

May 23, 2022

Dear Mendocino County Board of Supervisors:

With the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Mendocino can leverage federal funding to positively impact our communities now and well into the future. Our rural and remote region of Northern California has limited access to arts and cultural programming. For 15 years, the Mendocino Film Festival has run an annual community-driven local film festival to bring arts, culture, diverse stories, education, and visiting filmmakers to a community that has limited access to independent film. We like to say that the Mendocino Film Festival brings the world to Mendocino.

Having to cancel the 2020 and 2021 festivals, due to Covid, put us in catch-up mode and highlighted the improvements that are sorely needed and require funding. However we did not sit idly by. We expanded our Classic Film Series and year-round programming, experimented with outdoor screenings and virtual screenings, and developed a much-celebrated return of the festival for 2022 that includes an expanded high school program that now adds Fort Bragg High School to our Mendocino High School outreach. Our printed program book (10,000 copies) is distributed though out the county and state.

Our 300,000 annual budget is pulled together from the financial support we raise from the community:

- Membership (44,000 dollars)
- Sponsorship (108,000 dollars)
- Advertising (9,000 dollars)
- In-kind donations (50,000)
- Ticket Sales (50,000)

Yet there is more work to be done. And it will require expanded funding.

A \$200,000.00 investment in this county event will help us bring more people into the area for the first time, including journalists, podcasters, filmmakers, and film fans. The Festival is one of the premiere events of the year in Mendocino County, done by a shoe-string group of volunteers, a small board, and very limited staff.

ARPA funds would allow us to:

- Revamp our website and expand the marketing of the festival.
- Increase our footprint in the county including Ukiah, Hopland, and Willits, as part of year-round programming goals.
- Modernize the festival with scanners for venues, a new ticketing system, new computer equipment, and the development of an app.
- Hire more staff including a development director to better source national sponsors and supporters.
- Expand our Young Filmmakers Training program to further engage students from Fort Bragg High School and Mendocino High School

As you make plans for the ways in which ARPA funding will be dedicated in Mendocino County, consider how an investment in the Mendocino Film Festival strengthens the fabric of our community with arts, culture, education, and job training, and brings visitors and filmmakers alike to our stunning location.

We ask that you please allocate funding for the Mendocino Film Festival and empower us with the resources we need to bring the world to Mendocino.

Sincerely,

Angela Matano