

# cultural center

of charlotte county  
inc.

April 29, 2014

David Johnston  
Room 109 Building B  
Charlotte County Budget Office  
18500 Murdock Circle  
Port Charlotte, FL 33948

Dear Mr. Johnston:

This letter is attached to the Funding Request. As the Cultural Center operates out of a County owned facility, the question is, "Should we be requesting financial assistance from the County's Maintenance/Facility budget?" If so, how do we proceed?

The Cultural Center of Charlotte County Inc. is requesting assistance with expenses incurred with its operation of the County building it occupies at 2280 Aaron Street, Port Charlotte through the Non-Profit Non-Human Services Funding Request as recommended by staff.

The cost of operating and providing services at the Center to the citizens of Charlotte County is funded by a budget of approximately \$2,000,000 per year. Eighty-five percent of this budget is raised by its user fees in the many programs in entertainment, education and activities. The \$300,000 balance of the budget relies on unbudgeted donations and various trusts that the Center has received in the past. In recent years, we have experienced a steady decline in these donations and are struggling to cover our shortfall.

In order to continue its operation, the Board of Trustees feels it appropriate to go to the County for \$150,000 annually to help with this shortfall. Through additional expense savings for the upcoming year's budget beginning in July, we have instituted payroll cuts totaling over \$120,000 by eliminating full time positions including our Theater Manager, Volunteer and HR Manager, Learning Place Manager, Administrative Assistant, Maintenance Manager plus reducing the Executive Director to a part time position. Some of these positions may have to be partially added back to our staff when we go into our high volume months of December through March. We run a very lean payroll budget averaging approximately \$14.00 per hour per employee with a benefit package under 10%, with about 15% of this going to the maintenance of the facility. In making these reductions in staff, we believe we will be able to maintain our building and our high level of service to the over 500,000 people who visit the Center each year.

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2280 Aaron Street Port Charlotte, FL 33952

[www.theculturalcenter.com](http://www.theculturalcenter.com)

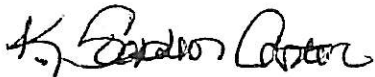
We will also be closing our main building during the evening hours, moving these activities to the school portion of the complex saving an additional \$70,000 per year in utilities and payroll. Between our payroll savings, the evening closing schedule and other expense savings we feel we can accomplish a \$150,000 budget reduction annually. This combined with the requested \$150,000 from the County will make up our shortfall and allow the Center to remain open.

As our lease requires us to fund the entire facility's maintenance costs, this amount has escalated to over \$300,000 per year including the cost of repairs, equipment, supplies and maintenance payroll. As part of the facility is over 50 years old, it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet the expenses required to maintain the Center's 47 HVAC units, food service equipment and what is required to keep our over 80,000 square foot building at a level that the citizens expect.

The assistance of \$150,000 will enable us to continue to be a multigenerational community center that provides a multitude of valuable low cost services to our patrons and visitors and assists many non-profit organizations that serve the County.

Thank you in advance for your consideration to this matter. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



K. Stephen Carter  
President

Cc: Board of County Commissioners  
Gordon Burger  
Ray Sandrock  
Cultural Center Board of Trustees