



July 31, 2019

Dear Selection Committee for 100&Change,

I am writing to express our organization's support for Montana State University's application for a 100&Change Grant. We believe that their proposal to foster coordinated state-wide art projects and collaborations for marginalized communities could have significant and widespread impact, particularly in a state that has a uniquely rural population and a wide range of complex and challenging dynamics. We urge you to award this consortium of energetic partners to help them address Montana's significant needs for interconnection and communication.

Turnaround Arts' involvement in Montana began in 2012, when President Obama's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities selected Lame Deer Middle School to be a pilot school in our program. In our work with the school, we worked to leverage the arts to catalyze school change. We saw considerable successes that have continued through the leadership of Susan Wolfe, their visual art teacher. For the past seven years, she has successfully coordinated dozens of projects and experiences for her students, many in collaboration with art partners from around the state. Whether bringing Montana Shakespeare in the Schools in to work yearly with students, coordinating a cultural dance exchange between Native youth and Ballerina Lily Rapp (member of the pre-professional division at Center of Creative Arts (COCA) in St. Louis), transporting students to Billings to host an art opening of their work at a professional gallery, or hosting musicians from the Silkroad ensemble to lead art workshops each year for students, Susan's projects serve as excellent examples of the arts-based work that could be extended to marginalized and rural populations all over the state.

Turnaround Arts works via a collective impact approach, making us good potential national partners, should a Montana project be launched by this grant. Based on our relationship with key education stakeholders in Montana, we consider it to be a promising location for a centrally-based state-wide Turnaround Arts site. We would welcome working with a Montana team to explore innovative ways to support rural schools, and to work together to design evaluation methods that are authentic and meaningful.

We encourage you to award Montana State a 100&Change Grant, and in doing so, provide these state leaders with a critical opportunity to connect and heal their communities, and allow organizations such as ours to learn and invest in the state as a whole.

Warm regards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Winston Cox".

Winston Cox
Director of Implementation, Turnaround Arts
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts