



March 24, 2021

Dear Legislators

My name is Deb Belquist, the managing director of Dakota Prairie Regional Center for the Arts in New Rockford, ND. We have been a theatre/arts organization celebrating our 30th year in 2021!

In 30 years we have had many highs and lows but without the help from the North Dakota Council on the Arts and the grant money from our Institutional Support and additional CoVid funds from the state of North Dakota we would have been forced to close the doors on this 30 year old business.

We were one week into a month long run of our spring show when we were forced to close the doors on our show at the Old Church Theatre and our Latte Lobby Bistro. Our theatre has remained closed since March 2020. We had no significant funds coming into our organization. Without federal and state funds we would have been forced to let go our two full time employees, 10 part time employees and our 10-25 seasonal workers.

The DPRCA Theatre Program is known throughout the state and has drawn people from over the United States as they travel through the Dakotas stopping to visit friends and family. The loss of this institution would have been devastating to our community. The thousands of people we draw into New Rockford makes an enormous impact. We are so grateful for the funding from the state of North Dakota and the North Dakota Council on the Arts.

Times are still very uncertain for us. We are beginning to inch our way back to having patrons attending our productions BUT at a greatly reduced number. So much so, that we will operate at a loss for this spring show. Any additional funds would truly help sustain our arts organization through this devastating time.

Thank you for considering additional funds for North Dakota Council on the Arts

Sincerely,

Deb Belquist

Dakota Prairie Regional Center for the Arts