



THE ARTS CENTER

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PRESS RELEASE

The Arts Center has been awarded \$500,000 through the North Dakota Department of Commerce's Destination Development Grant Program. The grant brings the organization significantly closer to completing its Raising the Bar for the Arts capital campaign and expanding access to creative learning opportunities in Jamestown.

The funding supports renovation of the former Wonder Bar building, located directly west of The Arts Center. Once complete, the new addition will feature classrooms, studios, a culinary kitchen, gallery commons, courtyard, and storage space—tripling the organization's capacity to serve youth and community members.

"This grant gets us very close to reaching our fundraising goal," said Mindi Schmitz, executive director of The Arts Center. "It's an incredible show of confidence in what we're building here: a permanent home for creativity that reaches every age group in our community."

The Raising the Bar for the Arts project directly addresses a long-standing programming gap for preschool, middle school, and high school students who currently lack access to visual arts opportunities. The expansion will allow The Arts Center to grow its cornerstone Arts After School program and introduce new initiatives including art therapy, culinary arts classes, and high school partnerships with the James Valley Career and Technology Center.

"Our community has always believed in the power of the arts to connect and inspire," said Riley Akervik, president of the Jamestown Fine Arts Association Board. "This project is about expanding our building and investing in the next generation of creators and innovators."

To date, The Arts Center has raised more than \$2.6 million towards its capital campaign goal. This will allow The Arts Center to complete phase one of its renovation project. Phase 2 will renovate two upstairs apartments into housing for visiting artists. Fundraising efforts will continue as the project nears completion, and naming opportunities remain available for supporters who wish to leave a lasting mark on the space.

Construction is on schedule, with a grand opening event planned for November 13, 2025. Full programming in the new addition is expected to begin in January 2026, including use of the new culinary kitchen by Jamestown Public Schools and community members.

The \$500,000 grant was awarded as part of the 2025 Destination Development Grant Program, a \$15 million initiative supporting projects that enhance tourism, recreation, and cultural opportunities throughout North Dakota. 23 applications were awarded from 106 applicants.

For more information about Raising the Bar for the Arts or to donate to the campaign, visit jamestownarts.com or call 701-251-2496.