

# NOBLESVILLE THEATER STUDY

LOCAL NEEDS, CAPACITY AND COMPARABLE PROJECTS  
ASSEMBLED BY NICKEL PLATE ARTS IN FALL, 2022

# OVERVIEW

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2022, we surveyed 14 local theater organizations and 31 individuals about their current and future operating needs. We also researched 36 venues in the 11 Statewide Cultural Districts and 4 additional communities.

Existing Noblesville Theater groups struggle to access space. Their business plans and cultural impact are limited by the spaces they can access. The majority would want to use a Noblesville public theater venue at least once a year. A space with 400-600 seats would seem to be a good fit.

In the other Cultural Districts around the state, the majority have large performing arts centers that include multiple venues and are operated by or in cooperation with the local arts agency. We include more details about 6 smaller venues with 400-600 seats.



# SURVEY DISTRIBUTION LIST

## THE SURVEY WAS SENT TO ORGANIZATIONS



- The Belfry Theatre
- NCAC (present Shakespeare in the Park)
- The Attic Theatre
- Improbable Fiction Theatre Company
- Hyperion Players
- Poet-Ape Productions
- Underdog Theatre
- Page & Stage Theatre
- The Brick Room
- Roots School of Theatre
- Prism Project
- Christian Youth Theater
- Gigi's Playhouse
- Stone Soup Children's Musical Theatre
- Asante Art Institute

- Nancy Lafferty
- Betsy Reason
- Joni Corbett
- David Heighway
- David Malloy
- Rebecca Roy
- Christy Clinton
- Jeff Bick
- Ian Hauer
- James Holbrook
- Sean Wood & Clay
- Howard
- Spike Wilson
- Eric Sablan
- Brad Roots
- Kelly Fischer
- Laura Baltz
- Joey Murello
- Angela Skaggs
- Greg Richards
- Ron Richards
- David Melton
- Emilia Seabourne
- Quentin James
- Eric Matters
- Glenn Dobbs
- Susan Nieten
- Rebecca McConnell
- Vernon Williams
- Keesha Dixon
- Celeste Williams

