



March 5, 2026

Felisa Garate
Senior Procurement Manager
Procurement & Contracting Services Department
City of Somerville
93 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Re: RFP #26-27 Lease of Building Space at 191 Highland Ave “Armory”

Proposal from The Center for Arts at the Armory

Dear Members of the Review Committee,

The Center for Arts at the Armory (CAA) respectfully submits this proposal in response to the City of Somerville’s above-reference Request for Proposals for tenancy at the Armory.

CAA brings nearly two decades of experience operating, stewarding, and programming within the Armory, with a demonstrated understanding of the operational, financial, and collaborative requirements of a complex, multi-tenant public facility. Our proposal responds directly to the evaluation criteria outlined in the RFP and is supported by detailed narrative responses and supplemental documentation, including program descriptions, financial materials, and letters of support. Together, these materials reflect CAA’s capacity to meet the City’s expectations while advancing the City’s Vision for Success for the Armory.

Selection as an Armory tenant would have a significant and positive impact on CAA’s ability to sustain and deepen its work. Continued tenancy enables organizational stability, supports long-term planning, and allows CAA to invest in infrastructure, staffing, and partnerships that strengthen both artistic and community outcomes. The Armory’s scale, visibility, and accessibility are essential to CAA’s business model and

public mission, allowing us to operate at a level that would not be possible in smaller or less centrally located facilities.

Tenancy at the Armory directly builds CAA's capacity to provide accessible artistic and creative programming, particularly for marginalized and underserved communities. Through affordable and subsidized access to space, sliding-scale and free programming, targeted outreach, and partnerships with community organizations, CAA reduces barriers related to cost, representation, and access. The Armory enables CAA to serve under-resourced artists, present culturally specific and underrepresented art forms, and welcome diverse audiences into a shared civic space where arts and culture are experienced as public goods rather than exclusive offerings.

CAA's mission and operations are deeply aligned with the mission of the Armory as a community-centered arts facility. Through high-volume, diverse programming; responsible stewardship of shared space; and a collaborative approach to multi-tenant operations, CAA supports the Armory as a place where artists can create and present work, communities can gather, and cultural life can thrive. Our long-standing presence in the building has contributed to the Armory's identity as a trusted, welcoming, and active hub for arts, culture, and community engagement in Somerville.

CAA is committed to continuing this work in close partnership with the City and fellow tenants. We bring institutional knowledge, operational capacity, financial stability, and a collaborative spirit that positions us as a reliable and mission-aligned tenant for the Armory's future.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this Proposal. The Armory is a vital civic space for arts, culture, and community in Somerville and we look forward to the opportunity to continue supporting the Armory as a shared civic resource for generations to come.

This Proposal is firm for one hundred and twenty (120) days from the date of this Letter.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Scherpf
CEO

Narrative

Mission Alignment

The **mission** of the Center for Arts at the Armory (CAA) is to provide an inclusive and accessible venue that creates opportunities for artists and cultural workers, brings diverse audiences together, enriches and transforms lives, and promotes the creative economy. Our **vision** is to create a thriving and sustainable center that serves as a permanent beacon of arts, culture, and community for generations to come. **This mission closely aligns with the City's Armory Master Plan** and reflects nearly two decades of community input and public engagement. Throughout the Master Plan process, community members expressed a clear desire for the Armory to continue serving the community in the ways CAA currently provides.

CAA has an 18-year history as a successful, community-centered hub for arts and culture that advances the Armory's Vision for Success, shaped by and responsive **to the needs of artists, cultural workers, small businesses, audiences, community members, and partner organizations**. In addition to hosting many independently produced events, CAA produces five signature programs: The Spotlight Series; the Performance Opportunity Program (POP); the Feet Keep the Beat Percussive Dance Festival; the Somerville Winter Farmers Market; and ROOTED Armory Café Visual Arts Exhibitions. Across all programming, Arts at the Armory hosts approximately 700 events annually in disciplines including music, dance, theater, literary arts, visual arts, film, circus, comedy, and more, serving hundreds of artists each year by providing accessible and affordable space to create and present their work (see our supplementary materials for more about programming).

CAA supports artists across the creative life cycle, with particular strength in public-facing presentation, audience development, and community engagement. Incubation and creative development are embedded throughout our spaces and programs, from poetry workshops and ensemble rehearsals in the Lavender Room to the intercultural creation processes of the Feet Keep the Beat Percussive Dance Festival, which supports artistic experimentation and culminates in public performance.

As a community-based organization stewarding a shared civic asset, **CAA prioritizes transparent decision-making, collaboration, and proactive conflict mitigation in shared environments.** Prior to recent capital upgrades in the Performance Hall, CAA conducted 40 stakeholder interviews to inform planning and implementation. Every event hosted at the Armory represents a form of partnership, many of which have developed into long-standing relationships spanning 15 years or more.

CAA's leadership is deeply embedded in Somerville's nonprofit and arts ecosystem. Stephanie Scherpf, our Co-Director/CEO, serves on advisory committees for SomervilleCAN (Community Agency Network) and Somerville Arts Engine (SAE), strengthening coordination and synergy across the city. Stephanie has spearheaded collective fundraising for both SomervilleCAN and SAE, including authoring a joint SAE proposal to the Barr Foundation for over \$1 million (pending).

