

2024 GRANT APPLICATION

Name of Organization

Ballet Arizona

Project Title

DanceAZ School Residency Program

Dollar Amount Requested

\$10,000

Primary Contact Person

Sasha Vincett

Title

Corporate & Foundation Manager

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Additional Contact Person (Optional)

Steven Henderson, shenderson@balletaz.org

Mission of Your Organization

With a vision of “Ballet for EVERYONE,” Ballet Arizona’s mission is to ignite the human spirit through the magic of dance. Founded in 1986, Ballet Arizona is currently the largest full-time professional ballet company in the state, bringing the beauty and power of dance to 90,000 people each year.

How long have you been established in Tempe (if not Tempe, please indicate in which metro area city you are located)?

Ballet Arizona is headquartered in Phoenix and has maintained a presence in Tempe since our founding in 1986.

Do funds exclusively benefit programs or organizations that serve City of Tempe or Tempe residents? (If not please elaborate. 250-word maximum)

Yes. Funding from Tempe Diablos Charities will exclusively benefit elementary school students participating in Ballet Arizona’s DanceAZ School Residency Program hosted at Scales Technology Academy and Frank Elementary School in Tempe. Ballet Arizona is currently the only professional ballet company providing community outreach programs in Tempe schools, giving low-income Tempe elementary students incredible access to high quality dance programs they would otherwise be unable to access.

Describe in detail the program that the funds are requested for and how the funds will be used within that program. (250-word max)

Ballet Arizona respectfully requests \$10,000 from Tempe Diablos Charities in support of our DanceAZ School Residency Program located at Scales Technology Academy and Frank Elementary School, Title I elementary schools in Tempe. Funding will provide professional ballet training to 40 low-income, underserved students in grades 3-5 during the Fall semester of 2025. Grant funding supports program personnel, teachers, production, and other program expenses.

DanceAZ is a transformative afterschool residency program that introduces the fundamentals of ballet to youth in under-resourced communities, empowering them for success with character building skills. During the fall semester, students receive 60-minute lessons from professional ballet teachers, twice a week for nine weeks (18 classes total). The residency culminates in a free ballet showcase for friends and family at our partner schools, including a performance by the students. Ballet Arizona Company dancers visit our partner schools to perform in the showcase, offering a professional demonstration.

Further deepening the premier ballet experience for our young dancers and their families, DanceAZ participants receive a voucher for four tickets to an upcoming Ballet Arizona production. Students are also eligible for scholarships to continue training at the School of

Ballet Arizona, located at our state-of-the-art dance facility in Phoenix.

Please describe the beneficiary(s) of the funds or the organization (i.e., grade school kids, college students, residents in general).

Ballet Arizona's DanceAZ Residency Program at Scales Technology Academy and Frank Elementary School benefits 40 low-income students in grades 3-5, ranging in age from 8-11 years old. Scales is a Title I school located at 1115 W. 5th St. in Tempe, where 77% of students are eligible for FRPL (Free & Reduced-Price Lunch) and 89% of students are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). Since last year, we have expanded our program in the Tempe School District. Frank Elementary School is a Title I school located at 8409 S. Avenida del Yaqui in Guadalupe (Tempe School District), where 96% of students are eligible for FRPL and 95% of students are BIPOC. Ballet Arizona partners with Title I schools, identified by their high proportions of students eligible for FRPL as an indicator of low-income status, to ensure that the DanceAZ program reaches the low-income communities most in need of accessible dance opportunities.

A recent report from the Arizona Arts Education Data Project revealed that during the 2021-2022 school year, only 2% of Arizona students in grades K-8 were enrolled in a school-based dance course, making dance one of the least accessed arts disciplines among elementary school students. Perhaps the biggest reason for the low percentage is that dance programs are rarely offered in Arizona elementary schools and are not offered at the partner schools Ballet Arizona serves. This means that children's access to dance education relies heavily on a family's ability to seek out and pay for out-of-school dance programming, something that is rarely feasible for low-income families. One year of dance classes costs an average of \$1,920 per child, a cost that prohibits many children from low-income families and/or BIPOC communities from accessing ballet.

