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CITY OF BOULDER  
POTTERY PROGRAM  
MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

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*Summary of Findings*

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Submitted by

MUSEUM MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS, INC.  
San Francisco, California

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## INTRODUCTION

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The City of Boulder Parks and Recreation Department (Department) retained Museum Management Consultants, Inc. (MMC) of San Francisco, California to conduct a management assessment of the Boulder Pottery Lab. This report summarizes the findings from that assessment, which was conducted by MMC consultants Adrienne Horn, President, and Katie Sevier, Vice President.

### Background

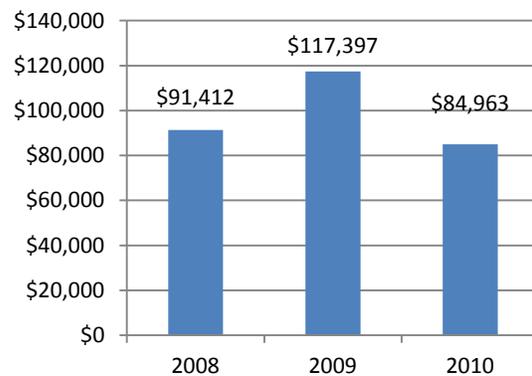
The Pottery Lab opened in 1954 as a program of the Department, making it the first city-supported pottery program in the United States. The Pottery Lab is housed in a 3,800 square foot historic firehouse in a residential area of West Boulder. Offerings include classes in the ceramic arts for children, pre-teens, teens, and adults of all levels; summer camps; and occasional workshops. Classes are popular; in 2009, 108 classes were offered and 56% were full.

From 2008 through 2010, the Pottery Lab averaged \$283,496 in expenses per year and \$185,572 in revenues; the Department subsidizes the difference. Figure 1 shows the subsidy for the last three years, which averages \$97,924. The Pottery Lab program is a subset of the visual arts

in Boulder. While other arts programs receive support from the City, no other art subset receives the level of support or amount of subsidy from the City as does the Pottery Lab.

Given declining revenues from tax support and user fees, the Department is evaluating all of its programs to ensure long-term financial sustainability. In order to work toward a more efficient model, the Department is exploring alternative methods to provide ceramics and other arts programs and classes to the community. Toward that end, the Department issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2010 to identify an organization capable of taking over management of the

**Figure 1.**  
**Pottery Lab Subsidy 2008-2010**



Pottery Lab program and facility. The goal of this effort was to maintain the quality and diversity of Pottery Lab offerings while decreasing the City subsidy for the program. Two organizations submitted proposals, which were reviewed by a committee of community members. The committee assessed the quality of the submitted proposals with an evaluation matrix that was made available to the proposal respondents prior to their submission.

Late in 2010, the decision was made not to contract out operation of the Pottery Lab, but the Department remained committed to the goal of improving the program's management and economic viability. In 2011, the decision was made to complete a management assessment of the Pottery Lab program; MMC was retained to conduct the third-party analysis. Implementation of recommendations from the assessment will begin in 2012.

### **Methodology**

MMC visited Boulder in July 2011 and held confidential interviews in person or on the telephone with 24 individuals, including Department staff, Advisory Board members, Pottery Lab staff and students, and other stakeholders (see Appendix A for a list of interviewees). In addition to the interviews, MMC developed a brief online survey to obtain feedback from Pottery Lab users. The survey was implemented by Department staff in August 2011; a total of 118 students completed the survey. The findings can be found in Appendix B. In addition, MMC researched four benchmark ceramics programs; the findings from this research are introduced in the next section, *Benchmark Organizations*. Finally, MMC reviewed a broad spectrum of Department and program-related documents, such as financials, long-range plans, community feedback from public input sessions, and results from a previous survey of Pottery Lab users.

### **Summary of Interview Findings**

Interviewees described the Pottery Lab as a unique, hidden gem in the community, beloved by its users but largely unknown to the general population. One interviewee captured the positive sentiment toward the program by saying, "The Pottery Lab is a singular place that offers a vital service offered nowhere else in town for kids and adults." Students pointed to the Pottery

Lab’s “supportive community” and “mix of generations” as assets. The quality of instruction was noted as a key strength, as well as the popularity of classes.

