Staffing/Salaries	7500
Operational Expenses	5000
Supplies and Materials	2000
Facilities (Rent/Mortgage)	0
Technology Equipment	0
Instructional Resources and Curriculum	3000
Student Transportation Fees	2500
Other: Please specify	10,000 for student production costs, including sets, costumes, lighting, and design supplies

Attachments Included

1. Organization's current year budget.
2. Organization's final/actual budget for the previous year.
3. Program/project budget

Other sources of revenue (\$2,000 or more) for the project/program: Provide a list of sponsors, grants, etc., and include dollar amounts.

ATG Entertainment – \$40,000 The Gunter Hotel – \$25,000 WOAI News 4 / KABB FOX – \$10,000 H-E-B – \$10,000 Texas Commission on the Arts – \$7,000 The McCombs Foundation – \$20,000 Mays Foundation – \$10,000 Greehey Foundation – \$10,000 Betty Stieren Kelso Foundation – \$15,000 Herrmann-Zeller Foundation – \$15,000 Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Trust – \$15,000 Wheeler Foundation – \$25,000 Kleberg Foundation – \$25,000 MEF Fundraising Contribution – \$54,500; Total Raised to Date: \$284,500 Request to Texas Women for the Arts: \$30,000 Total Program Cost: \$359,500 Percentage of Program Funded: 79%

Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation: (Question 5 continued)

Program Implementation (if new) or Operational Plan: How will/is this project/program administered? Limit 1500 characters including spaces. Please include details such as where the program will be hosted, how children will be enrolled, how students gain access to this program, if transportation is needed or provided, and how the program will be administered.

The Institute is hosted at the historic Josephine Theatre, MEF's year-round education hub. Students enroll through an application promoted to teachers, school counselors, district arts coordinators, community partners, and social media networks. Priority is given to Title I, low-income, and low-arts-access youth to ensure equitable access. Once enrolled, students participate in weekly after-school classes from August-May, receiving training in acting, directing, design, technical production, storytelling, and creative leadership. Monthly Saturday Creative Labs offer 3–4 hour deep-dive sessions led by university faculty and industry professionals in lighting, stage management, dramaturgy, producing, and technical design. Students also attend holiday intensives over winter break to strengthen skills and prepare for spring production assignments. During June and July, the program expands into full-day summer classes with rehearsals and a three-show student production season. Youth take on roles as directors, choreographers, designers, technicians, and stage managers under the guidance of a professional creative team. Transportation assistance is provided through district partners or MEF coordination. Program oversight is led by the Director of Advanced Education, supported by the Programs Manager. Students engage directly through classes, labs, intensives, rehearsals, and productions, gaining authentic, hands-on experience in creative leadership.

Evaluation Plan: How will you evaluate the success of this program? Limit 500 characters including spaces.

Success is measured through pre/post assessments of artistic and leadership growth, attendance and engagement tracking, student portfolios, production evaluations, and surveys from teachers, students, and families. Student-produced shows demonstrate mastery, and outcomes are tracked for advancement into higher education, training programs, and workforce opportunities.

Program/Project Timeline: Provide a detailed timeline to implement this program. If you choose to upload a file to answer this question please type, "Project Timeline attached" in the box below. TWA grant funds must be spent between June 1 - May 31. Limit 800 characters including spaces.

Project Timeline attached.

Program/Project Timeline: Optional File Upload.

MEF_Joci_Timeline%20(1).pdf

Impact: (Question 6)

Demographic Information of Children Served

Demographic description of the children served by this project/program: Check all that apply.

At-Risk of dropping out of school* See explanation in #18

Title I

Low Socioeconomic

Low arts access

Children with disabilities or special needs

Children recovering from an unusual life crisis. (i.e Foster Care, Neglect, Abuse, Trauma)

Children served represent cultural diversity

What percentage of children served by this program are considered at-risk? The term at-risk is used to identify students or groups of students who statistically have a higher probability of failing academically or dropping out of school.

54

What percentage of the children served by this program are economically disadvantaged?

72

Describe the community served by this program: Check all that apply.

