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Workshops Aim to Help “Creatives” Learn Career-Shaping Business Basics

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Artists, artisans, designers and other “creatives” don’t need an M.B.A. to make a living from their artistic talents, but attaining some fluency in the language of business and finance gives them more control over a creative career.

To that end, WESST and ArtSpark, two New Mexico organizations dedicated to business development and entrepreneurship, are co-sponsoring an immersive, interactive “Business Canvas Workshop for Creatives.” The training will help arts-oriented professionals fashion an uncomplicated and useful blueprint for their chosen vocation.



“Becoming friendly with a foundation of business understanding isn’t difficult and doesn’t require much time,” said Kristine Maltrud, ArtSpark’s founder and CEO. “Much of the task of business understanding is becoming familiar with business language or jargon. Knowing basic concepts (of) business planning helps too.”



To visualize their creative goals and design a strategy that makes them tangible, participants will use an artist-centric version of the “business model canvas” created by ArtSpark and based on the book *Business Model Generation* by Alex Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur. The “canvas” is a large wall chart featuring blank spots that represent nine segments of a business model; participants sketch and post ideas on the canvas as they brainstorm about marketing strategies, supply chains, costs and revenue streams.

The process inspires creatives to identify what makes their work special and valuable and who is likely to buy it. They gain an appreciation of how technological tools — such as simple websites

and social media platforms — can help them reach potential customers and partners, share digital content and advertise events, activities and artistic creations.

“Learning about and crafting an artistic career or business is increasingly necessary for artists who want to make a living making art,” Maltrud said. “Artists participating in business canvas workshops are experiencing positive impacts as a result, including more shows and increased sales, acceptance into startup accelerators, collaborative commercial ventures, small-business loans and increased confidence and business skills.”

The partnership with ArtSpark is part of the Creative P.I.E. (Practice, Innovation and Enterprise) program that WESST launched after receiving the Mayor’s Prize for Entrepreneurship in November. The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation underwrote the prize as part of a new philanthropic fund it launched with a \$200,000 bequest to promote entrepreneurial expertise among Albuquerque’s creative professionals. The Albuquerque Community Foundation manages the fund and raises matching dollars to sustain it. WESST was one of three organizations to receive funding.

WESST plans to use Creative P.I.E. funds to help more than 200 emerging entrepreneurs and “creatives” in greater Albuquerque start, grow or reposition their businesses. WESST hopes to eventually extend these support services to other parts of New Mexico.

The workshop convenes from 5-8 p.m. Feb. 2 and Feb. 11 at the WESST Enterprise Center, 609 Broadway N.E. The \$114 cost includes the workshop, materials and a follow-up session. Low-income creatives can contact WESST to see if they qualify for a reduced fee.

Register online at www.wesst.org or call Lorena Schott at 505-246-6939; space is limited to 15 attendees. For more information about ArtSpark, visit www.art-spark.org.

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