At the same time, a number of issues were cited by interviewees, including the limitations of the Pottery Lab facility, decreasing City funds, and the uneasy relationship between Pottery Lab advocates and the Department. Everyone involved with the Pottery Lab appreciates the creative use of its facility, but cites its small square footage, inaccessibility, and inefficient layout, as the primary stumbling blocks for the program’s growth. Without more space for wheels, more storage areas for pots, or a dedicated retail space, there is limited ability to expand the Pottery Lab’s audience and increase earned revenue.

The relationship between the Department and Pottery Lab staff and supporters has been compromised over the years. A number of interviewees described the relationship as “adversarial.” Numerous incidents over the past two or three years have broken the bond of trust between the two parties, leaving Pottery Lab advocates feeling that the program is consistently on the verge of being closed down. Not surprisingly, staff is “burned out.” A group of Pottery Lab students and supporters known as Friends of the Pottery Lab expressed the concern of many students that “the City is constantly undercutting the Pottery Lab” with reductions in staff and elimination of services. It is the Friends’ opinion that the Pottery Lab has decreased its expenses and uses its small facility in an efficient and inventive manner. Most notably, they feel the City has not expressed its belief in the value of the Pottery Lab and has lacked transparency with financials.

Department staff acknowledges recent missteps and communication breakdowns, and are fully dedicated to finding effective strategies to ensure the Pottery Lab’s viability and longevity. Like municipalities across the United States, the City of Boulder has been impacted by the economic downturn and its effect on tax revenue. Municipal arts programs have been hit particularly hard as cities focus their limited resources on core services. In Boulder, the Department has acknowledged the need to reduce their reliance on tax-supported funding. As stated in the Department’s *Recreation Programs & Facilities Plan*:

The key elements of this effort will include reducing overall high overhead, program direct and indirect expenses, improving program and facility efficiency, enhancing marketing to increase the customer base and pursuing partnerships and sponsorships as well as strategically leveraging key facilities and opportunities to generate additional revenue.

The Department is committed to the Pottery Lab program, but due to their financial constraints, a plan must be developed to achieve financial sustainability within three to five years.

Everyone involved with the Pottery Lab expressed the same desire for the program to remain in the community, and a dedication to making changes that will help the program to flourish. The following pages present further detail on the key issues facing the Pottery Lab and MMC's recommendations to address those issues in the long-term while increasing cost recovery and building toward self-sufficiency in the near-term.

## BENCHMARK ORGANIZATIONS

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MMC researched four ceramics programs in the United States to establish a broader context for Pottery Lab operations and provide operational models from programs with similar challenges. Figure 2 below provides an overview of the four benchmark organizations.

**Figure 2. Overview of Benchmark Organizations**

Organization	Location	Discipline	Operating Budget	Facility Size (indoor gross ft <sup>2</sup> )	Full-Time Staff
<b>The Clay Studio</b>	Philadelphia, PA	Ceramics	\$1,500,000	15,000	12
<b>Kirkland Arts Center</b>	Kirkland, WA	Visual Arts	\$715,000	9,000 <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>Mudflat Pottery Studio</b>	Somerville, MA	Ceramics	\$750,000	16,000	2
<b>Pottery Northwest</b>	Seattle, WA	Ceramics	\$260,000	3,500	1
<b>Boulder Pottery Lab</b>	<i>Boulder, CO</i>	<i>Ceramics</i>	<i>\$283,000</i>	<i>3,800</i>	<i>2</i>

<sup>1</sup> Within the Kirkland Arts Center facility, the ceramics studio is 1,200 square feet; another 600 square feet is used for artist studios.

Each organization was selected by MMC, in consultation with the Department, based on recommendations by assessment interviewees. This is not meant to be a homogenous group of comparable ceramics organizations. These benchmark organizations were selected with the knowledge that change must take place at the Pottery Lab to become more financially sustainable.

With that in mind, MMC researched dozens of recommended programs of varying size, governance structure, location, and discipline. MMC initially researched organizations with budgets at or below the Pottery Lab's, but found these programs to be struggling financially and therefore, not appropriate as models of future operations. Similarly, municipal programs were investigated, but MMC did not find a program of sufficient financial standing and sophistication to serve as an example of "best practices" in the field. Municipal pottery programs themselves are relatively uncommon, but an appropriately robust and thriving municipal pottery program proved difficult to find. As a result of these research limitations, each of the programs selected is an independent nonprofit organization with little to no government support. Despite differences among the benchmark organizations, each organization exhibits characteristics and

standards that are instructive for the Department as operational changes are considered for the Pottery Lab.

Findings from MMC's conversations with each of the benchmark organizations are interspersed throughout this report; a more detailed version of the findings appears in Appendix C.

## KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Based on MMC’s interviews, research of benchmark organizations, and professional observations, the two primary issues facing the Pottery Lab are financial sustainability and the drawbacks of its current facility. Although there are other significant short-term considerations, these two issues determine the Pottery Lab’s viability in the long-term. As such, the key findings and recommendations that follow begin with these two “big picture” issues and segue into findings related to current operations and short-term recommendations. Whether or not MMC’s long-term recommendations are implemented, the short-term recommendations provide steps to create greater efficiency and effectiveness in the Pottery Lab program in both the near-term and when considering new directions in the future.

### ***Finances***

Understanding the Pottery Lab’s financial position lays the foundation for all other issues that follow. This section is not intended as an in-depth financial analysis, but rather provides an overview of the Pottery Lab’s finances and appropriate recommendations. A closer look at class pricing can be found later

in the section, *Class Structure and Fees*, which begins on p. 17.

As detailed in Figure 3, Pottery Lab revenues decreased

**Figure 3. Pottery Lab Income and Expenses 2008-2011**

	2008	2009	2010	2011 (through 8/31/11)
<b>Revenue</b>	\$196,476	\$182,805	\$177,435	\$107,870
<b>Expense</b>	\$287,888	\$300,202	\$262,398	\$150,645
<b>Net Revenue (Department Subsidy)</b>	(\$91,412)	(\$117,397)	(\$84,963)	(\$42,775)

between 2008 and 2010 while expenses fluctuated. During this timeframe, the Pottery Lab averaged \$185,572 in revenues and \$283,496 in expenses, resulting in an average subsidy of \$97,924 from the Department.

### **Revenue**

Pottery Lab revenues are derived almost entirely from class fees and

**Figure 4. Pottery Lab Main Sources of Revenue**

Revenue Source	2008	2009	2010	2011 (through 8/31/11)
<b>Class Fees</b>	\$164,105	\$157,066	\$159,623	\$96,112
<b>Pottery Sales</b>	\$29,017	\$24,841	\$16,619	\$8,798

retail sales (see Figure 4). As a municipal program, income streams are limited to these earned sources, as well as the subsidy from the Department to cover the shortfall between income and expenses. A 15% increase in class fees in 2011 appears to have raised revenues slightly when compared to previous years at the same point in time. The decrease in retail pottery sales is due to the elimination of the Holiday Sale in 2010.

The limitations of the Pottery Lab’s revenues are best viewed in comparison to the four benchmark organizations. To compare revenues across organizations, MMC categorized income in the following categories:

- Contributed Income: donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations; special events; membership
- Earned Income: class and program fees, gift shop, pottery sales
- Government Grants: grants from local, state, or federal government
- Investment Income: interest on organizational investments

Unlike the Pottery Lab, each of the benchmark organizations is a nonprofit organization and receives contributed revenues from individuals, foundations, corporations, special events, and

memberships (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Benchmark Organizations: Revenue by Source**

	Contributed Income	Earned Income	Government Grants	Investment Income
<b>The Clay Studio</b>	35%	58%	7%	0%
<b>Mudflat Pottery Studio</b>	33%	65%	2%	0%
<b>Pottery Northwest</b>	27%	72%	0%	1%
<b>Kirkland Arts Center</b>	41%	58%	1%	0%
<b>Average:</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Boulder Pottery Lab<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>0%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Revenue figures from 2010

This revenue stream essentially takes the place of government funds, in the form of the Department subsidy, at the Pottery Lab. None of the benchmark organizations receive

significant funds from government grants. This comparison reinforces the reality that as the Department’s financial support of the Pottery Lab decreases in the coming years, other revenue streams must rise to meet expenses.

## Expenses

Expenses related to the operation of the Pottery Lab are relatively simple and fall into the following major categories: personnel (full-time staff), classes (instructors, materials, other direct costs), and administration (office expenses, marketing, etc.). For the purpose of comparison with the benchmark organizations, MMC has reorganized the expenses into standard nonprofit categories:

- Personnel: wages, benefits, payroll taxes (full-time staff only)
- Administration & Development: office and business expenses, fundraising expenses
- Facility: rent, utilities, maintenance
- Classes & Programs: instructors, materials, supplies
- Marketing & PR: advertising, marketing, public relations
- Other: Miscellaneous expenses not categorized above

The Pottery Lab's status as a municipal program results in a substantially different expense model when compared to the benchmark organizations (see Figure 6). Most notably, the Pottery Lab does not incur significant occupancy fees, such as rent, since the facility is owned

**Figure 6. Benchmark Organizations: Expenses by Category**

	Personnel	Admin & Development	Facility	Classes & Programs	Marketing & PR	Other
<b>The Clay Studio</b>	33%	16%	14%	31%	5%	2%
<b>Mudflat Pottery Studio</b>	38%	23%	8%	26%	3%	2%
<b>Pottery Northwest</b>	36%	15%	24%	21%	2%	0%
<b>Kirkland Arts Center</b>	40%	8%	10%	40%	2%	0%
<b>Average:</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Boulder Pottery Lab<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>

<sup>1</sup> Expense figures from 2010

by the City of Boulder. Because expenses outside of classes and personnel are minimal, the existing personnel expenses appear high, but it is the lack of balance from other expenses that gives this impression. While staff salaries and benefits are generous for the field, they are not exorbitant. The percentage of the budget spent on classes and programs is substantially higher in the benchmark organizations than it is at the Pottery Lab. Even Pottery Northwest, whose

budget and facility size are on par with the Pottery Lab, spends a greater percentage on their classes and program.

It is important to remember that although the Department identifies direct and indirect program costs in the Pottery Lab budget, they do not calculate and include Department indirect costs (Department Director, support staff, marketing staff), City allocation (City Manager, City Attorney, Budget/Finance, Risk Management, etc.), facility costs (rent or mortgage), major maintenance and repair, and capital replacement costs in the budget. As a result, the Pottery Lab budget is significantly higher than what is represented in Figures 3, 5 and 6; in particular, “administration and development” and “facility” expenses in Figure 6 appear to be lower than they are. Although more recent data is not available, in 2008, Department indirect, City allocation, and capital costs totaled \$80,000 (28% of 2008 expenses); this figure does not include major maintenance or facility costs. Incorporating these costs into the expense budget would result in a substantial increase in the gap between revenues and expenses.

### Restrictions

On the surface, the solution to the Pottery Lab’s reliance on the Department subsidy seems quite simple: increase revenues and cut expenses. Opportunities to increase revenues incrementally are discussed later in this report, but these changes offer marginal revenue enhancements. Significant changes to revenues, such as increasing the number of classes, are limited by the lack of space to accommodate increased production and growth. At the same time, expenses have been minimized; recent examples include the elimination of janitorial services (they have since been reinstated) and the decision to fill an open full-time staff position with seasonal staff. Current operations are lean, and it is MMC’s belief that further cuts will critically damage the integrity of the program. As such, this report does not address specific ways to reduce Pottery Lab expenses. With limited expenses to begin with, and a lack of clear accounting of all indirect costs associated with the program, this report focuses on ways to streamline operations and enhance revenue generation that should also reduce costs in the long-run.

## ***Facility***

The Pottery Lab resides in a 3,800 square foot historic firehouse in a residential area southwest of the University of Colorado at Boulder. Its location in a residential neighborhood offers limited visibility and challenging parking requirements. For those who know about and frequent the Pottery Lab, the location might appear to be beneficial, but the lack of foot traffic and visible signage that accompany a populated area results in minimal awareness within the wider Boulder community. Its location next to apartment buildings and other homes leads to complaints and concerns about issues related to the kilns.

Drawbacks within the building itself include a lack of air conditioning and accessibility for most people with disabilities. The lack of security within the building was addressed by a study conducted by risk management and emergency response consultants in May 2011. The resulting report, *Safety and Security Considerations: Boulder Pottery Lab*, makes several recommendations to put procedures and controls in place that will reduce the risk to students and staff. Many of the recommendations are basic, such as requiring all patrons to sign in and installing cameras and a public address system, and should be undertaken to ensure the safety of the public, but each item requires an outlay of resources on behalf of the Pottery Lab. As such, the recommendations have been put on hold awaiting the outcome of this assessment.

The most significant issue related to the Pottery Lab facility is its small size and layout. The two-story building is used in a creative fashion, but its limitations are considerable. Every interviewee commented on the lack of space, which limits the opportunity to increase the number of classes offered. Adult classes take place downstairs and children's classes and camps upstairs. In the adult classes, once a student has a completed piece, it is carried upstairs and placed on the drying rack. Staff conducts the bisque firing upstairs, then places the student work in a different area of the drying rack. The pieces are brought downstairs by Pottery Lab staff to be glaze fired in the kilns outdoors. Once firing is complete, staff remove the pieces and place them in the outdoor storage area. Many interviewees said that student work can go missing during these moves, but more important, the constant climbing and descending of the

narrow stairs with a few pots at a time is not an efficient use of staff time. Almost all interviewees agreed that the drying and storage areas for students are so restricted that production cannot increase. As one interviewee said, “The building cannot take another pot.”

Potential alterations to the Pottery Lab building itself are limited by its designation as an historic building. One interviewee added, “The small lot has restrictions and prohibitions for change and expansion.” The same interviewee noted that the space is only functional “because of creative adaptation by the director.” Without a complete reconstruction of the interior space, it is hard to imagine the facility generating enough income to turn a profit; certainly not without a new source of income.

***Recommendation: Establish a nonprofit organization to operate the Pottery Lab in a public-private partnership with the Department.*** Without increasing the Pottery Lab’s revenues and diversifying its funding sources, the organization’s ability to become financially self-sufficient is in question. Even with significant changes, earned income cannot fully support a dynamic organization. It is MMC’s belief that financial self-sufficiency will not be possible without a bigger facility. Based on this belief, the Pottery’s Lab’s ability to be financially self-sustaining relies on finding a new facility, establishing new revenue streams, and rethinking staff roles. Considering the uncertainty of the Department’s funding, establishing a nonprofit organization to govern and operate the Pottery Lab will allow the organization to rethink and grow its operations in response to market demand.

Many different examples of public-private partnerships exist, but in relation to the Pottery Lab and the Department, MMC proposes that the Department issue an RFP to determine which individuals or organization will operate the Pottery Lab. In turn, this group will establish itself as a nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status (if it does not have this status already) and form a Board of Directors. Once a nonprofit organization is established, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department and Board of Directors should outline the relationship between the two parties and their respective roles and responsibilities. The MOU

should detail what each group brings to the partnership (i.e. funding, facility). It will be important for the Department to continue its financial and operational support of the Pottery Lab for at least three to five years as the nonprofit establishes itself and begins to reorganize and raise funds. This should include continued occupancy in its current facility, and ongoing repairs and maintenance. Once a new facility is identified, the nonprofit entity will be responsible for developing a strategic plan to program the site and conduct a capital campaign to renovate, open, and operate the new Pottery Lab.

If the Department cannot guarantee funding to the Pottery Lab beyond three to five years, it will be essential to start the transition process immediately. Establishing a fundraising infrastructure and building a donor base takes years and the Pottery Lab should not be left without subsidy before it has established a contributed revenue stream. Fortunately, the Pottery Lab has a built-in constituency of current and former students as a starting point.

By becoming a nonprofit entity, the Pottery Lab will ease the pressure on the Department's finances while continuing to support and promote the arts in Boulder. Nonprofit status will allow the Pottery Lab to be more flexible; as a nonprofit, the organization will not be subject to certain restrictions that are inherent with City operations, including requirements for employee benefits packages and rules against holding workshops and other events without budgeting for them in the previous year. As noted in the Department's *Recreation Programs & Facilities Plan*, "The Department has limited flexibility to make adjustments that respond to emerging needs and trends."

The current challenges facing the Pottery Lab require rethinking staff roles and necessary skills. If the Pottery Lab is to become a nonprofit organization, it will need a leader with administrative and business acumen who will spend less time engaged in physical labor and teaching. Staff with fundraising expertise will be necessary to develop a donor base of support, and program staff will be required to rethink the organization's artistic offerings. This reorganization around required skills and competencies will result in a more efficient

organization. For a more detailed discussion of personnel, see the *Staff* section, which begins on p. 26.

**Recommendation: Secure a larger facility in Boulder.** Based on MMC’s observations, as well as the opinions of interviewees and constituent feedback through Department-initiated surveys and meetings, the Pottery Lab cannot grow and thrive in its current facility. As such, MMC recommends setting a long-term goal of securing a larger facility in Boulder. This recommendation goes hand-in-hand with the above recommendation to establish a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization to work in partnership with the Department to reorganize Pottery Lab operations. MMC recognizes that the City of Boulder does not have the financial means to secure and rehabilitate a new site for the Pottery Lab; by establishing a nonprofit entity and transitioning to a public-private partnership, it will be the nonprofit organization’s responsibility to raise funds for the capital project and ongoing operations.