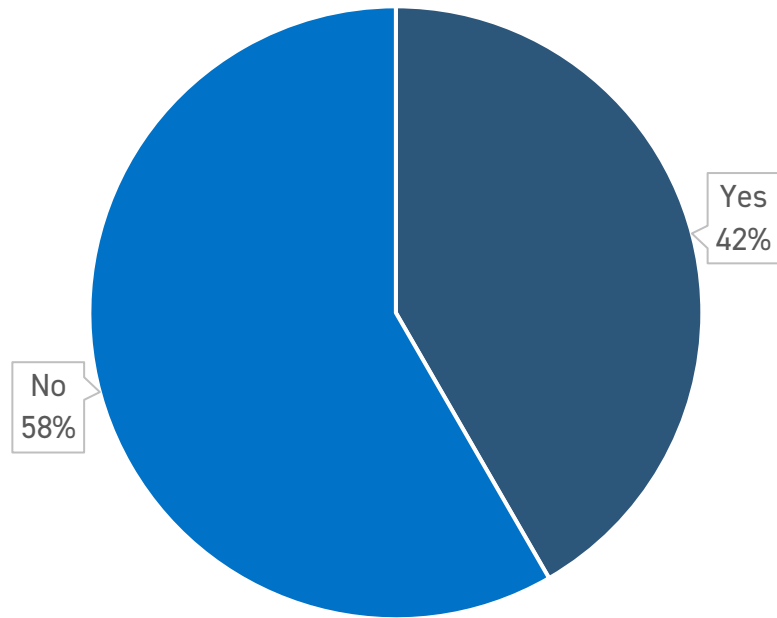


## AND TO THESE INDIVIDUALS



# NON-PROFITS STATUS

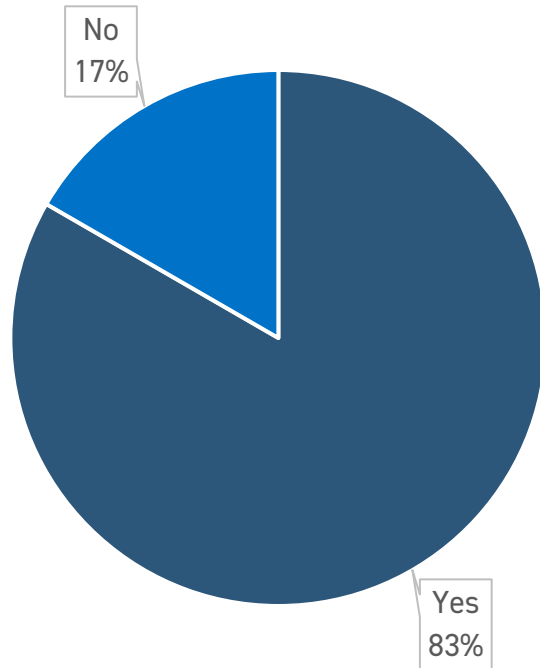
501-c-3 status?



The majority of existing theater groups do not have 501-c-3 status and don't want to become nonprofits

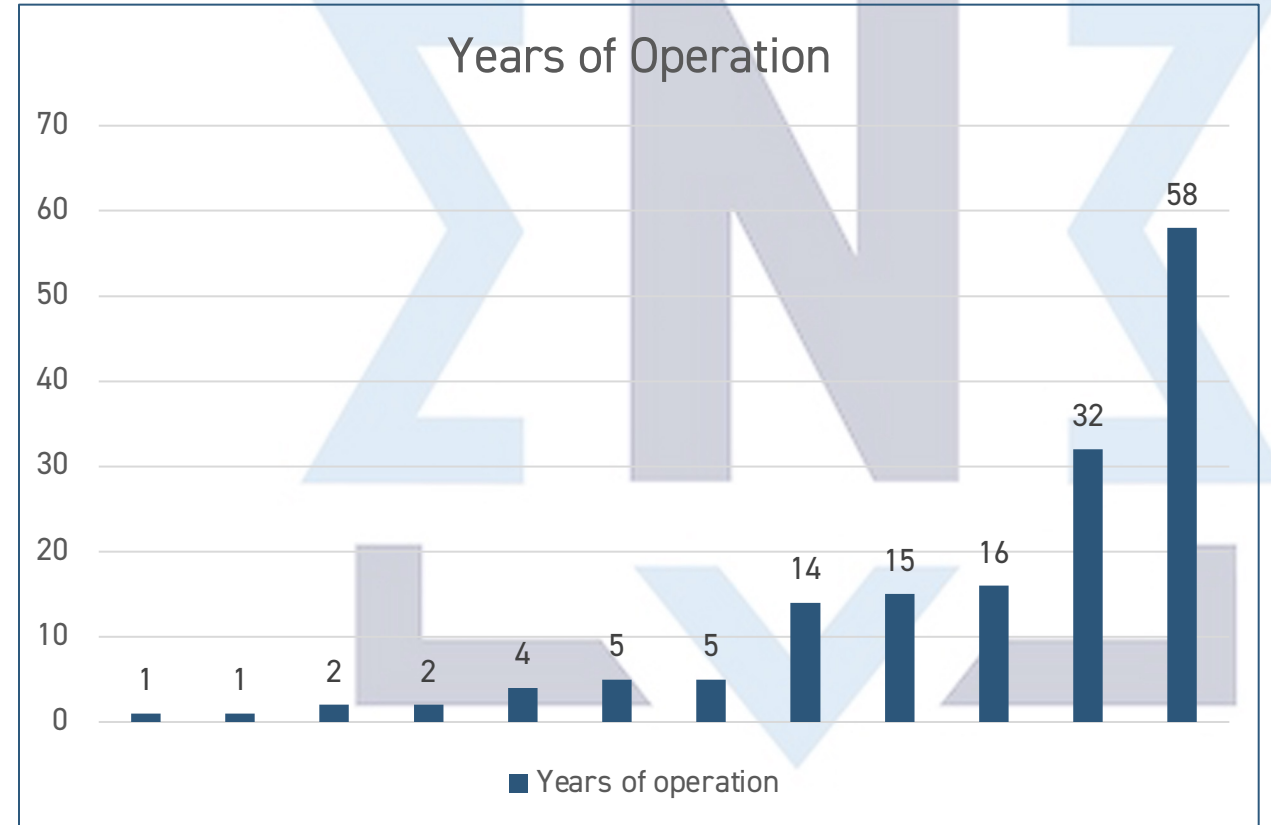
# CURRENT OPERATIONS:

Are they currently staging productions?