Rural, Urban, Suburban, Inner City, Fringe, Major Metro Area, City- Large, City- Midsize, City- Small, Town, Distant

Project Need: What need(s) does this project/program fulfill? Limit 200 characters including spaces

Many South Texas teens lack sustained, high-quality arts training. This program fills that gap with a free, year-round pathway that builds artistic skill, technical proficiency and creative leadership

Describe the race percentage of the student population served by the program. Please enter a numerical percentage for each. Percentages must add up to 100%.

American Indian or Alaska Native	1
Asian	3
Black or African American	7
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1
White	23
Two or More Races	2
Other	63

What percentage of the children served by this program are Hispanic/Latino? Enter a numerical response totaling 100%.

Hispanic/Latino	66
Not Hispanic/Latino	34

Optional Content Provided

Is there anything else that should be considered about this project/program? (Optional)

The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute continues the legacy of Texas Women for the Arts Chair Emeritus Joci Straus by expanding a pathway she envisioned—one that takes students from early exposure to advanced artistic and technical leadership. The program offers opportunities rarely available to youth, especially girls and underrepresented students, in directing, design, stage management, and technical production. It also reinvests in its alumni by employing graduates as teaching artists, creating a multigenerational cycle of mentorship and inspiration. This initiative strengthens the creative workforce pipeline for San Antonio and the state, ensuring that Joci's impact continues to shape future leaders in the arts.

Date: **NOV 24 1992**

Las Casas Foundation
Foundation For Cultural Arts IN S A
P O BOX 15873
San Antonio, TX 78212-9073

Employer Identification Number:
74-2512597
Contact Person:
Mary A. Smith
Contact Telephone Number:
(214)767-1162
Our Letter Dated:
November 7, 1988
Advance Ruling Period Begins:
September, 1988
Advance Ruling Period Ends:
December 31, 1992
Addendum Applies:

Dear Applicant:

Our letter of the above date stated that we had determined your organization is exempt under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) and that you would be treated as a publicly supported organization and not as a private foundation during your advance ruling period. This was based on our determination that you could reasonably be expected to be an organization described in sections 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) and 509(a)(1) or in section 509(a)(2).

We also stated that at the end of your advance ruling period you would have to establish that you were in fact an organization described in one of the above sections.

Our records indicate that your advance ruling period begins and ends on the dates shown above. Your exempt status as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) is still in effect. However, to establish that you are a publicly supported organization described in sections 170(b)(1)(a)(vi) and 509(a)(1) or in section 509(a)(2), please complete the attached Form 8734, Support Schedule for Advance Ruling Period, for each of the tax years in your advance ruling period.

The information requested in this letter is required to support your claim to be other than a private foundation. It is needed in addition to any required Form 990 or other annual return. Please send it to us within 90 days from the end of your advance ruling period.

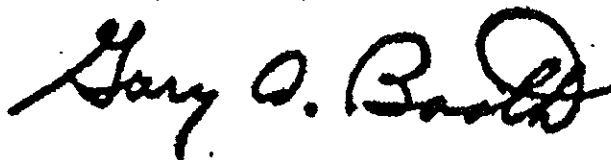
If we do not receive this information, we will presume you are a private foundation and you will be treated as a private foundation as of the first day of your first tax year for purposes of sections 507(d) and 4940 of the Code. In addition, if you do not provide the information by the time requested, it will be considered by the Internal Revenue Service that you have not taken all reasonable steps to secure the determination you requested. Under section 7428(b)(2) of the Code, not taking all reasonable steps, in a timely manner, to

ive remedies available to you within the Service, and may preclude the issuance of a declaratory judgment in the matter under judicial proceedings.

If you have any questions, please contact the person whose name and telephone number are shown in the heading of this letter.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,



Gary O. Booth
District Director

Enclosures:

Form 8734

Copy of this letter

The Majestic Empire Foundation

Profit and Loss

January - December 2024

	TOTAL
Income	
501 Theatre Rental Income	250,759.82
505 Donations	
508 Donations - Individual	138,807.34
510 Donations - Corporate	119,309.51
515 Donations - Foundations	345,000.00
Total 505 Donations	603,116.85
539 Membership Income	5,718.80
551 Event Income - Gala	91,842.88
590 Courtesy Ticket Sales	105,169.73
591 Ticket Percentage Income	40,850.00
Total Income	\$1,097,458.08
Gross Profit	\$1,097,458.08
Expenses	
705 Bank Charges	695.24
706 Processing Fees	4,677.10
707 Board & Fundraising Expenses	2,561.00
4 Board Meetings	5,312.48
Donor & Committee Lunches	78.23
Entertain, Meals, Retreat	471.02
Event Tickets	5,000.00
Total 707 Board & Fundraising Expenses	13,422.73
709 Contract Labor	51,894.92
Grant Writing	11,219.33
Social Media	36,499.98
Special Events Professional	140.00
Total 709 Contract Labor	99,754.23
710 Dues & Subscriptions	702.20
748 Employee Benefits-Health Reimb	9,300.00
790 Legal Expense	809.75
800 Office Expense	896.72
Computer Hardware/Software	6,620.53
Copier	2,904.90
Database	2,555.16
Maintenance & Repairs	825.00
Office Supplies	1,709.74
Total 800 Office Expense	15,512.05
820 Parking & Mileage Reimb	2,885.40
City of SA Parking	28.82
Validations	3,000.00
Total 820 Parking & Mileage Reimb	5,914.22
840 Postage & Courier	1,107.47
850 Printing	627.40

The Majestic Empire Foundation

Profit and Loss

January - December 2024

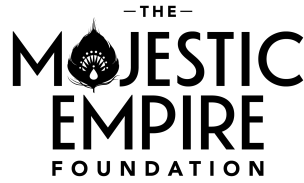
	TOTAL
960 Taxes	202.31
965 Taxes - Payroll	47,958.99
Total 960 Taxes	48,161.30
966 Telephone	3,915.70
Payroll Expenses	3,341.92
Wages	
Salary	180,475.83
Total Wages	180,475.83
Total Payroll Expenses	183,817.75
Reimbursements	370.64
health stipend	9,765.00
Reimbursement	6,144.59
Total Reimbursements	16,280.23
Total Expenses	\$404,697.37
Net Operating Income	\$692,760.71
Other Expenses	
1200 Community Grants	11,597.88
Other Organizations	9,776.39
Total 1200 Community Grants	21,374.27
1350 Scholarship Grants - Individual	104,822.21
1400 Scholarship Competition	107,061.65
Adjudication Expenses	16,524.71
Master Class	3,139.00
National High School Musical Theater Awards	17,925.09
Parking Validations	1,800.00
Prelims	8,106.57
Staff	70.99
Workshop	5,867.20
Total 1400 Scholarship Competition	160,495.21
1410 Out of Town School/Student Support	3,432.82
1450 Scholarship Finals	90,964.67
Airfare & Travel	1,265.69
Audio - Visual	28,666.71
Hotel & Food - Judges	8,667.83
Jimmy Expense	7,234.44
Miscellaneous/Additional Equipment	2,974.12
Posters, Sponsors, Programs	2,092.00
Production Staff & Crew	509.70
Total 1450 Scholarship Finals	142,375.16
1500 Fundraising	99,461.27
Gala	5,458.98
Gala - Boutique	3,735.00
Total 1500 Fundraising	108,655.25

The Majestic Empire Foundation

Profit and Loss

January - December 2024

	TOTAL
1510 MEF Brand in Action	49,546.75
1525 Balcony/Centennial Strategic Plan	45,460.86
1530 Website	434.17
1535 E-Commerce Website	1,105.89
1550 Insurance	
Boiler	1,359.00
Umbrella/Liability	9,703.00
Total 1550 Insurance	11,062.00
1600 Marketing & PR Support	29,172.60
1700 Membership	3,806.85
Postage-Memb	230.00
Printing-Memb	5,514.30
Special Events	1,278.00
Total 1700 Membership	10,829.15
1900 Behind the Scenes	1,149.18
2000 Summer Program Partnerships	8,642.15
2100 Encore Ambassadors Program	8,357.99
555 RESTRICTED- Pecha Kucha	9,214.66
665 SCHOLARSHIP PRODUCTION	24,258.32
967 RESTRICTED - Education at Josephine	4,577.90
Total Other Expenses	\$744,966.54
Net Other Income	\$ -744,966.54
Net Income	\$ -52,205.83