Until a larger facility is secured, the Pottery Lab will continue to reside in its current facility for a significant period of time and that facility is handicapped by its lack of storage space for student work. The side effect of this lack of space is lost work. As such, MMC recommends conducting a space analysis to better understand how the current space is used and where greater efficiencies could be created with minor adaptations. In addition, MMC recommends studying the use of the Pottery Lab kilns in order to better understand the proper number of kilns required and if the existing kilns are being used efficiently.

Seeking out a new facility will require significant funding. As such, it will be critically important to conduct a thorough assessment of demand for the Pottery Lab’s programs as well as potential financial support. This assessment report cannot answer these questions, but they should be addressed before moving forward.

MMC recommends this long-term approach to creating a more vibrant and financially self-sufficient Pottery Lab, but acknowledges that forming a nonprofit that will be able to plan for and implement a new facility and program is not without risk. It is possible that the endeavor

may not succeed in the long-run, or that it may take longer than anticipated to establish the nonprofit and raise the necessary funds. If either of those scenarios takes place, MMC believes the analysis and recommendations for current program operations that follow will result in the type of internal analysis and change that will greatly enhance the efficiency of Pottery Lab operations. And as a result, the gap between income and expenses, if still present, will be well defined and the Department will be in a better position to make decisions about the future of the Pottery Lab.

**Program Offerings**

Classes are the core program of the Pottery Lab; they constitute the main user experience and cover 57% of the Pottery Lab’s

**Figure 7. Programs Offered by Benchmark Organizations**

	Classes & Workshops	Artist Residencies	Gallery	Outreach
<b>The Clay Studio</b>	•	•	•	•
<b>Kirkland Arts Center</b>	•	•	•	•
<b>Mudflat Pottery Studio</b>	•	•	•	•
<b>Pottery Northwest</b>	•	•	•	
<b>Boulder Pottery Lab</b>	•			

operating budget. When compared to the benchmark organizations, it is readily apparent that the Pottery Lab offers less variety in programming. Figure 7 shows that in addition to classes and workshops, which are at the heart of each benchmark organization, artist residencies, galleries, and outreach programs are essential offerings. All but Pottery Northwest have access to larger budgets and facilities than the Pottery Lab, but each organization works within a relatively limited budget to provide creative and dynamic programming that appeals to the community while investing in local artists.

Pottery Northwest, which has a facility and budget on par with the Pottery Lab’s, hosts 10 artists in residence and sells their work, along with the work of other Pottery Northwest students and guest artists, in their gallery. While the gallery is not a significant source of income, it is seen as an important part of the organization’s mission of service and education. Their artist residency program is described by Pottery Northwest’s Executive Director as a transfusion of new energy and faculty every few years. He said the program has “made a huge difference in the studio.”

The Clay Studio's award winning *Claymobile* program is another example of programming that increases the organization's visibility and impact in the community. Since 1994, the *Claymobile* has partnered with schools, community-based organizations, and social service agencies in greater Philadelphia to bring hands-on arts experiences to underserved communities. The *Claymobile* is equipped to turn any classroom into a ceramics studio. While the program costs about \$250,000 per year, it has been very appealing to funders, whose grants make the program break even.

Each benchmark organization talked about the challenge of attracting new students, many of whom view ceramics as a significant commitment of time and resources. To address this barrier to participation, many of the organizations offer options to expose the public to ceramics:

- **Intensives** offer an overview of a skill or technique in a compressed time period. For example, the Kirkland Arts Center offers intensives in wheel throwing, handbuilding, and ceramics in general. Intensives include four sessions for \$215 (compared to eight sessions for \$280 for a full beginner class).
- **Samplers** also take place in a shorter timeframe, but introduce the student to a range of techniques. The Clay Studio offers five-week mini courses for \$195 (compared to \$295 for a full 10-week class).
- **Date Nights** are utilized by a number of benchmark organizations to provide a very brief introduction (e.g. one, two-hour session) to ceramics at a low fee.
- **Open Houses** also serve as a way to reach new users and demystify ceramics. The Clay Studio takes part in the city's *First Friday* program, leaving the studio open and free to the public for four hours once a month. They capitalize on the 1,200 to 1,800 visitors each First Friday by inviting small groups to take on a ceramics project during their time at the studio.

The Pottery Lab has utilized samplers during special events for children, such as *Children's Day*, *My First Camp*, and *Green Streets*, but not in a systematic way. Offerings are limited by space and staff time, as well as the budget constraints of the Department. One interviewee noted, "The [Pottery Lab] programs aren't designed to bring in non-users." For example, each of the benchmark organizations holds workshops, but the Pottery Lab's ability to host workshops is limited by the need to account for each workshop in the fiscal year budget. Since workshops

are often scheduled with only a few months' notice, this rule means the Pottery Lab has to find creative ways to make the workshops a reality.