CAA is widely recognized as a **trusted community partner** among artists, cultural organizations, nonprofits, businesses, and residents, having served millions of people over the course of its history. Under current leadership, **CAA has consistently demonstrated its ability to manage shared space responsibly, navigate operational complexity, and maintain strong working relationships with artists, patrons, tenants, and the City**, supported by an engaged Board of Directors and Advisory Council providing legal, financial, HR, and governance expertise that ensures financial stability and operational sustainability.

Facility Alignment

CAA proposes to use the Performance Hall and Café, in substantially the same ways these spaces have been stewarded throughout our 18-year history, **demonstrating strong alignment with the Armory's physical infrastructure and multi-tenant operations.** (See our supplementary materials showing how CAA's spaces are advertised to the public).

The physical connection between the Café and the Performance Hall is an important component of CAA's space use and operational/financial model. Food and beverage service is coordinated across the two spaces, allowing patrons attending Performance Hall events to order dinner options, local snacks, and a curated menu of beer, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages at the Performance Hall bar. Food orders are prepared in the Café kitchen and delivered to patrons in the Hall, minimizing duplication of infrastructure while supporting efficient service flow, audience experience, and operational sustainability. This integrated approach makes effective use of existing building conditions without introducing additional equipment, noise, or facility strain.

CAA's full-time staff of eight and part-time staff of approximately twenty-five has outgrown the small office currently located off the Performance Hall. Under this proposal, **the existing office would be repurposed primarily for storage and event staff operations,** improving functionality without increasing public impact or strain on shared areas. CAA proposes to move its administrative office from the small room off the Performance Hall to Unit 2A.

CAA proposes to use Unit 2D as a green room for Performance Hall artists and as a rentable space for creation, rehearsal, readings, meetings, and classes. This use mirrors CAA's long-standing stewardship of what has previously been known as Unit B5, with the additional benefit of increased square footage and wooden flooring that supports movement-based practices. Direct backstage access and adjacent bathroom facilities, including a shower, would **improve artist support and operational flow while remaining fully compatible with building systems.** It should be noted that CAA has not been able to present certain high-profile artists as part of the Spotlight Series because CAA could not offer a private bathroom and direct stage access.

Programming in Unit 2D would follow the same operational standards currently applied to the Café and B5, including sound restrictions and a prohibition on hazardous materials. No heavy machinery, industrial processes, fumes, or high-heat activities are proposed, and all equipment would be portable and temporary, resulting in no disproportionate wear or facility strain.

It should be noted that, via this proposal, CAA has proposed to lease Unit B7 (previously B5). If awarded Unit B7, CAA would seek to execute a lease for this unit only in the event that Units 2A and 2D are not awarded. In that circumstance, CAA would continue to utilize Unit B7 in its current capacity: as a rentable space for creation, rehearsal, readings, meetings, and classes, as well as an artist green room.

CAA's use of the Performance Hall and the "community-use" function of the Café are further detailed in Supplemental Materials 1 and 2. Performance Hall programming may result in occasional sound bleed and increased public foot and parking traffic during events; these impacts are inherent to the function of a public performance venue and are expected and appropriate within the context of the Armory. CAA actively manages these conditions through scheduling coordination, sound management practices, and clear communication with other tenants. Across all proposed spaces, **CAA's operations are designed to integrate seamlessly with other uses, minimize conflicts, and contribute positively to the Armory's shared and functional working environment.**

Community Benefit

CAA serves artists, cultural workers, and the general public in Somerville and the Greater Boston region, **with particular focus on communities that face financial, cultural, or structural barriers to accessing arts and cultural resources.** These include under-resourced artists, artists working in historically marginalized or underrepresented art forms, and audiences who experience barriers related to income, disability, language, or cultural representation—many of whom live or work in Somerville.

Equity, inclusion, and access are central to CAA's mission and operations and are reflected in both programming and organizational practice. **CAA is widely recognized as a welcoming and safe space for diverse communities**, and our programming consistently centers artists and cultural traditions that are underrepresented within mainstream arts venues. Affordability is embedded in CAA's operational model through sliding-scale pricing and free public programming, ensuring broad public access.

The Performance Opportunity Program (POP) supports financially under-resourced artists and cultural workers by providing access to professional performance, presentation, and event space at a significantly subsidized rate, reducing one of the primary barriers to public artistic presentation. Participating artists retain control over ticketing and earned revenue, allowing them to determine how best to engage audiences and sustain their work.

The Feet Keep the Beat Percussive Dance Festival centers percussive dance forms such as Kathak, Irish, Flamenco, West African, Tap, and Step—cultural traditions that have been historically marginalized and under-resourced—supporting both artists and culturally specific audiences. ROOTED Armory Café exhibitions prioritize local visual artists who often lack access to exhibition opportunities.

