



[overture.org](http://overture.org)

August 1, 2017

The Honorable Paul R. Soglin, Mayor  
City of Madison  
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Room 403  
Madison, WI 53703

*-Hand Delivered-*

Dear Mayor Soglin,

On behalf of the Overture Center Foundation (OCF) Board of Directors and staff, I respectfully and formally request an Annual Grant from the City of Madison for Fiscal Year 2018 in the amount of \$2,193,247. This request is made in accordance with the intent of the Structural Agreement between the City of Madison and Overture Center Foundation dated December 31, 2010 that provides for an annual adjustment of the Annual Grant based on the change in the Consumer Price Index methodology in the State's Expenditure Restraint Program ("ERP").

The City's Grant will support a number of diverse programs that engage and provide access for students and adults of our community, that partner with many local community and service organizations, and employ or exhibit a number of Madison area performing and visual artists. For instance, Overture's *OnStage* program continues to provide opportunities for students to experience live professional performances during the school year. A portion of the City Grant allows Overture to fully subsidize the cost of a ticket and school bus transportation to any student or school in Madison Metropolitan School District qualifying for Title 1 funding. Our annual *Rising Stars Talent Search*, about to begin its fourth season, provides the opportunity for several hundred Madison area performers who compete in the Capitol Theater for cash prizes and future paid opportunities to perform at Overture. This program provides an opportunity for these performing artists, representing just about every neighborhood of Madison, to have their first experience with Overture by performing in front of a very diverse audience. Another initiative beginning its fourth year is *Club10*, a program only offered to individuals and families affiliated with a number of Madison's social service organizations where \$10 tickets for many Overture events, including some Broadway shows, are made available to those who never thought an affordable Overture experience was possible. Overture also continues to take a leadership role in the partnership with the City of Madison and the Metropolitan Madison School District with the local *Any Given Child* initiative that will provide equal access to arts experiences for students grades K-8. We know from studies in other cities that a program like this will contribute to greater educational success of students in the Metropolitan Madison School District.

Overture will also use a portion of this grant to continue funding capital improvements to the building including those older portions of the building that were created as part of the Madison Civic Center. This grant cannot be expected to fund all such improvements called for in the 15-year plan commissioned by the City in 2010, which is why OCF has steadily increased its own annual budget to help make such improvements while still continuing to build its reserve fund from surpluses to cover extraordinary expenses should that ever become necessary in the future. For instance, Overture is funding nearly \$1.2 million this summer to replace an obsolete sound system in Overture Hall to ensure we may continue to attract and host major artists and events such as nationally touring Broadway shows.

To that end, we are pleased to report Overture Center has now become the #1 entertainment destination in the State of Wisconsin for attracting visitors to Madison, surpassing the same shows that play elsewhere in the state. These major events attract our largest audiences and they have a positive impact on all types of businesses in Madison with a direct financial benefit from audience spending for items such as overnight lodging, meals, souvenirs & gifts, and ground transportation beyond the price of a ticket.

Overture continues to implement elements of its *Racial Equity Initiative*, adopted by our Board in October 2014. That plan includes, among many other goals, the diversification of its workforce, governance and volunteerism, purchasing, education and community engagement programs. The Overture Board is currently 28% persons of color. I'm also pleased Overture was able to hire last summer its first Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Edward Holmes – retired principal at West High School, to lead our D & I initiatives.

A separate and more detailed report of Overture's continued success will be provided to you by September 30, 2017 and will include audited financial statements of our past fiscal year ending June 30, 2017. Those financials will show we continue to expand our access to Overture through ticket sales and free/low cost events and strengthen relationships with Madison community based organizations to increase the number of events attended by a more diverse audience.

The Overture Center Foundation is extremely grateful to the City of Madison for its financial support and commitment to the success of Overture. We fully appreciate and look forward to our partnership with the City of Madison to continue engaging a greater number of Madisonians at Overture.

Sincerely,



Ted DeDee  
President & CEO

cc: All Alders, Madison Common Council  
All Members, Madison Room Tax Commission  
All Members, Madison Arts Commission