**2025 Budget
Final Draft**

	2024 Budget	2025 Budget
<u>INCOME</u>		
Theatre Rental Income	212,215	222,944
Membership Income (including Ticket Sales)	110,000	130,000
Fundraising Events	125,000	175,000
Individual Donations	200,000	200,000
Foundation Donations	250,000	350,000
Corporate Donations (includes Joci Sponsorships)	95,000	110,000
Joci Ticket Income	10,000	15,000
Playbill Ads & Merchandise Income	7,500	10,000
Ticket Percentage Income	40,850	45,000
Interest		
<i>In-Kind Office Space Rental</i>	<i>57,963</i>	<i>57,963</i>
Theatre Tours	500	2,000
Government Grants		50,000

TOTAL PROJECTED INCOME	1,109,028	1,367,907
---------------------------------------	------------------	------------------

Our future income projections are rooted in a strong commitment to expanding fundraising and development efforts to support program growth and broaden our impact. Key initiatives include growing our membership base, increasing grant revenue, hosting a gala event inspired by Beauty and the Beast in November 2025, and bolstering our foundation of corporate support. It is important to note that these fundraising goals do not include potential federal or targeted grants for capital projects. These initiatives are thoughtfully designed to diversify and strengthen our funding streams, ensuring the long-term financial stability of our mission and enhancing our ability to deliver transformative programs.

2024 Budget 2025 Budget

PROGRAMS EXPENDITURES

Performing Arts Education & Scholarship		
<i>Joci Awards: Production, Education & Outreach</i>	213,265	292,000
<i>Individual Scholarships</i>	140,000	154,000
<i>ME Education Initiates: Broadway Bridges, Produced by Youth, Broadway</i>		175,000
<i>Masterclass Series, Workshops & Summer Program, Encore Alumni Group, Arts in Education Alliance</i>		
Theatre Stewardship - (Centennial, Restoration, Insurance, Membership)	59,243	75,000
Marketing & PR	111,000	111,000
Community Engagement & Partnerships	5,000	20,000
Fundraising	100,000	115,000
Salaries- Programs (79% of total)	174,195	189,070
	802,703	<u>1,131,070</u>

TOTAL PROGRAMS EXPENDITURES

1,131,070

OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES

Accounting & Audit	25,030	26,000
Board & Staff Development	7,564	10,000
Office Expense	8,797	13,573
Parking & Mileage Reimbursement	6,680	9,000
Dues & Subscriptions	905	1,000
Telephone, Internet, & Website	2,110	3,845
Salaries - Administrative/Operations (21% of Total)	46,305	50,259
Employee Benefits	15,750	30,000
Legal Expenses	1,000	1,000
Taxes- Payroll	16,000	24,493
Insurance (Gen Liability, Crime, & Worker Comp)	9,160	9,703
Office Rent (in-kind)	57,963	57,963
	197,264	<u>236,836</u>

TOTAL OPERATIONS EXPENDITURES

236,836

Our future budget growth is driven by secured funding that enables the expansion of our programs and the transition to the Majestic Theatre, paving the way for a threefold increase in the reach of our Joci Awards. This growth also includes the launch of transformative educational initiatives, such as Broadway Bridges, the Arts in Education Alliance, and the Encore Alumni Group, all designed to amplify our impact and foster deeper community engagement. Additionally, we are strengthening and expanding our community partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability and a wider cultural influence.



Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute

Comprehensive Budget

Category	Amount (USD)
PERSONNEL	
Program Director / Manager	\$70,000
Lead Teaching Artists & Master Instructors	\$110,000
Production & Technical Coordinator	\$30,000
Alumni or Data Intern	\$3,000
Administrative Support / HR / Accounting	\$10,000
Student Support Services	\$4,000
Stipends for Student Leaders or Interns	\$4,000
Professional Development for Staff/Artists	\$3,500
Personnel Subtotal	\$234,500
SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT	
Technical Equipment (lighting, sound, rigging)	\$15,000
Scenic & Costume Design Supplies	\$20,000
Software & Digital Licenses	\$2,000
Educational Materials & Printing	\$2,000
PPE, Tools, and Safety Supplies	\$1,500
Wearables (shirts, IDs)	\$1,500
Laptops/Tablets for Interns	\$3,000
Technology/AV Maintenance Fund	\$2,000
Supplies & Equipment Subtotal	\$38,000
FACILITIES & PRODUCTION	
Venue Use & Internal Cost Allocation	\$20,000
Student Transportation	\$10,000
Showcase Production Costs	\$7,500
Meals & Snacks for Students	\$6,000
Insurance, Licensing, Union Fees	\$5,000
Accessibility Accommodations (ASL, sensory too	\$1,500
Parent & Community Engagement Events	\$3,500
Facilities & Production Subtotal	\$52,500
EVALUATION & PROGRAM GROWTH	
External Evaluator or Consultant	\$5,000
Data Tracking & Reporting Tools	\$2,500
Photography/Video Documentation	\$5,000
Alumni Follow-Up	\$3,000
Marketing, Outreach, Recruitment	\$5,000
Emergency/Capacity Growth Reserve	10,000
Translation/Interpretation Services	\$1,000
Scholarship Fund for Continuing Education for Te	\$5,000
Evaluation & Program Growth Subtotal	\$34,500
TOTAL PROGRAM COST	359,500

Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute Program Timeline

June–July

- Auditions & enrollment
- Full-day summer classes
- Rehearsals & two student-produced shows

August

- Final summer performance
- School-year auditions & enrollment

August–May

- Weekly after-school classes in acting, directing, design, technical theater & leadership

September–May

- Monthly Saturday Creative Labs (3–4 hours each) led by university & industry faculty

December–January

- December Showcase
- Holiday skill-building intensives

February–April

- Weekly classes continue
- Rehearsals & production leadership assignments for school-year performances

May

- Final school-year showcase
- Student portfolios & evaluation reviews

Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute

A Year-Round, Free Advanced Arts Training Program for High School Students

Program Reach

- 2,500 students served annually
- 72% economically disadvantaged
- 54% at-risk

Partners

- 170+ hours annually
- Weekly classes, labs, intensives
- Three-show summer season

Locations & Partners

- Josephine Theatre
- Texas State University
- UTSA Arts
- ATG Creative Learning

Teaching Artists & Faculty Leadership

Instruction Led by Professional Artists & University Faculty

Majestic Empire Foundation Core Staff

- Jason Barrera — Director of Advanced Education
- Jaselyn Blanchard — Executive Director
- Maddie Ellwood Speer — Director of Programs

Texas State Faculty

- Tom Delbello (Directing)
- Julio Cataño (Dance)
- Jackson Perrin (Voice)
- Kate Glesshan (Acting/Voice)

UTSA Arts — Dr. Emilie Amrein

ATG Creative Learning — Alexandra Snell

Teaching Artists (14+)

- Acting
- Directing
- Choreography
- Technical Theatre
- Music Direction
- Design

**All instruction emphasizes leadership,
industry-pathway training, and college readiness.**

Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute

A Year-Round, Free Advanced Arts Training Program for High School Students

What Students Experience: Program Dosage & Structure

High-dosage arts training shown by research to increase academic persistence & creative skill mastery.

Weekly After-School Classes

- August–May
- 1.5 hours per week
- 48–60 hours total
- Acting, directing, design, tech, leadership

Monthly Creative Labs

- Sept–May
- 3–4 hours monthly
- 27–36 hours total
- Lighting, stage management, producing, dramaturgy

Holiday Intensives

- December–January
- 10–12 hours
- Audition technique, directing labs, design intensives

Summer Programs

- June–July
- 125–150 hours
- Full-day classes, rehearsals, productions
- Two student-led shows + final August performance

Total Annual Instruction: 170–200+ Hours Per Student

Impact on Students & Community

Access & Equity

- Free for all participants
- Priority for Title I & low-income youth
- Centralized location removes transportation barriers

Leadership Outcomes

- Students direct, design, stage-manage
- Build portfolios for college programs
- Alumni hired back as paid teaching artists

Workforce Development

- Pathways to theater careers
- Technical skills (lighting, audio, carpentry)
- Partnerships with IATSE Local 76

Impact & Demographics

Program Reach and Equity Impact

The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute is designed to reach students who have the least access to sustained arts education. The program intentionally centers Title I schools, low-income families, and students who are at risk of falling behind academically or disengaging from school.

