

ELKINS WELCOMES RIPPLE:

How can art experiences at the Farmers Market enhance the Elkins community?

Elkins, WV - Elkins has been selected to participate in the Tamarack Foundation for the Arts (TFA) RIPPLE program. Program participants will design and implement two artist-led projects in collaboration with the Elkins Farmers Market.

RIPPLE is TFA's artist-led community and economic development pilot program for artists and their communities, designed to help communities create a shared vision of collaboration for developing public art and supporting working artists at the local level by connecting artists with other businesses. Participating communities will receive TFA coaching, technical assistance, and \$10,000 in mini-grant funds to design and implement two projects that pay local artists for services and bridge the gap between business and arts.

The initial RIPPLE community-wide brainstorming session for Elkins will take place via ZOOM on May 31, 2022, 4pm-5pm, to discuss the big question: How can art experiences at the Farmers Market enhance the Elkins community? The purpose of this meeting is for community members to share their visions and acquire collective insight into which specific arts activities the community would like to see happen at the Farmers Market. The meeting will also serve as an opportunity to recruit 12-20 participants for a 2-day intensive project design workshop at a later date. Note: Community members are encouraged to attend the brainstorming session even if they cannot commit to the project design workshop. Community input is needed in order to guide project development.

The Elkins RIPPLE intensive project design workshop will take place in-person on June 24-25, 9am-4pm, and will include an experiential learning trip to the Farmers Market on Saturday morning before finalizing project plans on Saturday afternoon. More details will be shared at the community brainstorming session.

Nicole Spencer with the Farmers Market said, "We are excited this year to bring the community together in an effort to help establish self sustainability from within. The impending food shortages make this a priority, to help us thrive and help each other. The market can be a place for small farmers to connect and create opportunities for themselves and the people of the community can benefit from whole foods grown organically and have the access that many major grocery stores cannot. This year we are trying to create a family friendly atmosphere to welcome young people and show them the benefits of a community coming together."

Jakeya Perrin is the WV Community and Economic Development Hub VISTA serving at two sites in Elkins: Davis and Elkins College and the Elkins HubCAP team. Perrin is leading communication for the Elkins RIPPLE program, alongside support from Elkins Main Street. As part of her service with the Hub, Perrin works with Ready Randolph and their arts and branding task forces.

“This work with the Farmers Market aligns with the work inside the ‘Arts’ of ‘Arts and Branding.’ Adding these art elements to the Farmers Market will bring in a whole new crowd. I can see jam sessions and arts projects really livening up everything and drawing in crowds. This rebranding of the Farmers Market has something for everyone, and I hope as the summer continues the market grows with wonderful vendors and great talent,” said Perrin.

Nevada Tribble, mixed media artist and TFA Emerging Artist Fellow Alumni, lives in Elkins and is part of the planning team. “I think the RIPPLE program will be an excellent way to spark collaboration between all of the different artists and art organizations working in Elkins. We have so many wonderful creative people here, and these projects will be a fun way to bring us together, and highlight the creativity of our community,” said Tribble.

TFA Operations Director Domenica Queen has been working with community partners since February to prepare for the launch of RIPPLE in Elkins. “It is always a joy to see people team up across sectors and make creative projects come to life. With RIPPLE we are empowering people to leverage the arts for change in their communities. The ripples from these artist-led projects that Elkins community members will design together bring artists to the table, building up and strengthening relationships that will carry into the future.”

If you have questions or want to get in contact with someone concerning this program, contact Jakeya Perrin at jakeyaap13@gmail.com or Domenica Queen at dqueen@tamarackfoundation.org.

Support for the RIPPLE program is provided by the Benedum Foundation. TFA RIPPLE communities for 2022 are Elkins, Clarksburg, and Williamson. TFA will be selecting three 2023 communities in the fall. Interested in making RIPPLE part of your community? Contact Executive Director Renee Margocee at renee@tamarackfoundation.org.