



Think It: Arts Work Fund Grant Application  
October 2020

**Background: Tell us about your organization (and the other organizations involved in this project, if applicable) More than your mission statement, give us a sense of what drives your work and what you are most proud of in terms of your organization's accomplishments**

Teatro Vista, Theatre with a View, was founded in 1990 by Edward Torres and Henry Godinez to address the lack of opportunities for Latinx artists and other artists of color within the Chicago theater community. In 1995, Henry Godinez left the company and Edward Torres became Artistic Director. Under Torres' direction, Teatro Vista used the stage to engage, connect and challenge audience members through Latinx stories that reflect the universality of our humanity. Today, Teatro Vista is in its 30th season, having grown to be Chicago's only Equity Latinx theater company producing full scale, Latinx theatrical productions in English. Teatro Vista has produced over 60 theatrical works since its inception, many of which have been world or Chicago premieres.

Teatro Vista is dedicated to nurturing & presenting voices that explore the wealth and variety of the human experience from a Latinx perspective. Our ensemble of professional theater artists do so through theater productions that personalized established plays, as well as by commissioning and creating new works and presenting classic plays featuring artists of color. We are committed to nurturing new talent & supporting the diverse individual interests & efforts of our ensemble members.

The success of our productions, combined with the support offered by individuals from diverse racial and economic backgrounds, has reaffirmed the company's relevance and the need for stories that highlight the lives and culture of Latinxs in Chicago. We take pride in the contributions that we make to diversify Chicago's theater audiences and to produce an unmatched repertory of plays. Teatro Vista has grown to be Chicago's only Equity Latinx theater company focused on ensemble guided, Chicago style, Latinx theatrical productions in English.

The work of Teatro Vista is driven by the ensemble. Our ensemble members have guided the vision and mission of this organization since its inception, and we are proud of the collective accomplishments they hold. The future of our organization rests in Teatro Vista's ability to support, develop, guide and highlight the work of the ensemble.

**Project: What question(s) will be addressed, and how was it identified? How will you explore this question?**

This moment presents a unique opportunity within the arts and culture sectors. Not only is change being demanded of us, “The Great Pause” allows us to be reflective and intentional with what kind of change we collectively desire to make. While conventional theatrical production is unavailable to us in service of community health, we are in a time that gives us permission to reorganize our own structures and reimagine the function of these processes.

Teatro Vista is in such a place; one of enthusiasm and determination and change. After a recent change with the artistic director stepping down, the organization is in a moment of infinite potential. We desire to be in alignment with the greater cultural values shift. This necessitates a shift in management, organization, and leadership. Teatro Vista is ready and willing to experiment with this structural reconsideration. Innovating and implementing new models of organization; the new goals of Teatro Vista include assisting the Board of Directors in finding a model for serving the organization best, reimagining the structure of their organization from one of hierarchy to one of ecology, and to enrich the artistic ensemble relationship with the organization.

**Leadership: Who Will be involved? Provide a one to two sentence background of the key project staff, volunteers, or partners.**

BLVE Consults' President Brian Loevner who has over 20 years in the non-profit industry will spearhead these efforts and guide Teatro Vista through this journey. He will be assisted by Assistant Producer Kelsey McGrath. BLVE is a creative consulting and theatrical production organization focused on working with leaders, administrators, producers and artists of incredible quality thereby supporting the vital non-profit arts, culture, social service and social justice communities. BLVE's mission is to create stronger organizations by building effective systems and processes and encouraging transformational leadership. BLVE connects organizations back to the mission and values of their work by building the structure necessary to make space for creativity, ideas, and innovation.

Assisting BLVE's efforts will be Teatro Vista's Managing and Development Director Sylvia Lopez who has been with the company for close to four years and has over 18 years of

experience in the nonprofit sector. Due to limited resources, an assistant will be hired to manage the administrative duties needed to complete the research. Additionally, the Teatro Vista Board and the Ensemble will actively participate in such an important step to make the organization the best that it can be.

**Timeline: What is the timeframe for the project, including start and end dates?**

The time frame for the project will be November 1- December 31, 2020.

**Assessment: How will you know if your activities have effectively met your challenge? How will progress be tracked?**

Progressive, personalized goals require a thorough process. The first step of which is to gather knowledge, thoughts and opinions on the future from Teatro Vista's Staff, Board, and ensemble. Here, data is gathered about what is working and what isn't working with the current system. More information is gathered about what's important to the organization and goals for its future. Individual ideas and perspectives are collected around moving forward. From here, data assessment takes place. Common threads and disparities are articulated, as well as what change is collectively envisioned.

The analysis phase takes into consideration the results of this assessment and asks what model would work best for Teatro Vista's intended trajectory. Since every organization has a certain capacity for change, this is taken into account and a plan is refined by this feedback loop. This process is an experimental exchange of question, idea, and solution; trial and error.

Once this research yields steady, amicable solutions, the recommendation strategizing begins. Here, specific changes are named and assigned; power redistribution is planned and envisioned; and processes are shifted or created to better serve the gathered consensus. This, too, is another exchange of information, as policies and roles are adjusted, decided, and declared.

The end of the process leaves Teatro Vista with an energized, renewed sense of self and the steps to execute this co-created reimagination of operation.

**Impact: How might this impact your organization?**

The internal collaborative work that will be done with BLVE will be a teamwork building process between the Board, Ensemble and Staff. Together they will work on a common goal to find the best possible model for the benefit of Teatro Vista's future. This team effort will make Teatro Vista the best version of itself and will propel the organization into the

next level - a growth that will motivate, inspire and solidify the Board, Ensemble, and Staff to a renewed and invigorating commitment to Teatro Vista and ensure its longevity and sustainability for the years to come. Teatro Vista will be left with actionable strategy and specific recommendations. One that's rooted in the research and catered to the company and their higher vision of the future.