

# PROSPECTUS: CREATIVE HUB WORCESTER

*A project of the Creative Campus*



Shaping the future of Worcester by revitalizing one of its greatest assets and establishing a unique artists' community and creative space.

## The Project

2 Ionic Avenue in Worcester was once a vital community asset. Built by a generous industrialist in 1914, this magnificent, 30,000SF space was a haven for youth and one of the original 15 Boys Clubs in the U.S. On any given day, as many as 1,800 boys came to this space for activities like boxing, swimming, basketball, and chess, or to study in the Club's library. For many children of working-class families, this Club was a rich social environment. It was also a safe place for hundreds of children of immigrant families who had moved to the area during the manufacturing boom.

This historic building, now vacant and desperately in need of rehabilitation, is preparing for a complete transformation into the Creative Hub Community Arts Center (Creative Hub CAC)—a dynamic Community Arts Center for artists, creative entrepreneurs, and community members to work, make, collaborate, perform, and attend events in a vibrant, multi-purpose environment. The revitalized building at 2 Ionic Ave will serve emerging and established artists, local youth who

are considered at-risk, and the community at large as a gathering place for art lovers and audiences of all ages.

The Creative Hub CAC project is a partnership between the Creative Hub Worcester (CHW) and The Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston (A&BC).

- CHW is a non-profit organization founded in 2016 with a mission to provide accessible and equitable arts and creative opportunities for all Worcester-area community members, with a focus on supporting youth who may be at risk or underserved.
- The A&BC invests in artists, creative entrepreneurs, and cultural organizations through integrated and responsive programs and services designed to support and nurture the creative ecosystem. This project is a catalyzing effort of the A&BC's Creative Campus—a mission-driven initiative seeking to preserve and develop affordable creative spaces in support of diverse and underserved communities throughout Massachusetts.



## Project Benefits

The Creative Hub CAC will benefit the City of Worcester and the Main South neighborhood culturally, socially, and economically and will fill an identified gap in the City for affordable programs and collaborative space. The Creative Hub CAC will directly implement many of the goals set out in the 2019 City of Worcester's Cultural Plan. The Creative Hub CAC will:

- Provide a space for the development of new and established artists through dedicated studio space, community building, and artistic events.
- Serve youth in the surrounding neighborhoods through programs, workshops, performances, and events.
- Provide over 80 high quality fully subsidized toddler and preschool childcare for Worcester families.
- Offer affordable, accessible art-making experiences and workspace for community members in a variety of media.
- Host regular events that promote the artistic and diverse cultures that exist within the city of Worcester.

## Programs for the Community

2 Ionic Avenue is situated between the burgeoning Cultural District of downtown Worcester and the Main South neighborhood, a dense, ethnically diverse neighborhood with one of the highest poverty rates in the City. The project specifically addresses services gaps in the Main South community as well as aiming to



*"I just wanted to say that I am so excited that you have decided to use the former IONIC AVE. BOYS CLUB for the new artist hub!! I'm so glad the building is going to get a second chance. I used to go to the Boys Club every weekend when I was younger! I'm so glad that the building is going to be brought back to life!"*

- Former Boys Club member, Jake Prew

*"CHW offers exciting opportunities that will lead to a revival of arts in the Downtown area, and serve as an important resource for the entire community."*

- Massachusetts Senator Michael Moore



provide – in the words of Worcester's Cultural Plan – "a gathering place for a wide range of geographically and ethnically based communities."

The Creative Hub Worcester's Executive Director and Board Chair are both art educators, with more than 25 years combined teaching experience. There is a large community of young people in Worcester that need accessible and supportive environments in which to socialize, learn, and engage positively with their peers. Additionally, all artistic practices in the city deserve to be celebrated regardless of the individual's level of income, ethnicity, or any other barrier they may be facing.

Creative Hub Worcester currently hosts a state-licensed after school program and will offer youth-focused creative classes and workshops at 2 Ionic Ave. Classes will range from beginner-level instruction through advanced placement programs for students exploring careers in design, art and other creative career fields. Classes will be led by local artists and will provide high quality art tools and equipment, giving youth the opportunity to work alongside working artists who represent many artistic genres. In addition to visual and fine arts, the Creative Hub will include dance and movement as part of a healthy







## Worcester Then and Now

and positive experience for the youth and residents in our community.