CAA also integrates arts access with broader community needs. Through the Somerville Winter Farmers Market, CAA fundraises annually to provide more than \$25,000 in SNAP matching benefits, offering a \$15 match to SNAP-eligible customers and supporting food access, linguistic diversity, and small businesses in Somerville and beyond. CAA further expands access through participation in the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Card to Culture program, offering free tickets to EBT, WIC, and ConnectorCare cardholders, and through Art Pharmacy, connecting individuals to the preventative and therapeutic benefits of arts and cultural engagement.

CAA's Spotlight Series reflects a sustained commitment to cultural representation and accessible engagement. Recent programming has included leading Haitian artists Wesli and Lakou Mizik; award-winning Puerto Rican artists iLE and Fabiola Méndez; and celebrated LGBTQ+ and transgender artists like Chris Pureka and Tourmaline. For select performances, CAA has partnered with Somerville- and Boston-area organizations serving Deaf, Blind, and disability communities, offering free or targeted access, intentional scheduling, and multi-sensory accommodations to expand participation.

Tenancy in the Armory enables CAA to deliver this community benefit at scale. The Armory's central location, accessibility, and multi-use design allow CAA to serve as **a public-facing civic resource for Somerville**, supporting artistic production, education, performance, and community gathering while ensuring that arts and culture remain accessible, representative, and embedded in daily civic life. Please see our supplementary materials for additional examples of how CAA's five signature programs center diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Operational Capacity

CAA demonstrates strong operational capacity to deliver its proposed services effectively and sustainably. The organization is led by an experienced co-directorship team and supported by a paid

staff of eight full-time and approximately twenty-five part-time employees, as well as an active Board of Directors and Advisory Council providing governance, legal, HR, and strategic support. (See Appendix 4 for leadership bios and org chart).

CAA operates with established administrative, financial, technical, and facilities systems that support a **high volume of programming and public use**. The organization routinely manages over 700 events annually, requiring coordinated staffing, scheduling, production, marketing, ticketing, front-of-house operations, and facilities management within a shared, multi-tenant environment.

With nearly two decades of experience stewarding complex public-facing arts operations in the Armory, CAA has demonstrated the leadership, infrastructure, and institutional knowledge necessary to uphold its programming, partnerships, and community commitments over time.

CAA's long-term presence in the Armory has provided continuity, institutional knowledge, and operational stability within a complex, multi-tenant civic facility. The organization's experience stewarding public-facing arts programming at scale, while maintaining positive relationships with artists, tenants, and the City, positions **CAA as a reliable and low-risk partner for the Armory's continued success**. Through thoughtful planning, collaboration, and sound management, CAA is well positioned to sustain its operations and community impact over the proposed lease term.

The Armory is central to CAA's ability to deliver public benefit at scale, serving as a visible and accessible civic resource for arts, culture, and community life in Somerville. Continued tenancy enables CAA to build on nearly two decades of stewardship while **supporting the City's long-term vision for the Armory as a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable arts center**.

Financial Capacity

CAA demonstrates a strong track record of financial stability and a sustainable, diversified business model that has supported continuous operations for over 18 years. The organization's revenue model includes earned income from space rentals, ticketed performances, and events; contributed revenue from individual donors, foundations, sponsorships, and government sources; and program-specific fundraising, providing resilience across funding cycles.

CAA maintains consistent financial oversight and management practices, supported by experienced executive leadership, an engaged Board of Directors, and regular financial reporting and review. The organization has successfully managed an annual operating budget of \$1M+, met its financial obligations, and adapted its business model in response to changing economic conditions while maintaining programmatic continuity.

Financial documentation submitted with this proposal, including our 990, recent financial statements, budgets, and proof of rent payment (Appendix 4), demonstrates CAA's capacity to meet its obligations and sustain operations within the Armory over the proposed lease term.

Supplier Diversity

CAA is led by a women-led co-directorship team, and the organization's Board President is also a woman, meeting the Commonwealth Supplier Diversity Office definition of woman-led leadership. In addition, CAA's Co-Director/COO identifies as LGBTQ. Organizational leadership, governance, staffing, and volunteer engagement reflect the diversity of the communities CAA serves, including representation across race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and income level. (See Appendix 4 for board and staff bios).

CAA demonstrates an ongoing, organization-wide commitment to equity through its employment practices, governance, and operations. All job postings include salary or pay rate transparency, a non-discrimination statement, and an explicit encouragement for candidates from diverse communities to apply. CAA actively leverages diverse professional and community networks to circulate opportunities and works closely with volunteers and interns from underrepresented backgrounds, providing mentorship, professional development, and employment references.

CAA maintains an active HR Committee composed of the Co-Directors and a Board member with professional expertise in human resources and social work. Equity and inclusion are regularly addressed at both Board and staff levels, including required DEI training for all full-time staff and Board members, most recently conducted in November 2023, with continued training planned. DEI considerations also inform policies related to programming, space use, and community partnerships, ensuring that CAA's leadership and operations remain inclusive, accountable, and responsive.

Please see supplemental materials for additional information demonstrating how CAA's programming and partnerships advance equity.

Commitment to Collaboration

Collaboration is central to CAA's operations and programming, with every event requiring close coordination among staff, artists, cultural workers, vendors, and event organizers. Please see Appendix 4 for lists of partners who have used our spaces over the course of many years.

CAA has a long history of collaboration within the Armory and extensive experience supporting shared building operations, including previously providing building management services that required ongoing coordination, communication, and responsiveness to tenant needs. CAA has collaborated directly with Armory tenants such as Dead Moon Audio, through hiring services and equipment use, and Acoustic Strings, through space exchanges and invitations to concerts, workshops, and educational opportunities. Over the years, Acoustic Strings has used the Café and Performance Hall for recitals, and Dead Moon Audio has been contracted by third party event organizers to provide A/V services in the Performance Hall. CAA actively contributes to a cooperative tenant environment through proactive communication, scheduling coordination, and shared resource management. CAA remains enthusiastic about future collaboration, shared programming, and mutual support that strengthen the Armory as a whole.

Appendix 5: Special Criteria for Performance Hall

Operational Capacity

The Center for Arts at the Armory (CAA) has extensive experience operating the Performance Hall as a high-capacity, multi-use venue serving artists, audiences, community organizations, and the City of Somerville. For nearly two decades, CAA has managed a diverse, year-round schedule of large-scale public events, including concerts, performances, festivals, markets, civic uses, and community gatherings. This work requires sophisticated coordination of scheduling, logistics, staffing, safety protocols, policies, and facility maintenance. CAA routinely manages hundreds of Performance Hall events annually and brings deep institutional knowledge of the space, its infrastructure, and its role within a multi-tenant civic building.

Artistic and Cultural Emphasis

CAA's programming for the Performance Hall prioritizes artistic, cultural, and community-oriented events and reflects a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Hall regularly presents music, dance, theater, circus, podcasts, literary events, film, comedy, interdisciplinary performance, culturally specific programming and more alongside free and low-cost community events and markets. CAA serves hundreds of artists each year by providing accessible, professional presentation opportunities and actively curates programming that reflects the cultural diversity of Somerville and the Greater Boston region. Community-oriented uses such as the Somerville Winter Farmers Market, elections, and other civic events remain a valued and integral part of the Hall's identity, consistent with the Armory Master Plan's goal of maintaining a diverse mix of uses.

Limited Private Use Policy

CAA's use of the Performance Hall includes a limited number of private rentals, which fall well under the threshold maximum of 25% of total Performance Hall events in a calendar year.

CAA maintains a transparent rental policy and pricing structure that clearly outlines availability, booking processes, and costs. Discounted and subsidized rates are offered to local artists, nonprofit organizations, and community groups to ensure equitable access to the Performance Hall.

Accessibility, Equity & Transparency

Accessibility, equity, and transparency are central to CAA's management of the Performance Hall. CAA maintains clear and transparent access policies describing who may use the space, how reservations are made, and how programming decisions are informed, and communicates this information directly to prospective users through its booking and inquiry process. Event calendars, booking opportunities, and open calls are communicated through CAA's website, digital platforms, and community networks.

CAA maintains an open and inclusive approach to use of the Performance Hall and allows a wide range of artists, organizations, and community groups to book the space. As stated in

CAA's Non-Discrimination Policy, access is not restricted based on identity or affiliation, and CAA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in its operations or provision of services.

At the same time, CAA maintains clear boundaries to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff, artists, and the public. Programming or use that includes violence, hate speech, or discriminatory conduct is not permitted. CAA reserves the right to deny or terminate use of the space where necessary to uphold these standards and to maintain an inclusive and welcoming environment.

CAA conducts proactive outreach to underrepresented and underserved communities and regularly collaborates with community partners to broaden access to the Performance Hall for both artists and audiences.

Alignment with Scope of Work and Armory Master Plan

CAA's operations align closely with the Scope of Work and the Armory Master Plan's goals of sustaining creative and community use, encouraging cultural vibrancy, ensuring financial and operational sustainability, and building public trust through accountability and transparency. The organization balances public benefit with earned revenue through a mission-driven business model that supports both accessibility and long-term viability, reinforced by clear policies and consistent communication.

Civic Access

CAA will provide civic access to the Performance Hall at no charge to the City in accordance with the RFP requirements, including:

- the third Tuesday in September for primary elections, and
- the second Tuesday in November for elections.

These two election dates will be granted scheduling priority over other events or programming in the Performance Hall, as required by the RFP.

CAA will also accommodate up to three additional civic access days per year with at least six months' notice. Because the specific dates for these additional civic uses are not fixed in advance, they will be coordinated with the City based on the existing Performance Hall schedule at the time the request is made. Because Performance Hall bookings are governed by executed contracts, CAA cannot cancel or displace previously confirmed events. When an additional civic access date is requested after a booking is in place, CAA will coordinate with the City to adjust the hours of civic use to accommodate both uses, if possible, recognizing that Performance Hall bookings typically occur in the evening.

Taken together, these policies and practices reflect CAA's long-standing stewardship of the Performance Hall as a civic and cultural resource that is broadly accessible, responsibly managed, and grounded in principles of inclusion, safety, and public trust.