Similarly, outreach activities have been limited due to the cost of equipment and the risk of losing the resulting pieces. But with such limited space in the Pottery Lab facility, it appears that outreach programs or classes and offerings at other locations, such as recreation centers, could expand the reach of the Pottery Lab beyond its four walls.

***Recommendation: Establish short-term offerings to attract new students.*** Work within the financial and physical constraints of the Pottery Lab to introduce ceramics “teasers,” such as date nights and on-site samplers, that reach new audiences. This will require studying the current class, camp, and open lab schedules to allow for small pockets of time for short-term classes.

Branching out into artist residencies or a retail gallery may not be feasible in the current facility, but they should be included in any expansion plans. At the same time, outreach efforts, such as The Clay Studio's *Claymobile*, could be integrated into the Pottery Lab program with grant funding. During a time when arts education is at an all time low, an outreach program would allow the Pottery Lab to make a deeper impact in the community by addressing a need. Such programs are appealing to funders and should be part of rethinking the Pottery Lab's offerings as a nonprofit. However, the timing for such a program needs to be coordinated with the priorities set for the next three to five years.

### ***Class Structure and Fees***

The next three sections (*Class Structure and Fees*, *Open Lab*, and *Retail Sales*) address the income generating areas of the Pottery Lab program. Each section addresses current operations and recommendations to increase revenues. Please note that although the Pottery Lab offers classes for adults and youth, the analysis and recommendations that follow focus on adult classes. It is MMC's belief although the class participants may differ in age, the issues

identified in this report and the respective recommendations are similar. As the Pottery Lab’s future direction is decided, it will be important to determine desired target audiences and how best to serve those audiences.

Overview of Classes

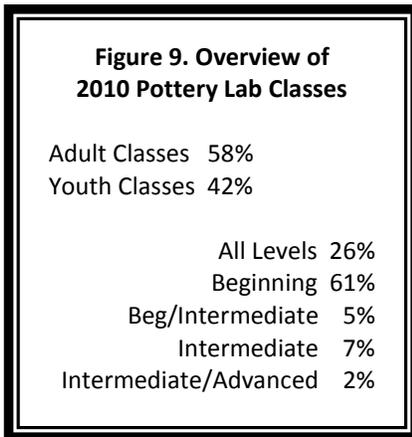
Classes are in session at the Pottery Lab 41 weeks of the year; there are four, nine-week sessions and one, five-week session. The remaining 11 weeks of the year are used for shut-down and clean up, as well as staff time off.

A number of interviewees suggested adjusting the length of each session in order to increase revenue. The options include lengthening the five-week session in order to charge a higher class fee (e.g. five, nine-week sessions) or offering more sessions for a shorter duration (e.g. six, eight-week sessions). Figure 8 indicates that the Pottery Lab’s class time is consistent with that

**Figure 8. Weeks of Class Time Each Year Among Benchmark Organizations**

Organization	Weeks of Class Time
The Clay Studio	38
Pottery Northwest	40
Kirkland Arts Center	40
Mudflat Pottery Studio	45
<i>Boulder Pottery Lab</i>	41

of the benchmark organizations.



Based on data from 2010, which is presented in Figure 9, the majority of Pottery Lab classes serve adults (58%) and are aimed at beginning potters (61%). The basic class fee for non-residents is \$266 and \$213 for residents; all adult classes are offered at the same price. The majority of students who took part in the online survey indicated that the Pottery Lab’s pricing was fair (79%), with 11% saying the price was too high

and 10% saying they were willing to pay more.

Class Pricing and Student Minimums

Class fees were raised 15% for the Winter 2010 session in order to ensure that all costs were covered by class revenues. This increase was based on 2009 actuals and 2011 estimates of direct and indirect costs of Pottery Lab classes; indirect costs are based on the Pottery Lab’s percentage of the overall Recreation Division budget.

Figure 10 below was developed from the direct and indirect cost estimates utilized by the Department. The chart details the costs associated with beginning through advanced adult classes. When calculating the cost per student, MMC used a range of 10 to 20 students, which are the current minimum and maximum students for the average adult class. According to internal policy, classes without the minimum of 10 students are cancelled. Please note that the program cost information utilized in Figure 10 includes salary information from 2009; as such, the actual salary costs (at least for full-time staff) are higher.

