

Presented by:

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE ARTS, OUR COMMUNITY AND ITS FUTURE!

AGENDA

1. Who we are and what we do
2. Community Impact
3. Economic Impact
4. Legacy Project
5. Q&A

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The African American Forum, Inc. was launched on September 21, 1993 to address the arts, cultural and experiential needs of the African American community in the Lexington-Fayette Urban County.



The **African American Forum, Inc. (AAF)** is a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax exempt arts organization, based in Lexington-Fayette Urban County of the commonwealth of Kentucky. The organization was established on **September 21, 1993**.

For over thirty (30) years the organization has presented arts and cultural programs that have ranged from the **African American Ball**, the ***Lexus Smooth Jazz Fest***, cultural performances at the Historic Lexington Opera House and so much more. Additional information about the organization can be found at **<https://www.AAFinc.com>**.

QUICK FACTS

On **January 24, 1994** we presented the first of **twenty-six (26)** annual African American Balls to showcase excellence in Art, Cultural and Entertainment. Over the course of three (3) years that became our signature event that catapult the AAB to become “The Event in the Black Community”. (source: **Lexington Herald-Leader 1996**)

From that point forward the organization forged a partnership with **LexArts** (***formerly the Lexington Arts & Cultural Council***) to better understand the appropriate legal structure and organization to guide our journey.

QUICK FACTS

ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

1. LEX Smooth Jazz Concert Series

The LEX Smooth Jazz Concert Series is the AAF's current signature program that is presented three (3) times a year to engage the public in diverse and excellent art, inclusive of underserved populations in the Lexington-Bluegrass Region of the commonwealth of Kentucky.

2. Horizon Society Membership Benefits Program

The Horizon Society Membership Benefits Program was launched in 2015 to cultivate and develop an individual donor base to support the AAF's general operations, make connections to each members employer and/or network for the benefit of the programs that they support that are presented by the AAF. As relationships grow and develop the membership will be cultivated for Legacy Gifts to benefit the long-term sustainability of the AAF.

QUICK FACTS

ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND PROGRAMS CONTINUED

3. Arts Partnership Program

The Arts Partnership Program is the cornerstone charitable giving component of the AAF that at its core is administered to invest in the future of the literary, performing, and visual arts aspirations of students enrolled in the Fayette County Public School system. Since 1996, the organization has donated over \$100,000 in funds, experiences and resources that have benefited over 90,000 K-5 students in addition to middle school students at the School for the Creative and Performing Arts (S.C.A.P.A.) and Carter G. Woodson Academy.

QUICK FACTS

ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND PROGRAMS CONTINUED

4. WSJZ-DB

WSJZ-DB is an online radio station launched in 2023 to serve as a community radio station to promote Smooth Jazz, R&B and Classic Soul, Blues and Gospel music in the Lexington-Bluegrass Region, Commonwealth of Kentucky and beyond. This is a partnership forged between the AAF and Forum Ventures, LLC.

QUICK FACTS

COMMUNITY IMPACT

From **1994** to **2025** the AAF touched over **60,000** individuals who attended our activities, events and programs. This does not include the ***Arts Partnership Program...*** Which impacted **90,000**.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

From **1994** to **2025** the AAF's programs had an estimated **\$4,500.000** impact that included ticket sales, overnight accommodations, food sales at restaurants, and other retails purchases such as clothes, beauty & hair care, etc. (source: **Community Ventures** and **VisitLEX** snapshot analysis)

FUNDING REQUEST

The AAF is seeking a one (1) time request of **\$3,000,000.00** to underwrite the cost of purchasing a facility to locate its operations and expand on its mission and purpose while addressing underserved populations in specifically the 1st Council District of Lexington-Fayette Urban County.

A close-up photograph of a wood surface, showing concentric growth rings in a light brown color. The texture is smooth and natural, with the rings curving across the frame.

FOCUS AREAS

Arts

The AAF has a thirty-five (35) year history of presenting that enhance the community within the **1st Council District** of the **Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government**. This has expanded to the **Lexington-Bluegrass Region**, the **Commonwealth of Kentucky** and **beyond**.

Community Development

- a) Culinary –**Catering Kitchen**, ***Food Court*** and **Mobile Truck Kitchen**;
- b) Communications – **WSJZ-DB**, ***“Smooth Jazz”***;

Education through Sustainability & Self-Sufficiency

- a) Arts Partnership Program;
- b) Outreach Programming to ***Young Adults*** age **14-22** through internships and summer job initiatives.

JOB CREATION

A key element in the project is the creation and sustainability of **temporary** and **permanent jobs**.

Construction Phase

We anticipate five (5) to ten (10) **temporary jobs** will be created during this phase of the project.

Start-up Phase

We anticipate five (5) to ten (10) **permanent jobs** will be created during this phase of the project.

Long-term

After three (3) years, we anticipate sustaining ten (10) **permanent jobs** and five (5) additional **part-time jobs** through summer employment opportunities for Young Adults.



SITE LOCATION

At the present time the AAF has identified two (2) sites within the 1st Council District that would be ideal for the project.

North Broadway Corridor

This site is our priority location because it has a high traffic county and is the most visible of the two (2).

East Third Street Corridor

This site is our 2nd priority location because it is in the old Deweese Street area of Lexington-Fayette Urban County and within the vicinity of the Historic Lyric Theatre, which the AAF has working partnership with for future programming.

CONCLUSION

Our goal in making this request to the **Commision on Race & Access to Opportunity** is to provide insight of our quest to position the AAF for consideration of a one (1) time allocation from the commonwealth of Kentucky.

By doing so, it will enable us to elevate our service to our community, through a mission-based Ministry, while leaving a Legacy of ***Making a Difference in the Arts, Our Community and its Future!***



Q & A

I will be glad to answer any questions at this time.