

Art Center Sarasota
Youth Digital Art Lab & Classroom Upgrade:
Building a Digital Arts Program + Expanding Classroom Capabilities

Art Center Sarasota's (ACS) mission is to bring together creatives and the broader public to increase understanding of the human condition, support well-being, and build community connection through the universal language of art. Their proposed **Youth Digital Art Lab & Classroom Upgrade: Building a Digital Arts Program + Expanding Classroom Capabilities** initiative will expand their youth programs to include digital technology to create art and will upgrade classroom space to allow for increased enrollment.

The total initiative budget is \$127,799, with funds beyond the Impact100 SRQ grant partially committed. The grant would fund \$46,000 for furniture, its installation and site preparation, to create innovative and efficient environments; \$27,000 for technology and equipment including video equipment, large format printers, computers and software; \$29,000 for the instructors and support personnel; and \$7,000 for other direct expenses that support the initiative.

ACS's addition of a digital arts program is a significant step in increasing visual art opportunities for youth in Sarasota, addressing the current imbalance between performing arts education and visual arts education opportunities. Digital and media arts play a pivotal role in society and are popular and lucrative choices for young people. Creating opportunities for students to explore photography, animation, graphics, visual effects and more can inspire a child to pursue digital art in college or as a career. Further, art experiences act as catalysts for discussion, enhanced critical thinking skills, and elevated social consciousness.

This initiative will enable 50 students to enroll in digital classes during the summer in addition to the more than 350 current summer camp enrollees. Scholarships are offered to provide access to all. During free Youth Saturdays, 312 students will be able to spend time learning digital arts. The classroom redesign will benefit more than 2,000 youth each year. The impact of the program will be monitored by the enrollment for classes and the development of new offerings connected to digital arts and classroom upgrades. ACS will measure satisfaction, effectiveness, and longevity through tools such as surveys and interviews.

The initiative and its impact will be sustained beyond the 24-month funding period through paid adult digital art classes and open studio hours. ACS's ability to maximize the size of classes offered at the Art Center will generate additional funds to support the digital art lab. The initiative will generate an additional 12 weeks of adult class instruction and 30 weeks of open studio time, resulting in a 42% increase to ACS's overall adult education offerings that include over 100 classes, workshops, talks, and events.

The incorporation of a digital arts program will further strengthen ACS's commitment to championing Sarasota's reputation as "Florida's Cultural Coast" and will inspire future generations of artists.