Appendix 6: Community Space – Café

The Center for Arts at the Armory (CAA) proposes to continue operating the Café (Unit 1B) as a welcoming, community-oriented space that aligns with the Armory Master Plan's goal of providing accessible public gathering space within the building. The Café has historically fulfilled this role and remains the most suitable location in the building for a community-facing space due to its first-floor location, accessibility, and adjacency to other public areas of the Armory.

Historically, the Café was envisioned and operated as an activated gathering space that benefited from consistent foot traffic generated by a fully occupied and active Armory building. Following the City's acquisition of the Armory in 2021, the building entered a prolonged transition period during which overall occupancy and daily activity levels were significantly reduced. As a result, incidental foot traffic declined, making it financially unsustainable to maintain extended public hours independent of scheduled programming. In response, CAA adapted its Café operating model to prioritize fiscal responsibility by aligning public hours with events and programmed activity, while continuing to steward the Café as a community-oriented space.

Operating a café within the Armory also presents inherent structural challenges related to the building's design and infrastructure. The Café operates without a stovetop or commercial venting, limiting food preparation options, and does not have a traditional storefront presence visible from the street. Exterior signage and outdoor activation opportunities have been limited, which can make the Café less immediately apparent to passersby unfamiliar with the building. These conditions require a café model that is closely integrated with intentional programming and activation rather than reliance on incidental walk-in traffic.

Public Accessibility

CAA will open the Café to the public on a regular and predictable schedule of **Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 3:00–10:00 PM**, totaling **21 open hours per week**, thereby meeting the minimum access requirement outlined in the RFP. Clear physical signage within the building and digital communication through CAA's website, event calendar, and social media channels will inform the public when and how the Café can be accessed. As overall building occupancy and activity increase following the RFP process, CAA is open to expanding Café public hours in response to demonstrated demand and financial sustainability.

In addition to the proposed Wednesday–Friday public hours, the Café will be open to the public on many additional evenings and on weekends in accordance with CAA's event schedule, while maintaining flexibility to accommodate both free community programming and occasional low-cost ticketed events.

Physical Accessibility

The Café is located on the first floor and is accessible via existing ADA-compliant building entrances. Furniture layout and circulation are arranged to support barrier-free movement to the greatest extent possible, and CAA actively stewards the space with the goal of maximizing accessibility for people with disabilities within the constraints of the existing building.

Affordability and Inclusivity

Access to the Café does not require purchase or paid admission. On Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, the Café will host **free, community-facing arts events**, with **voluntary donations to artists**

welcomed when appropriate. Individuals are welcome to use the space regardless of whether they choose to purchase food or beverages, ensuring broad public access and low barriers to participation.

Activation and Programming

During the COVID-19 pandemic, CAA rebranded the Café as ROOTED Armory Café and Farmstand, reflecting an expanded focus on supporting local artists, makers, and food producers while maintaining the Café's role as a community gathering space. The Café is actively programmed as a community space supporting informal gathering, cultural exchange, and public participation. Regular programming includes live music, comedy, social dancing and dance performance, community singing, readings, open mic nights, workshops and artist receptions, and other smaller-scale performances and events that invite audience engagement in a low-barrier environment.

The Café also functions as an important community gathering place on Saturday mornings and early afternoons during the winter months, when the Somerville Winter Farmers Market is in session from November through April. From 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, the Café provides a warm, welcoming indoor space for market patrons, vendors, and neighbors to gather during a time of year that can be isolating for many community members. During these hours, **Rick & Friends**, the Café's longtime "house band," performs live jazz each Saturday, accepting tips. This informal, intergenerational tradition has become a valued part of the Somerville Winter Farmers Market experience, offering low-barrier arts engagement and social connection during the colder months.

In addition to performance programming, the Café functions as a **gallery space**, hosting rotating visual art exhibitions by local artists every **6–8 weeks** as part of **ROOTED Armory Café Exhibitions**, one of CAA's five signature programs. CAA does not charge artists exhibition fees and does not take a commission on sales, and each exhibition includes at least one **free public reception**.

The Café is also part of CAA's **ROOTED Café and Farmstand model**, developed during the COVID-19 pandemic to support local producers and makers. The Café features locally made food products and goods for sale and incorporates these products into the Café menu when possible, further supporting small businesses and the local creative economy.

CAA's Co-Director/CEO is a member of the Advisory Committees for both SomervilleCAN (Community Agency Network) and SACO (Somerville Arts & Cultural Organizations) / SAE (Somerville Arts Engine). CAA provides the Café as free meeting space for these groups.

Use of Shared Space and Stewardship

As a first-floor, public-facing space, the Café interfaces naturally with shared areas such as the main entrance. CAA has extensive experience managing these interactions collaboratively, including wayfinding, visitor flow, and coordination with other tenants. The Café is actively stewarded during all open hours by on-site CAA staff, ensuring safety, accessibility, maintenance, and a welcoming environment.

Through this proposal, CAA affirms its commitment to maintaining the Café as a visible, accessible, and regularly activated community space that supports the Armory's role as a civic hub for arts, culture, and community life in Somerville, using a sustainable operating model responsive to current building conditions.