Key reasons for not staging productions:

- Not enough operating capital to get started
- No access to space



# SPACES & SEASONS:

## CURRENTLY-USED LOCATIONS



- Ivy Tech Noblesville
- The Switch Theater (Fishers)
- Theater at the Fort (Lawrence)
- Noblesville Alleys
- Lacy Arts Building (under construction)
- Holy Family Episcopal Church of Fishers
- The CAT theater in Carmel
- Marian University
- Roots School of Theater (Fishers)
- First United Methodist Church (Noblesville)
- Other local churches (for rehearsals)

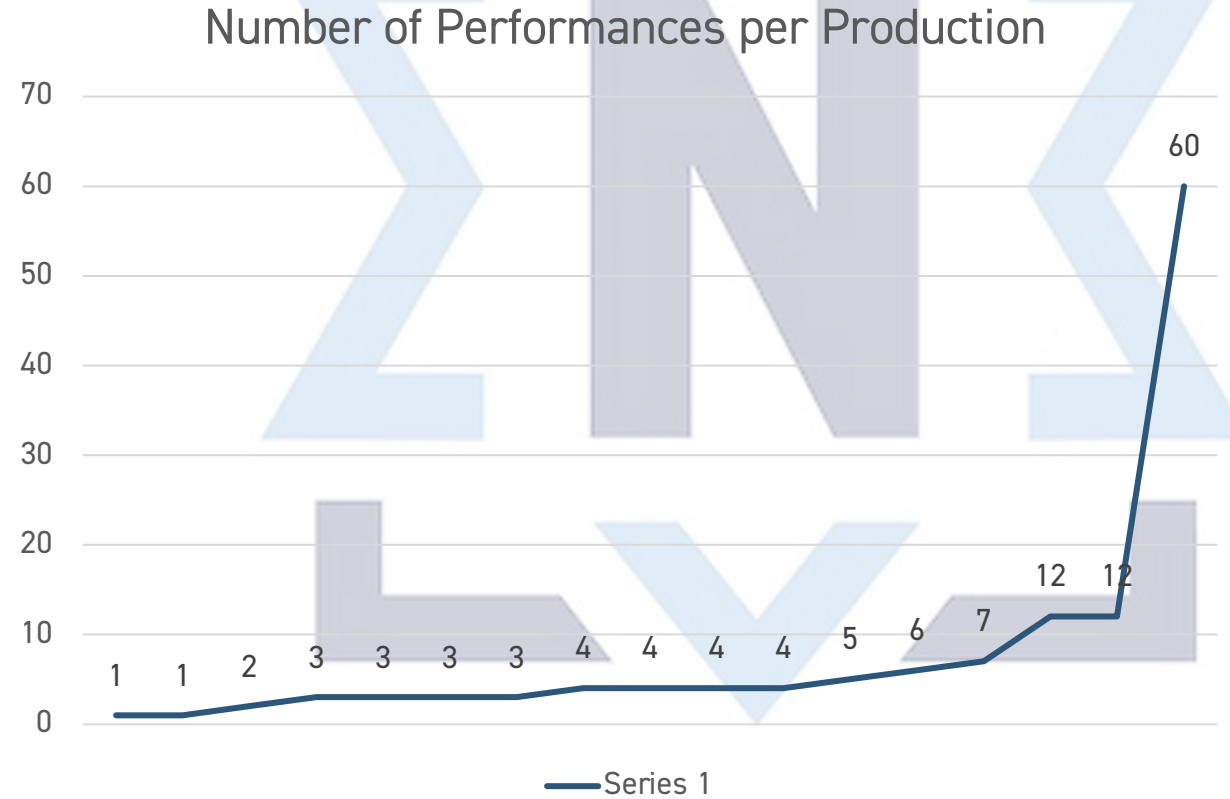
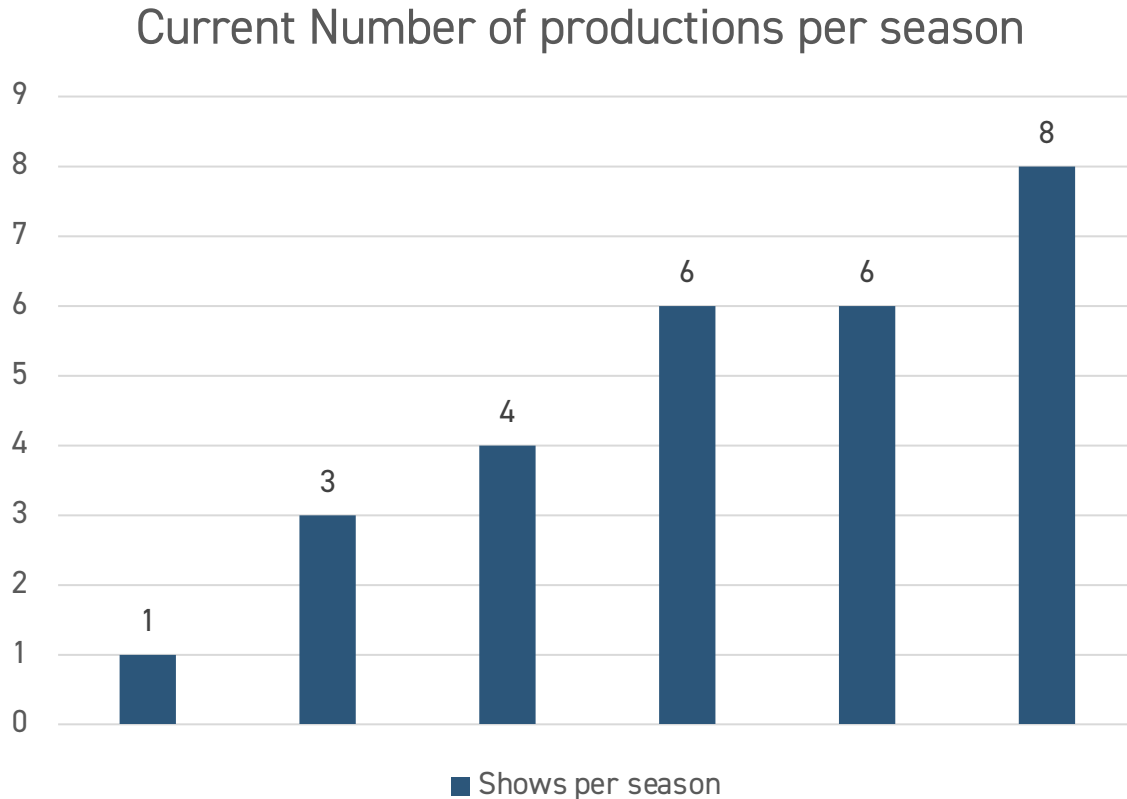
- Jan-Mar
- School year (Aug 1-May 31)
- Aug-July
- Shows in Oct, Mar & Jun
- Oct-June