To help close the gap in formal dance training available to low-income and predominantly BIPOC students, Ballet Arizona's DanceAZ School Residency Program removes barriers to participation in dance while enhancing participants' overall well-being, social-emotional skills, and academic performance. By holding DanceAZ sessions after school on campus, parents benefit from free extended childcare and avoid the hassle of driving to and from dance classes. At Scales and Frank Elementary School, DanceAZ impacts not only the 40 young participants but also the broader school community, as the semester-end performance reaches an audience of approximately 980 family members, friends, and students. To ensure accessibility and inclusivity for the school's significant Spanish-speaking population, we provide Spanish interpretation at these culminating performances.

How many individuals will the funds benefit?

1,000

Have you received funds in previous years from the Tempe Diablos Charities?

Yes

Previous Grant Title:

DanceAZ School Residency Program

Briefly restate the plan outlined in original request. Were any modifications to the plan necessary? If so, please briefly describe modifications along with the effect(s) they had on the program.

In our original request, Ballet Arizona received \$7,500 from Tempe Diablos Charities to bring our high-quality DanceAZ Residency Program to 20 low-income students at Scales Technology Academy in Tempe during the Fall semester of 2024. Students in grades 3-5 received nine weeks (18 classes) of formal ballet training, culminating with a live performance on November 6, 2024 at the school.

We are proud to report a successful semester of programming, with around 350 community members in attendance at the final performance showcase. The showcase included a demonstration by the students and a performance by members of Ballet Arizona's professional dancers and studio company members. No modifications to the plan were necessary.

Briefly restate the measurable outcomes as outlined in the original request. What progress have you made towards achieving these outcomes during this period.

Our original request included the following outcomes for Ballet Arizona's Fall 2024 DanceAZ School Residency Program at Scales Technology Academy:

- 1) Provide formalized ballet training to a minimum of 20 Tempe students (ages 8-11) attending Scales Technology Academy.
- 2) Present a free culminating DanceAZ performance to an anticipated 500 community members, hosted at Scales.

We are pleased to share that we completed both goals as of November 6, 2024.

What methods or strategies are being used to gather data on the program to document measurable outcomes.

Ballet Arizona collects data primarily through student registrations and attendance, as well as attendance at the final performance. Additionally, we gather pre- and post-program data from students using the Physical Activity Questionnaire for Children, which is a reliable, valid, and widely used assessment. The Physical Activity Questionnaire allows us to assess the impact of DanceAZ on participants' physical activity, behaviors, and overall wellness.

On the Physical Activity Questionnaire, we observed a noticeable increase in participants' physical activity levels. Over the nine-week DanceAZ School Residency at Scales Technology Academy, students also demonstrated increased attendance to school, teamwork improvement, increased communication, and mutual respect for peers when working as a team. By the end of the Residency, students' responses more accurately reflected their demonstrated behaviors, compared to the initial misalignment between their self-perceptions and observed actions. These findings align with results from previous years and across program sites.

What methods or strategies are being utilized to assure requested funds support specifically Tempe residents.

Ballet Arizona works with a contracted accounting team to ensure all funding from Tempe Diablos Charities is earmarked for our DanceAZ Residency Program in Tempe Title I schools. Funding and expenditures are tracked using QuickBooks to ensure funding is utilized as intended.

As applicable, explain any plans for ongoing funding, expansion, modification or replication of the program.

Ballet Arizona is proud to have completed our seventh year of partnership with Scales Technology Academy, transforming the school into a flourishing dance community that previously did not exist. DanceAZ has grown to become a highly anticipated afterschool activity each fall, with a steady demand for participation. The students' enthusiasm reflects our program's success in enriching lives through dance and fostering a sense of empowerment and belonging.