Supplemental Materials 1: CAA's Programming

Arts at the Armory

The Center for Arts at the Armory (CAA) exists as Somerville's largest arts organization, serving approximately 250,000 patrons per year through 700+ events. Arts at the Armory's mission is to provide an inclusive and accessible venue that creates opportunities for artists and cultural workers, brings diverse audiences together, enriches and transforms lives, and promotes the creative economy. The repurposed Armory opened its doors as a community arts center in 2008, and Arts at the Armory became the anchor tenant in the building, operating the Performance Hall, Café and B5. After a major capital improvement project in 2023, CAA is even better equipped to host a broad range of performing arts activities (music, theater, dance, circus, film, comedy, and more) as well as private events, visual art exhibitions, and a variety of cultural and community events. CAA's core activity is hosting events, being a great venue, and responding to the community's needs as a "third space" (a community space that is separate from home, work or school). Now within a ten minute walk to the MBTA Green Line, CAA's spaces are even more accessible to the Greater Boston community.

The Armory building, Performance Hall, Café and B5 are fully ADA compliant and accessible. Upon request, we provide ASL interpreters as required. We have invested in accessibility technology to support patrons with hearing impairments and those needing language access, including an in-house assisted listening system consisting of a transmitter and four receivers. This radio frequency and Wi-Fi-enabled system also supports translation services and can be accessed through a downloadable smartphone app. In addition, we secured a grant to purchase a captioning device that will further expand access for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and for patrons requiring translation support. Our website includes an accessibility FAQ addressing topics such as service animals and priority seating, and we send pre-show email confirmations with accessibility information. Event Staff are certified in crowd management, and trained in emergency preparedness, and working sensitively with diverse populations to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for all patrons.

CAA's Lavender Room (B5) in the Armory basement is rented for \$20 per hour to groups and individuals for rehearsals, classes, meetings, workshops and more. It offers tables, chairs and a sofa to comfortably gather and meet. It offers a baby grand piano, and a flexible setup to accommodate rehearsals, workshops and classes.

B5 Recurring Rentals:

- Harp Orchestra (weekly): music rehearsal
- Vinyl Street (weekly): music rehearsal
- Somerville Poetry Workshop (bi-weekly): writing workshop
- Somerville Road Runners (monthly): meeting

Other recent B5 uses:

- Dungeons & Dragons vacation camp
- Breakout room for large hall events/markets
- Acting classes
- Skill sharing workshops
- CPR training

CAA's Café provides free space to artists, cultural workers, and community event organizers, who are only required to meet a modest concessions minimum on the night of their event. It is also available for public ticketed events and private rentals. Below is a listing of some of the recurring events that happen in the Café:

- Mondays, weekly 7 - 10 PM: West Coast Swing
- 1st Tuesday, monthly 6 - 10 PM: Smut Slam
- 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, monthly 6 - 10 PM: Songwriters in the Round
- 2nd Wednesday, monthly 6 - 10 PM: Tunefoolery Coffee House
- 4th Wednesday, monthly 6 - 10 PM: Strummerville
- 2nd Thursday, monthly 6 - 10 PM: Pub Sing
- 3rd Thursday, monthly 6 - 10 PM: Atomic Comedy Improv Night
- 2nd Friday, monthly 6 - 10 PM: Nova Comedy Club Presents: Nebula Night
- 3rd Friday, monthly 6 - 10 PM: Improv Comedy: An Evening Of
- 4th Friday, monthly 6 - 10 PM: WYRD Presents Comedy
- Sundays, monthly (no consistent day), 4 - 8 PM: GottaBal! Dance

CAA hosts many different types of public and private events in our Performance Hall, Café and The Lavender Room. Among others, local non-profit organizations, presenting organizations, dance, theater and circus companies, and independent artists look to CAA to realize their events. The City of Somerville also looks to CAA to host a variety of important civic events from voting days to school dances (please see the attached sampling of events and programming produced by the City of Somerville between 2019-2026). Below is a list of recurring events that take place in the Performance Hall at least once a year.

- The Vegan Market (1 Jan - Mar event, and 1 holiday market late Nov or early - mid Dec)
- Balkan Music Night (once a year, Feb or Mar)
- BLOWW, Boston League of Wicked Wrestlers (3 shows a yr, Mar, June, and Oct)
- The Moth (one show a month, typically 4th Tues)
- Revels Spring Sing (once a yr, typically Mar)
- SCC Annual Meeting (once a yr, Mar or Apr)
- Gaia One-Day Choir (varies a lot, but typically 1 - 3 events a yr)
- Ecstatic Dance (a few a yr)
- Symphony Church (typically twice a yr, on Good Friday and in Nov)
- Bread & Puppet Show (1-2 back to back shows a yr in Apr)
- Esh Circus Arts (3 shows a yr, typically Apr, Jul, and Nov)
- SOS Somerville Open Studios (once a year, first weekend in May)