## WHEN DO THEY GENERALLY STAGE PRODUCTIONS?



# CURRENT NUMBER OF PRODUCTIONS & PERFORMANCES



Existing theater groups currently put on between 1 and 8 productions per year and each of those productions have between 1 and 60 performances/shows.

# FUTURE GOALS:

## AVERAGE SEASON



Currently, the average Noblesville-area theater group is staging 4 to 5 productions per season with between 4 and 8 performances per production.

This range also appears to be the ideal goal for most groups.

There are several groups that are not currently producing shows that would like to be staging 3 or more shows with multiple performances in the near future, if they had access to affordable performance space.

If the respondents to our survey could all produce their ideal seasons, **Noblesville would host 50 theatrical productions each year.**



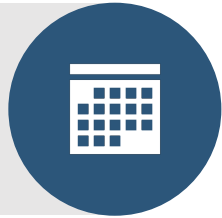
## IDEAL AVERAGE SEASON IN THE FUTURE





# PERFORMANCE DATES, TICKET PRICES & SALES:

## PREFERRED DAYS OF THE WEEK:



- Thursday through Sunday evenings
- Saturday & Sunday afternoons
- Occasional Wednesday and Thursday evenings

## Ticket prices:

- \$0-\$25
- Most frequent price was \$10
- Average ticket price is \$11.33
- Some groups give discounts for military, elderly, and children

## Ticket sales:

- Up to 10,000 tickets sold per season
- Average ticket sales appear to be around 125 per season
- Many newer groups are still trying to figure out their average ticket sales



## RANGE OF PRICES



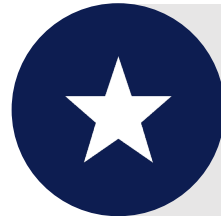
# IDEAL NUMBER OF SEATS:

## CURRENTLY USING



- Most groups are currently performing for 100-200 people per performance.