Who We Serve

The program serves approximately 2,500 students annually across South Texas. Of these, 72% are economically disadvantaged, 54% are identified as at-risk, and 66% are Hispanic/Latino. Students come from a diverse cross-section of districts, including urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Artistic and Leadership Outcomes

Students report increased confidence, stronger communication skills, and deeper engagement with school and community. They gain practical experience in acting, directing, choreography, design, and technical theater, and they learn how to manage complex projects, give and receive feedback, and collaborate across differences.

College and Career Pathways

Alumni of MEF's education programs have gone on to attend competitive university theatre and musical theatre programs in Texas and beyond and to work professionally in the arts. The Institute strengthens the pipeline into the creative workforce by giving students concrete skills, mentorship, and a sense of belonging in the arts.

Legacy and Long-Term Impact

The program continues the vision of Joci Straus by ensuring that young people—especially girls and under represented students—have access to leadership roles onstage and behind the scenes. By employing alumni as teaching artists and mentors, the Institute creates a multigenerational cycle of opportunity, inspiration, and community impact.



Student-Produced Season

Season of Student-Produced Works

A defining feature of the Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute is its Season of Student-Produced Works, in which young people step into leadership positions on and off the stage. The season includes school-year showcases and a summer production series.

School-Year Showcases

During the academic year, students prepare and present a December showcase and additional lab-based sharings. These events highlight work generated in weekly classes and Creative Labs, giving students the opportunity to perform, present original work, and experiment with directing, design, and technical roles.

Student Leadership Roles

Students move beyond performance into key creative and production positions, including director, assistant director, choreographer, stage manager, assistant stage manager, lighting and sound board operator, designer, dramaturg, and producer. Mentorship from faculty and industry professionals ensures that students learn how to lead a process from first rehearsal to final performance.

Summer Production Season

In June and July, the Institute produces a two-show summer season. Students spend their days in classes and rehearsals and their evenings preparing productions for public audiences. Youth serve as principal artists and production leaders, building portfolios that reflect significant, real-world experience.

Educational Impact

The Season of Student-Produced Works reinforces classroom learning with authentic practice. Students refine time management, collaboration, problem-solving, and communication while seeing their ideas realized on stage. This hands-on model helps them imagine themselves in college programs and creative careers.



This program fulfills the vision of TWA Chair Emeritus Joci Straus — empowering youth, especially girls and underrepresented students, to lead onstage and behind the scenes.



Dear Texas Women for the Arts:

On behalf of Texas State University, it is with great enthusiasm that we express our strong support for *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute* and commend The Majestic Empire Foundation (MEF) for its visionary leadership in expanding access to arts education across San Antonio and South Texas.

The Majestic Empire Foundation has long served as a beacon of cultural preservation and educational innovation in our region. Their commitment to breaking down barriers to participation and creating inclusive pathways for young people—particularly those from low-income and underserved communities—sets them apart as a leader in the field. Through *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute*, MEF provides tuition-free training that blends performance and technical theater instruction, while equipping students with essential skills in communication, collaboration, and creative problem-solving.

As a proud collaborator in this effort, Texas State University recognizes the importance of early exposure to high-quality, career-connected arts experiences. *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute* offers students meaningful opportunities to explore the full scope of theatrical production—from design and backstage roles to performance and direction. This comprehensive approach not only nurtures talent, but also prepares students to pursue higher education and professional opportunities in the arts and beyond.

We are proud to align not only our students, but also our educators with this initiative—creating opportunities for shared learning, mentorship, and meaningful collaboration between institutions. These partnerships foster a rich exchange of knowledge and support the professional development of future arts leaders throughout our region.

We have seen firsthand the impact of MEF's programs and the organization's steadfast dedication to equity, access, and student success. Their values align closely with our mission at Texas State to support the next generation of artists, educators, and changemakers. We are proud to stand with MEF in advancing this important work.

The Majestic Empire Foundation is not only a steward of San Antonio's iconic theaters—it is also a catalyst for transformation, empowerment, and community growth. Programs like *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute* exemplify the life-changing potential of arts education, and we wholeheartedly endorse their continued efforts to expand these opportunities.

Thank you for considering support for The Majestic Empire Foundation and this critical initiative. Texas State University is honored to be a partner in this work and looks forward to the continued impact we can create together for students throughout South Texas.