In addition to Creative Hub's own youth programs, The Guild of St. Agnes will be a major tenant in the community Arts center. The Guild of St. Agnes is a long standing, educational, private, non-profit child care agency founded in 1913. At 2 Ionic Avenue, the Guild will provide high quality fully subsidized childcare for 80+ toddler and preschool age students.

This childcare is desperately needed within the Main South area of Worcester, where there are no other state-subsidized toddler and preschool programs.

For adults, the Creative Hub CAC will provide new and established artists and community members with many opportunities to engage in the arts, affordably and at their own pace. While some of the area's existing art organizations provide specialized classes and private studio spaces, many are largely cost-prohibitive and inaccessible for much of the community. Worcester needs an affordable creative community space that can become a vital part of the arts ecosystem. The CAC, which will provide 25+ affordable artist studios as well as flexible program space, is a key part of an effort to bridge a widening gap between pockets of insulated arts communities and the rest of the cities' residents.

Creative Hub's event venues and galleries will also offer a space for tenants and the community to exhibit their work. Additionally, Creative Hub will be home to two premier event rental spaces, the double-height historic gymnasium and a rooftop space overlooking the city. These spaces will be rentable venues available for all different types of events.

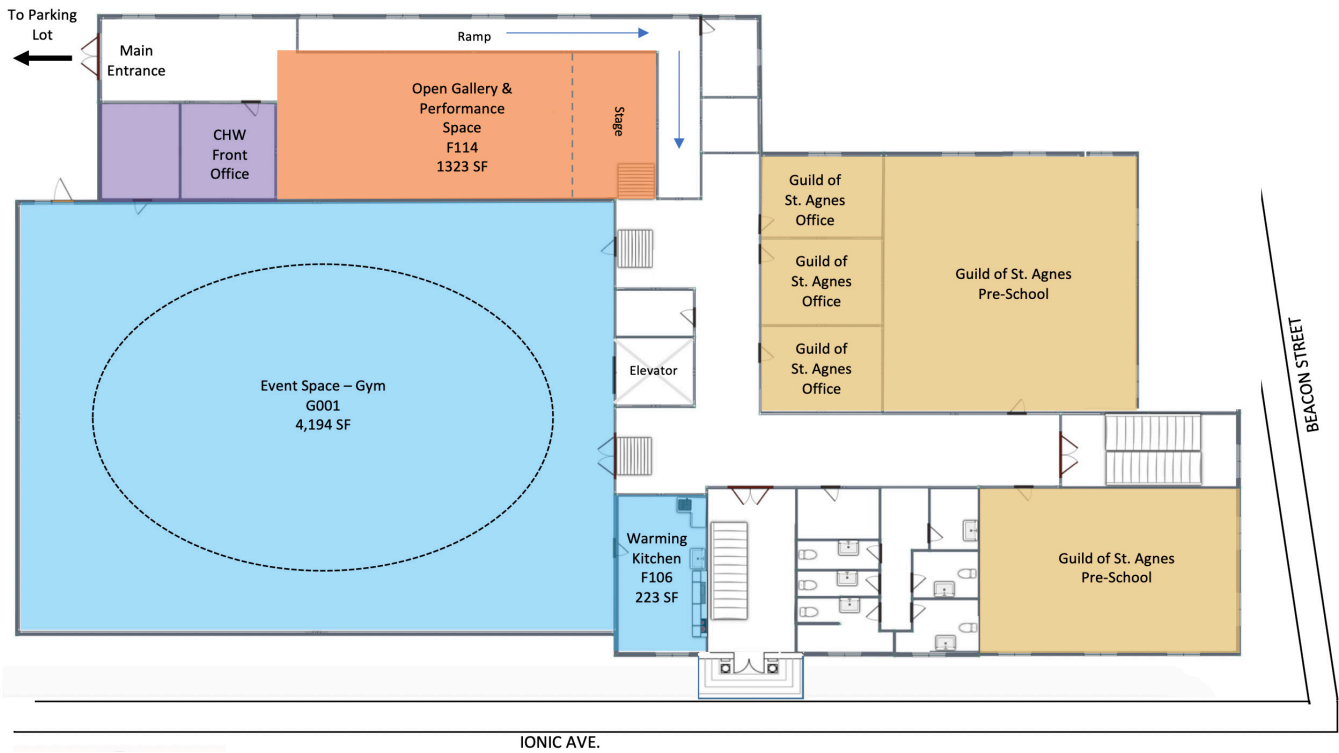
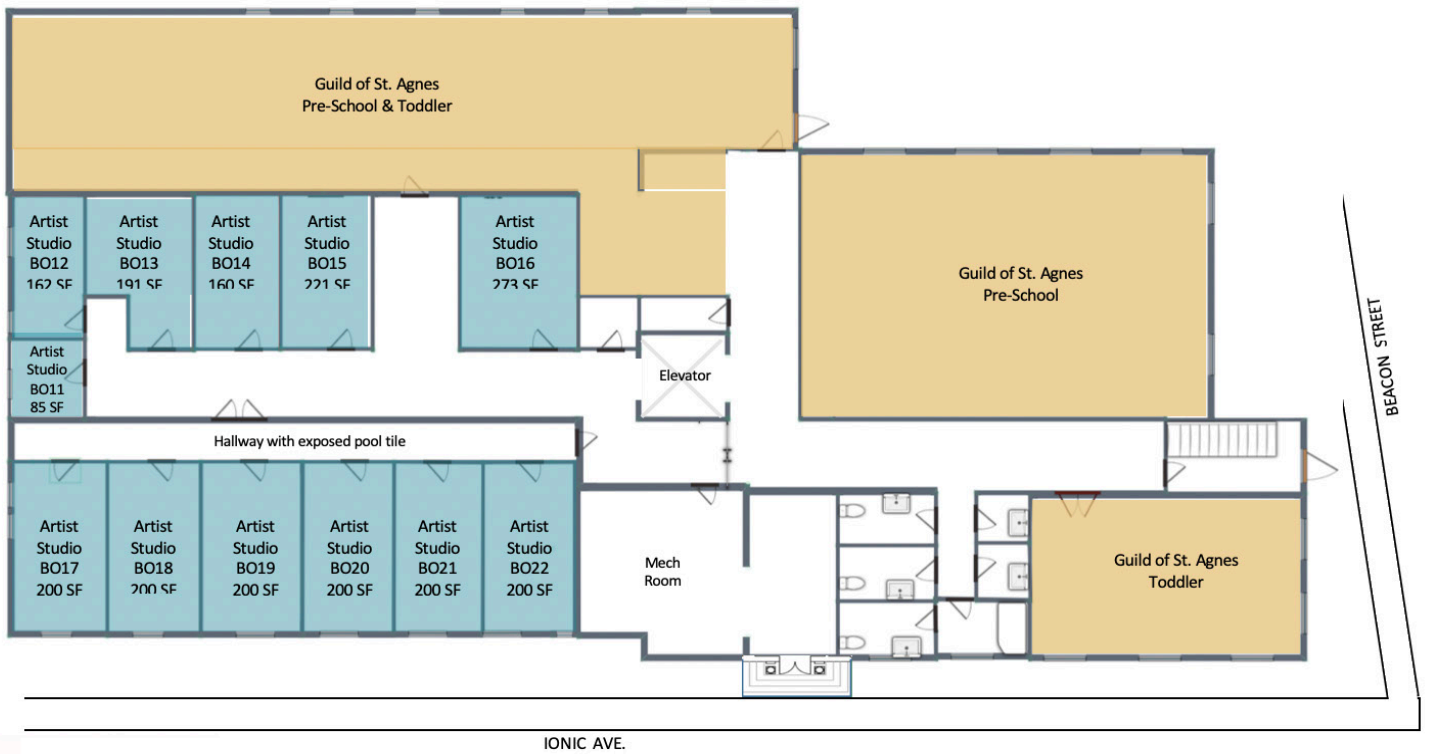
Once a center for colonists fighting the British in the Revolutionary War and later a thriving manufacturing hub, the city of Worcester has been an important and symbolic site of America's heritage for over 200 years. Like many New England cities, Worcester's economy suffered after the decline of U.S. manufacturing between 1950 and 1980, and although healthcare and biotechnology companies relocated to Worcester in order to expand the job base, poverty is still widespread.

