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## **Tacoma Arts Live Launches Small Business Incubator: Accelerating Creative Enterprise To Amplify Creative Enterprise in the South Sound**

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**TACOMA, WASH.**— Tacoma Arts Live is pleased to announce the launch of a new initiative that will fuel small business development and bolster arts professionals in the South Sound. **Accelerating Creative Enterprise (ACE)** is a three-part program that will incubate and accelerate BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and women-owned/led small businesses with creative and arts-focused entrepreneurs.

### **ACE will support these through:**

- Rent-free office and conference space at the historic Tacoma Armory
- Professional development workshops for small businesses, emerging non-profits, and creative professionals
- Event sponsorship for at least three small businesses to produce events at the Tacoma Armory or at other large scale venues

“Tacoma Arts Live is committed to transforming the historic Tacoma Armory into a welcome, diverse hub for arts, culture, and community,” explains Executive Director, David Fischer. “This goes beyond our own season of festivals, concerts, exhibits, theatrical productions, and education programs. It is about providing resources to others – including the Tacoma Armory venue itself. We are delighted to launch this new incubator to accelerate community-led entrepreneurship and artistic capacity.”

“The arts are a huge generator of economic activity in the South Sound and nationally,” continues Fischer. “We will diversify and amplify local economic impact through ACE, supporting a range of entrepreneurial activity. Independent creative professionals such as musicians, dancers, actors, artists, emergent event producers, other small businesses, and technicians are all invited to participate in this opportunity to sharpen their potential in the “gig economy.” Equity is a cornerstone of this initiative, focusing resources for BIPOC and women-led enterprise.”

ACE aims to provide strategic support in areas identified by the community itself. Tacoma Arts Live has been in dialogue with community leaders since relocating its new headquarters to the Hilltop in 2021. Recurring themes for growth include the need for larger gathering spaces and the challenges of sustaining entrepreneurial activity in a neighborhood and city that are experiencing rising expenses to locate and do business.

“Since relocating Tacoma Arts Live’s base of operations to the Hilltop, our goal has not been to roll into the neighborhood with our own vision, but to deeply listen and consider how we might dovetail with the creativity and ingenuity already present. ACE is about supporting both economic and cultural vitality,” says Director of Community Engagement, Antonio Gómez, who is also a Hilltop resident.

To realize the goals of providing rent-free space and professional development to local small businesses and creative professionals, Tacoma Arts Live teamed up with Tacoma-Pierce County Economic Development Board and a handful of other South Sound organizations, which successfully secured funding from the Washington State Department of Commerce.

ACE is [currently accepting applicants to participate](#) in the rent-free office space, professional development workshops, and event sponsorship. Participation in the program is open to individuals, small businesses and emerging non-profits including the following:



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- A BIPOC or woman-led small business (with an established business or new business idea)
- A small business person located in or focused on serving the Hilltop neighborhood
- A BIPOC or woman leader developing a new nonprofit idea
- A BIPOC or woman creative professional looking to take "gig work" or "side hustle" to the next level (actors, musicians, dancers, writers, theater techs, craft-makers, etc.)

Interested applicants should apply [here](#) or contact Antonio Gómez at 253-346-1399 or [ace@tacomaartslive.org](mailto:ace@tacomaartslive.org). The simple application process is streamlined to support newcomers to small business and working creative professionals.

Additionally, Tacoma Arts Live is reviewing proposals from entities interested in providing professional development workshops for small businesses, arts professionals, and emergent nonprofits. To propose services for participants in ACE or to learn more about contracting opportunities, see [Request for Proposals](#).

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Tacoma Arts Live's mission is to energize the community through live performance. Founded in 1979, Tacoma Arts Live is a non-profit organization recognized for leadership in presenting world-class performing artists and providing one of the largest arts access and education programs in Washington State. Tacoma Arts Live is located at Tacoma Armory and presents events in venues throughout the South Sound. Learn more at [TacomaArtsLive.org](http://TacomaArtsLive.org).

**Tacoma Arts Live gratefully acknowledges the following Sponsors for support of the 2022-23 Season:** [ArtsFund](#), [Arts WA](#), [Bamford Family Foundation](#), [Boeing](#), [Columbia Bank](#), [Florence B. Kilworth Foundation](#), [The Forest Foundation](#), [KNKX](#), [Mary Bridge Children's - Multicare](#), [M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust](#), [Tacoma Creates](#), [National Endowment for the Arts](#), [Pierce County](#), [Safeco Insurance Foundation](#), [Umpqua Bank](#), [US Bank Foundation](#), [The Washington State Arts Commission](#), and [William Kilworth Charitable Foundation](#).