

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Artspace?

Artspace is a nonprofit real estate developer specializing in creating, owning and operating affordable spaces for artists and creative businesses. Artspace is the nation's leading developer of arts facilities — live/work housing, artist studios, arts centers, commercial space for arts-friendly businesses and other projects.

What is Artspace's mission?

Our mission is to create, foster and preserve affordable and sustainable space for artists and arts organizations.

How does Artspace fulfill that mission?

Artspace works in three major areas — Consulting Services, Property Development and Asset Management.

- Through our Consulting Services, we share our expertise with clients across the country. In our process, we analyze and study the feasibility of new Artspace projects.
- Property Development creates new Artspace projects through a mix of historic renovation and new construction.
- Artspace's Asset Management group ensures long-term financial stability and affordability for artists.

How many projects are currently owned and operated by Artspace?

At present, we own and operate more than 50 projects across the country. Most are live/work or mixed-use projects comprised of more than 1,720 residential units. Our portfolio of projects is rounded out with non-residential projects that provide space for artists and cultural organizations.

What is the definition of a live/work project?

A live/work project is a residential building in which each dwelling has extra space (100 to 150 square feet) that the artist can use as a studio. Live/work units by Artspace have consistent design elements, such as high ceilings, large windows, durable surfaces and wide doorways. These spaces are designed to accommodate and foster a variety of creative processes. Artspace live/work projects also include common spaces such as galleries, meeting rooms and green space that encourage tenant engagement, cooperation and community involvement. Most Artspace live/work projects are mixed-use buildings with housing on the upper floors and non-residential space on the lower floors.



How does Artspace decide where to develop its projects?

Communities interested in pursuing an Artspace project invite our Consulting Services staff to assess the feasibility of developing a project. In an average year we make 15 to 20 feasibility visits to cities around the country; of these, two to four typically lead to projects. Our location decisions are primarily based on the feasibility and viability of the project as well as community support and engagement.

After an Artspace project is started, what is the estimated time until completion?

Artspace projects normally span from four to seven years in most cases.

Why does it take so long?

First, we are committed to community engagement as an essential part of the development process. Each Artspace project is built to address the unique needs of a specific community. We believe that the key to a successful project is taking the time to observe and listen to artists, civic leaders and other stakeholders in the community.

Second, we research and build relationships with a variety of public and private funding sources. Though this can be a time-consuming process, it has an important upside: Artspace projects are fully supported and funded at the time of ground breaking.

How are Artspace projects funded?

We access public funding sources including those available for the creation of affordable housing, economic development, historic preservation and cultural facility development. Private sector funding often includes conventional bank financing as well as individual and community philanthropic support.

Do the Artspace live/work projects qualify as affordable housing?

Yes. The majority of Artspace housing units are affordable to households earning at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) of the city or county in which the project is located.

How much does it cost to live in an Artspace project?

In setting our rents, we adhere to affordable housing guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD uses a formula based on the local AMI, the degree of affordability of any given unit (expressed as a percentage of the AMI), the number of bedrooms in the unit, and the number of people in the household.

While rents vary by community, our goal is to provide affordable space that is adequate for artists both to live and to work in their units. Artspace buildings provide live/work spaces that are larger than other affordable spaces and usually less expensive than other comparable spaces. And as part of our sustainability model, Artspace buildings remain affordable in perpetuity.

Do you have to be an artist to live in an Artspace live/work project?

Anyone who qualifies for affordable housing may apply for residency in an Artspace project, but we give preference to those applicants who participate in and are committed to the arts. Applicants need not derive their income from their art.

How does Artspace determine who is an artist?

We define the term "artist" broadly to encompass a wide variety of creative pursuits, including traditional art forms and those as diverse as clothing design, weaving and even canoe making. A community-based Artist Interview Committee meets all applicants. The committee looks for evidence that applicants are seriously committed to their art and that they will be mindful and positive contributors to the building and community. The application and qualification process does not include judgment of quality of work.

Who owns an Artspace live/work project when it is completed?

Once completed, Artspace retains ownership of its projects. We remain involved as owner/operators of our projects to ensure that the projects remain affordable for artists over the long term. In addition, we maintain and nurture our partnerships with the communities and artists.

How does Artspace sustain its projects once they are in operation?

Artspace projects are financially self-sustaining through tenant rents, which are sufficient to meet mortgage payments, fund reserves and operating costs. Revenues in excess of expenses are set aside for preventive maintenance, common area improvements, and building upgrades. Artspace's asset managers visit our properties multiple times a year to gather feedback, offer guidance, support and to provide connections for best practices throughout the Artspace community.



Last updated February 06, 2023



America's Leading Nonprofit Real Estate Developer for the Arts

Artspace is a nonprofit organization that uses the tools of real estate development to create affordable, appropriate places where artists can live and work. We consistently develop these projects in ways that also support more stable, healthy communities anchored in existing assets. Because Artspace owns each of the projects it develops, we are able to ensure that they remain affordable and accessible to artists. Over the last four decades, Artspace has led an accelerating national movement of artist-led community transformation. While embracing the value the arts bring to individual lives, Artspace has championed the once-radical idea that artists living with financial hardship and chronically underfunded arts organizations can leverage fundamental social change. With headquarters in Minneapolis and offices in New York, and Washington D.C., Artspace is America's leading developer of arts facilities and has served as a consultant to hundreds of communities and arts organizations nationwide. www.artspace.org