

## ABSTRACT

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Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the questions to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name: Artists For Humanity EpiCenter

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Address: 100 West Second Street

City/State/Zip: Boston, MA 02127-1112

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### 1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

The Artists For Humanity EpiCenter is a pure reflection of our organization's mission, goals and sensibilities. This is a facility completely dedicated to the voice, vision and virtuosity of urban youth. It further captures our overarching goal of sustainability by capturing renewable energy sources through features such as a 49-kilowatt solar panel array. These progressive design elements have not gone unnoticed. The EpiCenter was the first building in Boston to receive Platinum LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

In 2000, facing dislocation from urban redevelopment, Artists For Humanity (AFH) decided to develop our own youth arts facility. We recognized that our arts and enterprise programming could not exist without a facility. We saw this challenge as an opportunity to significantly impact the field of art and youth as well as to redirect the future of Boston's urban renewal. We began by creating a "wish list." First and foremost, Artists For Humanity hoped to stay within Fort Point, allowing us to draw upon the creativity, resources, and vitality of New England's largest arts community. We wanted to stay close to the business community to continue to connect Boston's professionals and urban young people with each other. We hoped to have a space large enough to house an extraordinary gallery of youth created and inspired artwork. We wanted a gallery that would allow us to invite large groups to experience a piece of our young artists' world. And we needed a building large enough to allow us to continue to grow and serve hundreds of young people each and every year.

AFH's decision to "build green" was a natural continuum of our work that is centered on the sustainability of inner-city teens as they learn about art, themselves, and the environment of the world around them. A concern about the environment and sustainability is a natural extension of artists' need to find creative and economic approaches to reflecting the complex society in which we live. As stated by Artists For Humanity co-founder Carlo Lewis, "The issue is architecture versus green architecture. Green architecture should be considered good architecture or good design, and part of a building's overall aesthetics. Quality design is part of AFH's mission."

Highlights of the Artists For Humanity EpiCenter:

- A 23,500 square foot center that houses Artists For Humanity's offices, programs, and gallery.
- A first-class gallery that houses a nationally unparalleled exhibition space for youth-created and inspired art. This space is widely rented for corporate meetings and private functions, and introduces a diverse group of adults to the ideas and concerns of urban young people while earning revenue for Artists For Humanity.
- Available space for use by community-based organizations.
- Designed flexible spaces to enable us to expand our programs to better serve our youth.

### 2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

The Artists For Humanity EpiCenter merits the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* because it pioneers a future shift to affordable, sustainable design and reflects the needs and innovation of our social enterprise programs for Boston's young people. Moreover, the EpiCenter has had a resounding impact on Boston's cultural and environmental communities as a public event space, resource for environmental awareness and host of the nation's largest exhibited collection of youth-created art.

Consider the following:

- In October 2005, the Artists For Humanity EpiCenter was awarded LEED Platinum Certification from the United States Green Building Council; it was the first project in the city of Boston to have earned this distinction. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings.
- The EpiCenter was also recognized in 2005 and 2006 with nine awards for design excellence.
- At \$191 per square foot, the EpiCenter demonstrates the feasibility - and affordability - of green design and the future role it could play in our changing built environment.
- The EpiCenter has allowed AFH to significantly impact the cultural economy by facilitating a significant youth/program expansion. Since we relocated in 2004, AFH has doubled our youth employment from 60 to 120 youth; added instruction in two new media; and created eight new positions for professional artists.
- In January 2005, Artists for Humanity introduced "Spiritus Solaris," an interactive environmental education program designed to educate the public on the ways energy and the environment affect their lives. Over the last two years, AFH has shared our learnings with more than 16,000 community members, architects, developers, green building engineers, college students and artists.
- The EpiCenter offers an exciting venue for special events near downtown Boston, the new convention center and public transportation. Since September 2004, AFH has hosted 136 events in the EpiCenter's gallery.
- The EpiCenter is the fourth artist-owned building in Boston's Fort Point, which helps preserve this neighborhood's history and character as the largest arts district in New England.
- It provides local artists much-needed studio space. AFH collaborates with the Fort Point Artist Coalition and the South Boston Arts Association to provide studio space two nights a week, free of charge, to local artists. We also provide studio space for teen programming in collaboration with the South Boston Neighborhood Health Center.