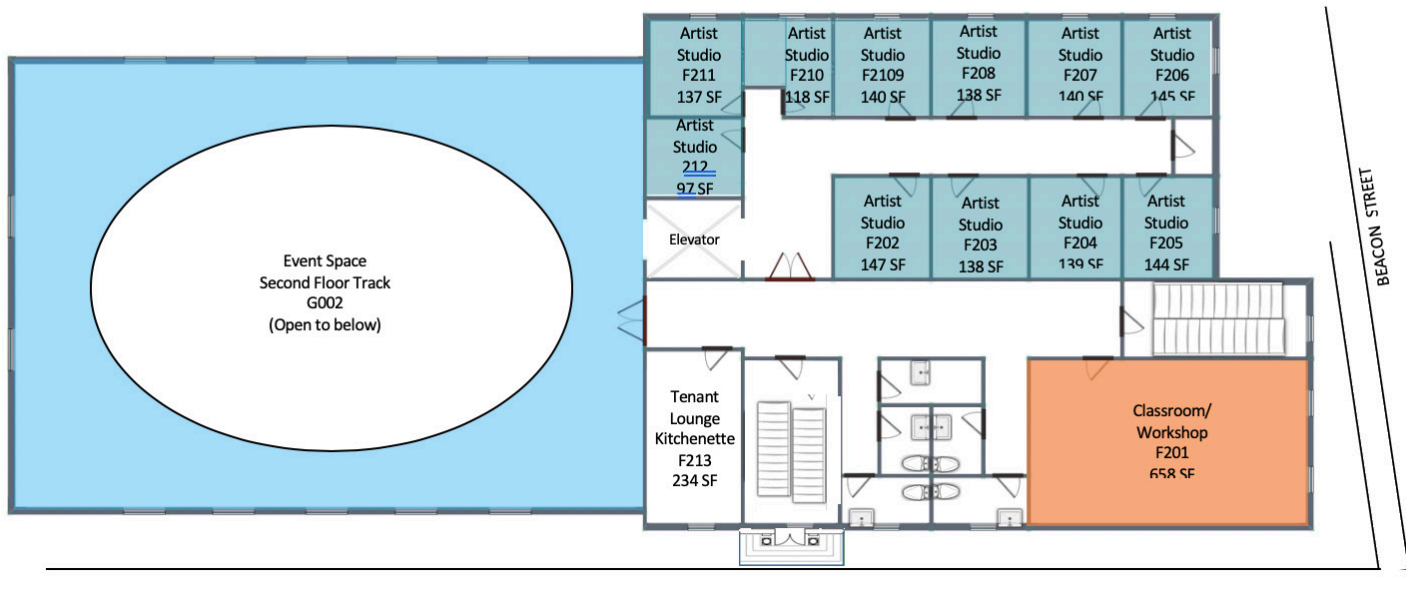


According to the 2014 U.S. Census Bureau's American Fact Finder and Worcester Public Schools FY17 Annual Budget, in Worcester:

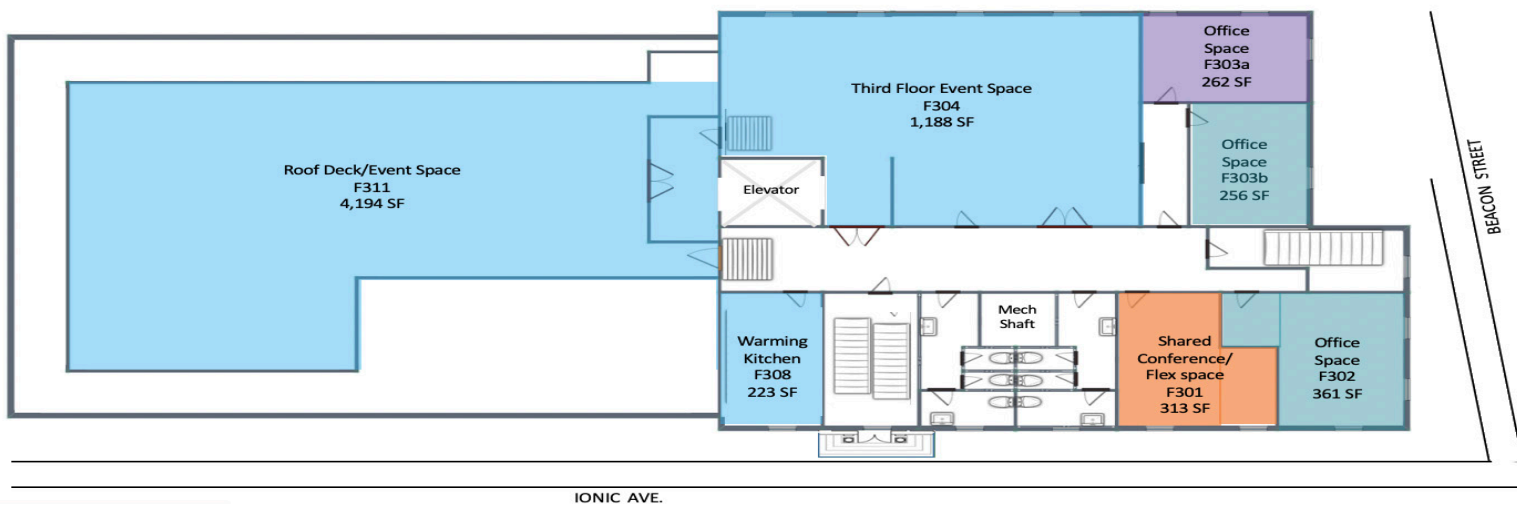
- 52% of the public school student body is classified as economically disadvantaged.\*  
**In the schools closest to the Creative Hub Worcester, up to 81% are considered economically disadvantaged and up to 97% are high needs.**
- 48% of families with children live below the poverty line; 60% of single-parent families with children live below the poverty line.
- 23% of families have an annual income of less than \$25,000. **In neighborhood tracts close to CHW, the median household income is only \$26,000.**
- 67.5% of the student population is minority, and the first language of about 38% of the public school district's students is one of more than 90 languages other than English.
- In the hardest hit areas, only 16% of the adults (25 and older) have any college education, and 41% have never graduated high school.

*\*Based on students' participation in one or more state administered programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children, the Department of Children and Families' foster care program, and MassHealth program.*





Second Floor



Third Floor

## A Powerful Partnership

This project is a collaboration between the Arts & Business Council's Creative Campus initiative and the nonprofit organization Creative Hub Worcester. The City of Worcester, Mass Development, and former building owner Peter Heaney are additional project champions and were early supporters.

The A&BC Creative Campus initiative serves as a cultural community development corporation with the goal of preserving and developing vibrant and sustainable cultural and maker spaces. A&BC's objective is to develop and own a network of Creative Campuses throughout Massachusetts that leverage the accumulated resources, human capital, equity, and development infrastructure toward the development of future projects.

Creative Hub Worcester is an incorporated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the arts to all community members in Worcester and central Massachusetts. At its helm are its Co-Founders: Laura Marotta and Stacy Lord.

Stacy Lord is co-founder of the hugely successful non-profit arts festival, stART on the Street, and has taught in the Worcester Public Schools for over 18 years as an art educator. Stacy is an active member of the NAEA, having presented over the past several years at the national conventions. She sits on the editorial board for SchoolArts Magazine and just ended her term as NAEA's Eastern Region Director for the Middle Level.

Laura Marotta is currently Past-President of the Massachusetts Art Education Association, serving on the board for over 7 years. Laura has been an art educator for over 8 years in both the public and private school system, and is currently Executive Director of Creative Hub Worcester, leading day-to-day operations of CHW's current programming. Both Stacy and Laura are working artists and exhibit locally and regionally.

## Project Budget

### Uses

Building	990,000
Parking	345,000
Construction	8,900,000
Soft & Reserves*	4,365,000

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\$14,600,000

### Sources

Debt	1,750,000
Tax Credit Funds	6,850,000
Capital Campaign	3,660,000
Equity	1,850,000
AB&C	490,000

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\$14,600,000

\*taxes, insurance, interest, marketing, financing fees, tax credit bridge load, contingency

## The Path Forward: Partner With Us

We know the profoundly positive effects that arts and culture can have on youth, especially in underserved neighborhoods. Now we want to tap into that power to save and reinvent one of the City's greatest assets.

We are building a team of investors and donors to support the purchase and development of 2 Ionic Ave and Creative Hub Worcester. To learn more please reach out directly to the A&BC's Jim Grace (jim@artsandbusinesscouncil.org).

Thank you for helping us to create accessible, sustainable community art spaces in the neighborhoods that need them most. We look forward to developing a facility motivated and molded by the goals and needs of the community.



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