- We asked “What would be the ideal number of seats (audience size) for your performances?”
- Responses ranged from 100-600.
- A theater with 400-600 seats should serve the needs of most of our existing theater groups in the future.



## IDEAL GOAL



# NUMBER OF ACTORS ENGAGED:

## ACTORS ENGAGED PER SEASON

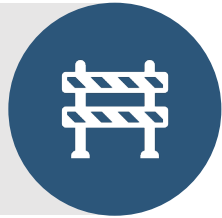


- Ranges from 5-500 per season
- Full gamut of amateur to professional
- Most groups rely on moderately-experienced volunteer actors
- Few currently pay actors for their performances
- Several groups specialize in getting children or people with disabilities to perform, most of which have never performed before



# CURRENT BARRIERS & SPACE NEEDS:

## CURRENT BARRIERS TO STAGING PRODUCTIONS:



- Insufficient or no access to performance space (the most frequent response)
- No access to adequate rehearsal space
- No access to build space for sets
- Adequate time in the performance space to load in, hang lights, run tech
- Cost of renting performance and rehearsal space
- Funding in general

- Respondents use between 4 and 40 weeks for rehearsing productions. The most frequent response was 4-6 weeks of rehearsal time per production.
- Most groups need at least 2 weeks in the performance space to stage productions and perfect their tech
- A couple of groups need to hold all of their rehearsals in their performance space
- 70% of respondents need access to build space for their productions
- Half of respondents do not currently have access to build space for sets



## SPACE NEEDS:



# FACTORS INFLUENCING USE:

## SITE CONCERNS:



- Will there be adequate time for rehearsal in the space?
- Will load-in and load-out of shows be efficient and effective?
- Will there be access to shop space for building sets and props?
- Will there be adequate storage space for set, props, and costumes?
- Will there be high-quality lighting and sound equipment available and will it be professionally maintained?
- Will the space be physically accessible to all?

- Will the space be affordable for rehearsal and performances?
- Will there be adequate marketing & social media?
- How far out can shows be scheduled?
- How will the theater be staffed?



## OPERATING CONCERNS:



# REVIEW OF SPACES

This is a summary of performance spaces in other Indiana Cultural Districts and cities. While the majority of Cultural Districts seem to have larger, multi-purpose venues, we have highlighted 6 smaller venues that seem to mirror Noblesville's theater needs. Funding information is included where available.



# OVERALL SUMMARY

Cultural Districts tend to have performing arts centers that include multiple venues, including:

- A large auditorium or music venue
- One or more smaller-capacity theater spaces
- An event or banquet space

These multi-purpose centers tend to offer a blend of national acts, local productions, and rental opportunities for community events.

Most have relationships with one or more local arts agencies (the city's arts council or performic arts group) and many are operated by the local arts agency, with widely-varying levels of annual support from the city.

Many venues are in historic buildings, while others were purpose-built, but often, public funds were used to build or renovate the spaces at some point.



THE CITY OF

**NOBLESVILLE**

EST. 1823



# COMPARISONS:



## BUSKIRK CHUMLEY THEATER

630 seats and an orchestra pit

Former movie theater

Originally donated to the Bloomington Area Arts Council, now owned and operated by BCT Management, Inc (nonprofit)

Primarily a concert venue



## THE CAT THEATER (CARMEL)

110 seats

A former concert venue renovated into a theater space

It has 7 resident theater companies

Received \$80,000 from Carmel City Council in 2019





# COMPARISONS, CONTINUED



## FORT WAYNE CIVIC THEATER

663 seats

This is a smaller venue within the Arts United Center

It is shared with the Fort Wayne Ballet



## BROWN COUNTY PLAYHOUSE

425-seat capacity

Offers theater, music, movies, and comedy

Since 1949

Revenue appears to have fluctuated significantly in recent years.



# COMPARISONS, CONTINUED



## FRANKLIN PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

918 seat capacity + 9 wheelchair spaces

This space hosts national acts, Franklin High School performances, and is rentable for community events

Attached to Franklin High School



## LONG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS (LAFAYETTE)

550 Seat capacity

Was originally a Vaudeville House, then a movie theater

It was donated to City by Mr. Long and is now the home of the Lafayette symphony orchestra & Wurlitzer theater organ

