

# The Dream Out Loud Center



**FOUNDED:** 2000

**CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET:** \$191,466

**CONTACT:** Tracy Furtado-Chagas, Executive Director

**PHONE:** 508.990.9090

**EMAIL:** [tfurtado@dreamoutloudcenter.org](mailto:tfurtado@dreamoutloudcenter.org)

**WEB:** [www.dreamoutloudcenter.org](http://www.dreamoutloudcenter.org)

## Investment Opportunity

The Dream Out Loud Center seeks an investment of \$550,000 over the next two years to double the number of youth it serves. To do so, the organization will invest in staff infrastructure to build capacity for expanded workshop hours and increase the number of paid apprenticeships. Dream Out Loud will also update the technology of its graphic design lab and recording studio to remain current with industry standards.

The Dream Out Loud Center nurtures the artistic passions of underserved youth, ages 6-21, to find purpose in their lives, build meaningful careers, and develop a community of peers and mentors. In New Bedford – a gateway city with a median annual income of \$37,000, which is half the state average, and a high school drop-out rate of 28% – access to the arts is a vital building block for a better future.

Research by Americans for the Arts shows that an investment of \$1 in after-school arts programming saves \$9 by reducing welfare and crime costs and increasing the earning potential of youth. Arts-invested youth are also five times less likely to drop out of high school and twice as likely to graduate from college.

Through free workshops in music, graphic design, and writing, youth at Dream Out Loud turn their art into recordings, performances, and publications that capture their voices and help create positive change for them and their community. More than 80% of the youth – initially shy and reserved, emotionally fragile, and underachieving in academics – complete the program with high school diplomas and go on to college or pursue a creative career.

## Two-Year Goals

- Increase the number of youth participating annually from 104 to 210
- Expand workshop offerings from 18 to 36 hours a week
- Increase the number of paid apprentices from 25 to 30 annually
- Upgrade technology in graphic design lab and recording studio

## Ways to Invest

### FINANCIAL

- \$250,000 funds expanding hours of executive director, program director, music and publishing coordinators, and teaching artists
- \$46,000 funds employment of 20 part-time youth apprentices for one year
- \$2,000 funds one year of workshops for one youth

### IN-KIND

- Marketing and public relations support
- Furniture and stage for performance space
- Printing of youth's design projects, such as poetry books and greeting cards

## Leadership & Governance

Executive Director Tracy Furtado-Chagas holds an MFA in creative writing from Goddard College. She co-founded Dream Out Loud after she experienced a positive life and career transformation because of the arts and understood the need for youth to have professional creative jobs to support themselves. Tracy has produced and edited many publications, plays, and films throughout the past twenty years. She works closely with the eight-member Board of Directors that reflects the diversity of the community.

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As a young artist’s haven, Dream Out Loud gave me an outlet that became a lifeline. It motivated the pursuit of my passion, the growth of my professionalism, and encouraged me to respond to higher expectations.

AMANDA DEGRACE

Former Dream Out Loud Student



## DREAM OUT LOUD CENTER’S MODEL



### CONNECTING YOUTHS’ CREATIVE PASSION TO PURPOSE

In a three-story arts building in downtown New Bedford, with a recording studio, graphic design lab, and performance space, Dream Out Loud provides free educational workshops in publishing, performing, and graphic arts for youth, ages 6-21. Dream Out Loud helps turn youths’ passions for the arts into a sense of purpose and a possible career.

**Mentorship:** First and foremost, Dream Out Loud provides a safe, supportive place where often vulnerable youth can take risks and grow. The staff is made up of teaching artists and peer junior instructors – both alumni and paid apprentices – who understand the struggle of New Bedford youth. They are patient, kind, encouraging, and always supportive, in addition to being skilled in their creative field. In turn, as the youth develop their own creative pieces and gain the confidence to perform in front of peers and community members, they begin transforming into a star in their own life.

**Education:** Dream Out Loud offers six free 8-week sessions, teaching the students a creative skill of their choice. In each session, the students produce a piece for publication, performance, and/or the pop-up shop. In the process of creating their own song, illustration, play, poem, or film, youths develop twenty-first century learning skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. They also begin to develop an educational and professional plan through the guidance of staff, fellow students, and alumni.

**Production:** The students’ creative work is distributed through publications, CDs, mp3s, YouTube videos, and social media throughout the South Coast region. In addition, students exhibit, market, and sell their own products at events and/or pop-up shops.

**Community:** During each session, Dream Out Loud connects youth to the community in a variety of ways, participating in community initiatives such as violence prevention, environmental sustainability, gallery nights, college fairs, and community conversations.





**Dream Out Loud’s teaching artists create a safe and special place for youth. The ‘us’ orientation of programs helps youth answer ‘yes’ to the question, ‘Do I matter?’ Dream Out Loud fuels their – and my own – passion for wanting to make a difference in our community.**



**DENISE PORCHÉ**  
Executive Director, Island  
Foundation

**Key Investors**

- CITY OF NEW BEDFORD, INVEST-IN-KIDS
- ISLAND FOUNDATION
- LENNY ZAKIM FUND
- MELLOR CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
- NEW BEDFORD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

**Partners**

- AHA! NEW BEDFORD
- CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
- NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- OUR SISTERS’ SCHOOL
- SPINNER PUBLICATIONS