- Cirque Us! (varies, typically 1-2 shows a yr, usually in Apr / May and/or Sept)
- YUM: A Taste of Immigrant City (once a yr, typically Apr or May)
- National Lawyers Guild Dinner (once a yr, May)
- Beheard.world Gala (once a yr, month varies)
- CaziCon (once a yr, usually Apr or May)
- Plant Market (typically twice a yr, in Jun-Jul and Nov-Dec)
- JAMI Rock and Roll Daycare Preschool Graduation and Celebration (once a yr, Aug)
- School of Rock Watertown (1-2 times a yr, Jan and sometimes Jun)
- Boston Tap Party (once a yr, early Aug)
- Boston Fuzzstival (once a yr, two day weekend in Sept or Oct)
- Commonwealth Pen Show (once a yr, two day weekend event in Sept)
- BSides Cambridge MA (once a yr, Oct)
- HONK! Festival (once a yr, Oct weekend)
- Cirque of the Dead (Oct, multi-day event typically around 10 days)
- Circus Up (once a yr, usually Nov)
- Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (once a yr, Nov)
- Citizens for Juvenile Justice Leadership Conference (once a yr, Dec)
- Vinfen Banquet (once a yr, Nov or Dec)
- Somerville Flea (twice a yr, holiday market in Dec)
- The Somerville Chanukah Party (once a yr, Dec)

In addition, CAA hosts dozens of concerts, podcasts and events each year produced by the most important promoters in Greater Boston—Crossroads/Live Nation, The Bowery, BB (Bill Blumenreich) Presents, Mass Concerts and ONCE. CAA hosted 53 performances hosted by independent promoters in 2025. CAA is in conversation with Celebrity Series and Global Arts Live about their increased use of the Performance Hall for upcoming performances. CAA is also in the process of establishing a partnership with Agora Cultural Architects, a non-profit arts organization currently moving from their Arlington Street Church location near Copley Square, Boston. Arts at the Armory would become Agora's exclusive venue for approximately 12 events produced each year. The mission of Agora is to foster the development, visibility, and sustainability of Latinx arts, culture, and heritage.

CAA works hard to maintain affordable rates, to have a trained staff at the ready to serve, and to outfit, upgrade and maintain our spaces in ways that are necessary and relevant to our community.

To get a multimedia sense of our programming and what happens in our spaces, it is recommended to view:

- CAA's website <https://artsatthearmory.org>, and in particular, CAA's upcoming events page <https://artsatthearmory.org/upcoming-events/> and each of the signature program pages available <https://artsatthearmory.org/our-programs/>
- CAA's Facebook and Instagram pages: <https://www.facebook.com/ArtsattheArmory> and <https://www.instagram.com/artsatthearmory/>
- CAA's Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@thecenterforartsatthearmor4117>

Signature Programs

In addition to independently produced events, Arts at the Armory produces five signature programs that advance equity, amplify diverse voices, and support artists and cultural workers living in Somerville and Greater Boston.

The Spotlight Series: <https://artsatthearmory.org/our-programs/spotlight-series/>

Arts at the Armory curates and produces the Spotlight Series to celebrate the diversity and culture of the community by bringing world-renowned performers, always paired with a local opening act, into the Armory's historic and intimate setting. CAA puts the spotlight on local, national and international artists from diverse communities, and provides platforms that amplify these voices.

The series focuses on music but also includes theater and dance, as well as keynote speakers, to create immersive experiences sparking joy, inspiration, reflection, and intercultural learning. Past and upcoming Spotlight Series performances include:

- Wednesday, May 28, 2025 7pm 10,000 MANIACS
- Saturday, June 14, 2025 7pm SHAWN COLVIN & RODNEY CROWELL
- Friday, June 20, 2025 7pm LEYLA MCCALLA
- Saturday, June 28, 2025 7pm
- & Sunday, June 29, 2025 12:30pm LAURA SANCHEZ'S WELCOME TO HOLLAND!?
- Thursday, November 13, 2025 7pm JANEANE GAROFALO
- Sunday, March 1, 2026 5pm DJEKADY w/BALLA KOKUYATE & MIKE BLOCK
- Friday, March 20, 2026 6PM WE BLACK FOLK: AN INVITATION TO LISTEN
- Friday, April 17, 2026 7PM RUFUS WAINWRIGHT
- Friday, May 9, 2026 7PM GRACE KELLY
- Thursday, May 28 7PM TOURMALINE

Performance Opportunity Program (POP): <https://artsatthearmory.org/our-programs/pop/>

Launched in 2022 in direct response to community feedback identifying a need for more performance venues, the Performance Opportunity Program (POP) exclusively serves local artists and cultural organizers. Through POP, Arts at the Armory secures funding to offer the Performance Hall at a substantially reduced rate, providing access to professional production resources, marketing support, documentation, and audience development opportunities. Upcoming POP events include Teen Empowerment Youth Conference on April 21, 2026, Orchestra Without Borders: Variaciones on May 20, 2026, and Boston Summer Opera on June 7, 2026.