Sincerely,

Tom Dell

Tom Delbello

Co-Head of Musical Theatre: Head of Production and New Works

Texas State University



Dear Texas Women for the Arts:

On behalf of ATG Entertainment and ATG Creative Learning, I am thrilled to express our enthusiastic support for *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute* and to highlight the extraordinary contributions of The Majestic Empire Foundation (MEF) in transforming the cultural and educational landscape of San Antonio and South Texas. As stewards of San Antonio's iconic Majestic and Empire Theatres, MEF has consistently demonstrated an unwavering commitment to preserving the rich history of these venues while fostering unparalleled opportunities for the next generation. Through innovative programs like *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute*, MEF is revolutionizing arts education by offering at-risk and low-income students free access to immersive theater experiences, both on stage and behind the scenes.

ATG Creative Learning is proud to partner with MEF on this initiative, which perfectly aligns with our mission to bring world-class theatrical experiences and meaningful community engagement to San Antonio. *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute* is not only igniting creativity and passion but also equipping students with critical technical, performance, and interpersonal skills that will shape their futures. We are especially impressed by MEF's tireless dedication to equity and inclusion, ensuring that students from Title I schools and underserved communities can participate in enriching programs that open doors to the arts and beyond. By providing mentorship, professional insights, and firsthand exposure to the collaborative artistry of live theater, *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute* embodies the profound power of the arts to educate, uplift, and transform lives.

As a trusted educational partner of The Majestic Empire Foundation, ATG Creative Learning has seen firsthand the far-reaching impact of their initiatives on students, families, and the broader community. MEF's commitment to expanding access to the arts is not only inspiring but essential for building a more inclusive and vibrant cultural future for San Antonio and South Texas.

We are proud to stand with The Majestic Empire Foundation and their innovative programs that empower students to discover their potential, dream big, and find their voices through the arts. *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute* is a shining example of how collaboration can drive meaningful change, and we are honored to be a collaborator, along with UTSA Arts and TX State University, in this impactful initiative.

Thank you for considering the incredible work of The Majestic Empire Foundation. We are privileged to support their mission and look forward to witnessing the lasting impact of their efforts in inspiring the next generation of artists, leaders, and engaged citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Alex Snell'.

Alex Snell
Creative Learning Director
ATG Creative Learning Department @ ATG Entertainment

To Whom It May Concern at Texas Women for the Arts:

On behalf of UTSA Arts, it is with great enthusiasm that we express our unwavering support for *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute* and applaud the transformative work of The Majestic Empire Foundation (MEF) in redefining the cultural landscape of San Antonio and South Texas.

For decades, The Majestic Empire Foundation has been a cornerstone of arts education and cultural preservation in our community. Their tireless efforts to break down barriers to arts access and empower the next generation of artists and leaders have set a standard for excellence. Through innovative programs like *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute*, MEF provides at-risk and low-income students with free access to the arts while equipping them with critical skills that nurture creativity, confidence, and a vision for a brighter future.

As a proud partner in this initiative, UTSA Arts is honored to collaborate with MEF in offering students immersive, hands-on experiences that illuminate both the technical and performance aspects of theater. By introducing young people to the artistry and collaboration and real world application of both the performing arts and technical theater, this program opens doors to career pathways, fosters essential life skills, and enriches the cultural fabric of our region.

We have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of MEF's educational programs. Their steadfast commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion ensures that all students—regardless of their background—have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from the arts. These values align seamlessly with the mission of UTSA Arts to foster creativity and innovation within our community, and we are deeply proud to stand alongside MEF in their pursuit of cultural and educational excellence.

The Majestic Empire Foundation is more than a steward of San Antonio's historic theaters; it is a driving force for inspiration, education, and community uplift. Programs like *The Joci Theater & Creative Leadership Institute* exemplify the profound ways the arts can transform lives and create lasting change. We wholeheartedly endorse their efforts and celebrate the positive impact they bring to our region.

Thank you for recognizing the vital work of The Majestic Empire Foundation. UTSA Arts remains a steadfast partner in their mission to empower students and shape a more vibrant cultural future for San Antonio and South Texas.

Best,



Emilie Amrein, DMA
Founding Executive Director, UTSA Arts
Associate Dean for Community Engagement
Professor of Community Arts