**CREATIVE CAREERS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

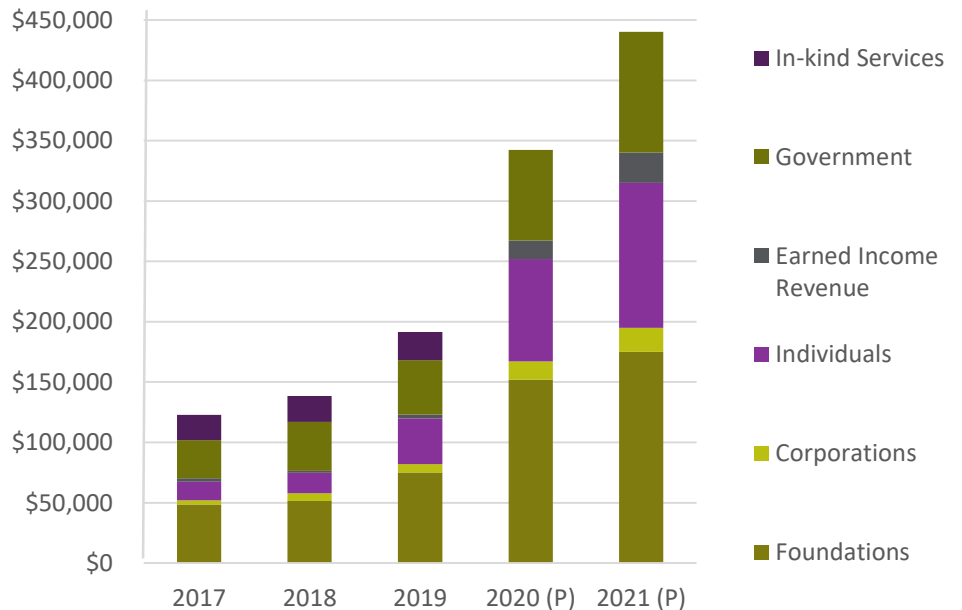
The Creative Careers Apprenticeship Program provides paid jobs for Dream Out Loud youth ages 16-21 who have demonstrated work ethic, responsibility, and dedication to their creative skill. After going through an interviewing and selection process, youth begin their apprenticeship and may continue until 21 years old, if evaluations are favorable and funding is available. The apprenticeships provide youth with further opportunities to develop their skills and competencies. Apprenticeships include jobs at the center as junior instructors, production assistants, or office assistants. Youth who participate in the apprenticeship program become the editors, directors, and producers of students projects. Through the development and execution of their own and others’ creative projects, the apprentices begin to understand the importance of being able to communicate clearly and effectively, meeting deadlines, and applying a teamwork approach. These experiences pave the way for academic success and career confidence in writing, business, the arts, and technology.

Ninety percent of Dream Out Loud’s paid apprentices continue to college. Some alumni are now working as teachers, graphic designers, fundraisers, photographers, and music program directors.

**FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Dream Out Loud has demonstrated the ability to manage limited funds efficiently and effectively since its inception. The Board of Directors is committed to growing funding sources to assist the (currently part-time) Executive Director in sustaining the organization and building capacity. As the Executive Director is able to increase her hours, her focus will primarily be on resource development, allowing for the projected growth in government and foundation grants and support from individuals.

**Revenue by Source**



### Success Story: Gianalis

When Gianalis started the Dream Out Loud program, she was dealing with poor self-image, shyness, suicidal thoughts, and self-harm. As a result of songwriting classes, she learned how to write her own original lyrics and gained the courage to perform in front of an audience within a year. Throughout the years, Gianalis became more social, collaborative, productive, purposeful, and goal-oriented, and overall, a happier teen.

In addition to writing and performing her own songs, Gianalis and five other students started a band and performed live at many community events. She participated in recording sessions, where she was able to record her original songs while learning the workings of a functioning recording studio from start to finish.

In her fifth year at Dream Out Loud, Gianalis received a job as a paid apprentice junior instructor for the songwriting and performance classes, and assisted with administrative tasks, winning the Summer Fund Superstar Award for her job performance. In her years at Dream Out Loud, Gianalis has grown to be a peer leader and a confident young woman. She was recently accepted into Curry College.



## PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below is a summary of the key measures Dream Out Loud will track to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, incorporate lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2019	FY 2020 (P)	FY 2021 (P)
<b>PROGRAM PERFORMANCE</b>			
Total youth served annually	104	150	210
Paid apprentices at Dream Out Loud	20	25	30
Program hours offered per week	18	27	36
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING</b>			
Full-time equivalent employees	3	6	8
Marketing and development plan	Initiate Process	Create Plan	Implement
Board members	8	10	12
Advisory board members	3	6	8
Total revenue	\$191,466	\$342,457	\$440,185

## SOCIAL IMPACT

The youth who come to Dream Out Loud are diverse – creatively and racially. They are struggling academically and emotionally when they enter the program. 95% are low-income; 75% come from single-parent homes or are not living with a parent; 40% have been exposed to gang activity as part of their daily life. Even with these challenges, they are creative and resilient. To measure its impact, Dream Out Loud conducts extensive surveys at the beginning and end of each 8-week program to track each participant’s progress against a number of criteria – both qualitative and quantitative. Below are the results of a few indicators that are measured.

INDICATOR	2018
Dream Out Loud program participants who exhibit growth in confidence, problem-solving, and leadership skills after one year of workshops	84%
Program participants who show an increase in their English language skills after one year	86%
Program participants who produce a final creative product that relates to issues affecting them (such as self-esteem, identity, gang violence, addiction, domestic abuse)	95%
Program participants who graduate from high school	93%
Paid apprentices who continue to college	92%