CAA presents approximately 12 POP events annually. Past POP events include:

- Meet the Poets: 30 Somerville Poets Read Their Work
- Charles Coe's Cricket Symphony
- Boston Adavu Dance

- A Celebration of the Life and Art of Charles Daniels
- Battle of the Big Bands (Henry Godfrey)
- Nepali Teej
- Louise Bichan
- DrumatiX Percussive Dance and Drum
- Two Truths and a Lie (storytelling)
- Tongue in Cheek (women's vocal ensemble)
- Afro-pop bands Kina Zoré and Kotoko Brass
- The Aardvark Jazz Orchestra
- Dylan Jack Quartet - Phantom of the Opera
- Somerville Youth Peace Conference

Feet Keep the Beat Festival (FKTB):

<https://artsatthearmory.org/our-programs/feet-keep-the-beat/>

Feet Keep the Beat is a multicultural percussive dance festival launched in 2023 that highlights historically marginalized forms including African, Step, Kathak, Irish, Flamenco, and Tap. The festival centers both cultural pride and intercultural exchange.

Now in its fourth year, FKTB has served 20 Massachusetts-based percussive dance artists. Each year, Arts at the Armory commissions an original, evening-length collaborative work exploring how rhythm and movement connect cultures across time and geography. FKTB also includes free jams and workshops and provides paid professional opportunities that help artists expand their reach, audiences, and teaching opportunities. Arts at the Armory actively represents the FKTB collective to other New England presenters, and functions as a fiscal and administrative base supporting external bookings for this collective.

Each year, CAA and FKTB share a summer weekend in late July/early August with Boston Tap Party, produced by Deborah Mason, whose studio is based in Somerville. This allows CAA and Deborah Mason to share production costs such as the rental/installation of a percussive dance floor in the Performance Hall, and to engage in shared promotion.

Somerville Winter Farmers Market (SWFM): <https://www.somwintermarket.org/>

The Somerville Winter Farmers Market operates Saturdays from November through April and is free and open to the public. Approximately 1,200 people attend weekly. 70+ small business vendors participate each season, including 9 farms. The market integrates arts and culture through paid live music by local musicians on the mainstage and jazz performances in the Café.

Arts at the Armory fundraises annually to provide a \$15 SNAP Match for SNAP-eligible customers, totaling over \$25,000 per year. Approximately 75 SNAP-eligible customers attend the market each week and use SNAP and HIP benefits. The market does approximately \$75,000 in SNAP transactions per season. The market is governed by DEI principles through diverse vendor selection, linguistic accessibility including a Mandarin interpreter, and the recognition that food is culture.

ROOTED Armory Café Visual Arts Exhibitions:

<https://artsatthearmory.org/our-programs/rotating-exhibits/>

CAA's ROOTED Café exhibitions provide free, rotating visual arts exhibitions for approximately 10 Somerville and Greater Boston-based artists annually. There is no cost to exhibit, no commission on sales, and no fee for artist receptions. Artists work closely with staff and volunteers to design, install, and promote their exhibitions in a supportive, accessible environment. The webpage above details past and current exhibitions.

Armory RFP Appendix 2: Space Form

Applicant Name: _____

Instructions:

1. Applicants must fill out rows F, G and H for particular rooms on which they wish to bid, and all three columns (F, G and H) must be completed for rooms on which you bid.
2. Applicants must propose a lease length of either: a) three (3) years or five (5) years in Column G.
3. Applicants may not place a bid BELOW the Minimum Annual Rent + Fee listed in Column E for a given space. Applicants may propose an Annual Rent & Fee **up to, but not more than, \$2.00/sf** ABOVE the listed Minimum Annual Rent and Fee for a particular space.
4. The City reserves the right to make partial awards by for only some of the spaces proposed on this form, considering an applicant's prioritization of spaces listed in Column H. Applicants bidding on multiple rooms should rank their chosen spaces in order of priority in Column H, with "1" being the highest priority.
5. An Annual CAM (common area maintenance) fee of \$1.50/sf, listed in Column D, will be charged for all leasable spaces in the Armory. Please include this fee when completing Column F for all desired spaces.

Example: An applicant wishing to bid on Unit 3B must complete Column F with an amount between \$24.00/sf and \$26.00/sf. Bids of \$24.00/sf or \$25.75/sf would be acceptable, but a bid of \$23.00/sf or \$27.00/sf would NOT be acceptable.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Room Number	Room Size (sf)	Minimum Annual Rent	Annual CAM Fee	Minimum Annual Rent + Fee	PROPOSED ANNUAL RENT + FEE (\$/SF)	PROPOSED Lease Length (3 or 5 years)	APPLICANT PRIORITY (1 = highest)
Third Floor							
3A	1,435 sf	\$22.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$24.00/sf			
3B	614 sf	\$22.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$24.00/sf			
Second Floor							
2A	540 sf	\$22.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$24.00/sf			
2B	570 sf	\$22.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$24.00/sf			
2C	596 sf	\$22.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$24.00/sf			
2D	815 sf	\$22.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$24.00/sf			
First Floor							
1A	1,150 sf	\$25.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$27.00/sf			
1B	1,310 sf	\$22.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$24.0/sf			
1C (Performance Hall and Mezzanine)	8,755 sf	\$4.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$6.00/sf			
Basement							
B1	1,650 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B2	300 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B3	140 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B4	210 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B5	1,010 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B6	415 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B7	400 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B8	205 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B9	500 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B10	740 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B11	570 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			
B12	400 sf	\$16.50/sf	\$1.50/sf	\$18.00/sf			

Applicant Signature: _____