As Ballet Arizona looks ahead, we remain committed to sustaining and expanding our DanceAZ Residency Program through ongoing fundraising and partnership efforts. The successful model of bringing dance to Title I schools is sustainable and positions us to expand into additional Title I schools as our capacity to serve the community increases. Ballet Arizona is also committed to ongoing program evaluation and improvement to refine and deepen our impact at our partner schools. In alignment with our vision of ballet for everyone, DanceAZ remains a cornerstone of Ballet Arizona's community engagement programs.

Were all funds utilized as outlined in the original request. Please submit program budgets as submitted in original proposal and actual for this period. Explain any variances over 10 percent.

Yes, all funds were utilized as outlined in the original request, covering program expenses including professional dance instructor fees, personnel expenses, and production costs.

List any Tempe Diablos funds organization has received in the past. If the organization has received funding through the Tempe Diablos Charities, for consecutive years, please submit a comprehensive report of grant funding toward the stated program objectives and mission of the organization. In addition, you may be asked to provide a formal presentation to the Tempe Diablos Charities prior to the awarding of any additional funding.

Ballet Arizona is grateful for the continued support of Tempe Diablos Charities, which enabled us to bring the magic of dance to 45 total low-income students in Tempe since 2023. We received \$7,500 in 2024 and \$5,000 in 2023, both in support of our DanceAZ Residency Program at Scales Technology Academy.

Over the course of one semester each Fall, students received formalized dance instruction from professional ballet teachers, who traveled to Scales to provide students with valuable foundational skills including:

- 1) Dance class etiquette (how to enter and exit the room, how to transition between learning activities, showing respect to teachers and fellow students, etc.).
- 2) Stretching and conditioning.
- 3) Foundational ballet movement combinations.
- 4) Introductory ballet terminology (feet and arm positions, names of steps). Because the ballet terminology is in French, students were exposed to a foreign language (ex. jeté is a jump and means “to throw”).
- 5) Creating movement sequences that involve creative thinking, problem-solving, and team building, all important 21st-century skills.
- 6) Learning and rehearsing choreography to be performed at the end of the program.
- 7) Cool down/mindfulness exercises.

In addition to learning the basics of ballet movements, understanding rehearsal etiquette, and discovering choreography, DanceAZ students benefit from increased physical fitness, academic improvement, and social awareness, empowering them with life skills for future success. New and existing research continues to conclude that dance instruction helps youth achieve remarkable health, academic, and socioemotional outcomes including increased fitness, teamwork, time-management, self-discipline, goal-setting, and social skills, among many others.

A DanceAZ partner school principal recently shared, “I believe this program can be an important tool in preparing our students to be successful academically, socially, and professionally because of the discipline of ballet.” Additionally, for many of our Title I students who have never attended a professional ballet, exposure to professional artists at the peak of their careers can inspire life-long participation in dance, a powerful physical and cultural activity with tremendous benefits.

What percentage do the requested funds constitute of your overall budget?

<1%

Would you accept partial funding?

Yes

What is the first date of your board meeting after July 1st?

09/18/2025

May we deliver your grant award in person?

Yes

Have any member(s) of your organization attended a Tempe Diablos event?

Yes

Please list events attended.

Steven Henderson, Ballet Arizona's Director of Philanthropy, attended the Tempe Diablos Annual Celebrate Giving event in 2023, and Sasha Vincett, Ballet Arizona's Corporate and Foundation Manager, attended the Tempe Diablos Annual Celebrate Giving event on October 7, 2024.

Attachments:

- [BAZ-Fall-2025-DanceAZ-Budget-2-Tempe-Residencies-FINAL.pdf](#)
- [BAZ-FY25-Org-Budet-09-2024-FINAL.pdf](#)
- [BAZ-FY25-Board-List-w-Affiliations-Terms-01-2025-FINAL.pdf](#)
- [BAZ-Donors-List-FY24-5000-and-above-11-2024.pdf](#)

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'SK' or similar, written in a cursive style.

Title

Executive Director