**Figure 10. Pottery Lab Adult Class Costs**

<b>Class Costs</b>	<b>Beginning and Beg/Intermediate Classes</b>	<b>Intermediate/Advanced Classes</b>
<b>Direct Costs</b>		
<b>Instruction</b>	\$432 <i>(seasonal instructor)</i>	\$703 <i>(full-time employee)</i>
<b>Clay</b>	\$233	\$233
<b>Glaze</b>	\$200	\$200
<b>Firing</b>	\$150	\$150
<b>Total Direct Class Cost:</b>	<b>\$1,015</b>	<b>\$1,286</b>
<b>Indirect Costs</b>		
<b>Program Cost @ \$79 per hour of class time</b>	\$1,778 (22.5 class hours)	\$1,778 (22.5 class hours)
<b>Recreation Cost @ \$11 per hour of class time</b>	\$248	\$248
<b>Total Indirect Cost:</b>	<b>\$2,026</b>	<b>\$2,026</b>
<b>TOTAL CLASS COST:</b>	<b>\$3,041</b>	<b>\$3,312</b>

Figure 10 shows that classes can be profitable if an accurate class minimum is established and implemented. Assuming the most conservative figures, 10 Boulder residents at \$213 each in a beginning class, the Pottery Lab

**Cost Per Student Compared to Fee Charged**

<b>Cost Per Participant (based on 10 students)</b>	\$304	\$331
<b>Cost Per Participant (based on 20 students)</b>	\$152	\$166
<b>Pottery Lab Class Fee:</b>	\$266 Non-Resident \$213 Resident	\$266 Non-Resident \$213 Resident

should gross \$2,130 and incur \$3,041 in expenses on a beginning/intermediate class. Based on these estimates, the class minimum should be higher since a beginning/intermediate class will not break even until there are 15 students who register as Boulder residents (15 students @ \$213 = \$3,195) or 12 non-resident students (12 students @ \$266 = \$3,192). No doubt, classes have a mix of resident and non-resident students, but these cost estimates point to a minimum class requirement of at least 12 to make the class profitable. The equivalent minimums for intermediate/advanced classes are 16 resident students (16 students @ \$213 = \$3,408) and 13 non-resident students (13 students @ \$266 = \$3,458).

Organizational data from 2009 indicates that 80% of the 108 classes offered that year met or surpassed the minimum student requirement. This number is artificially inflated since it is based on a minimum of 10 students for the average adult class. Assuming that the majority of classes do surpass the minimum student requirement, it is unclear why the Pottery Lab does not break even financially on the strength of its classes. Figure 10 reinforces that the class fee increase in 2010 was justified and may not have been high enough. In addition, the data in Figure 10 shows that costs increase as skill level increases, but the Pottery Lab does not charge different fees for different levels, thereby losing revenue for the Pottery Lab and reinforcing the incentive for advanced students to retake beginning classes.

**Figure 11. Comparison of Adult Classes at Pottery Lab, Local Organizations, and Benchmark Organizations**

Organization	Class Price <sup>1</sup>	Session Length	Class Length	Price Per Session	Price Per Hour of Class Time	Included in Class Fee			
						Clay	Tools	Glaze/Firing	Open Lab <sup>2</sup>
<b>Boulder Pottery Lab</b>	\$266	9 Weeks	2.5 hrs	\$30	\$12	50 lbs	No	Yes	Yes
<b>LOCAL CERAMICS ORGANIZATIONS</b>									
<b>Fort Collins Pottery Studio</b>	\$139	10 Weeks	2 hrs	\$14	\$7	25 lbs	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Westminster Pottery Studio</b>	\$125	9 Weeks	3 hrs	\$14	\$5	25 lbs	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Boulder Potters Guild</b>	\$185	8 Weeks	3 hrs	\$23	\$8	50 lbs	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Mudslingers</b>	\$150 Beg. \$160 Int.	5 Weeks	2.5 hrs	\$30 Beg. \$32 Int.	\$12 Beg. \$13 Int.	Yes (unlimited)	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Arvada Center</b>	\$85 Beg./Int. \$170 Adv.	5 Weeks (Beg./Int.) 10 Weeks (Adv.)	3 hrs	\$17	\$6 Beg./Int. \$6 Adv.	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>BENCHMARK ORGANIZATIONS</b>									
<b>The Clay Studio</b>	\$295	10 Weeks <sup>3</sup>	3 hrs	\$30	\$10	No <sup>4</sup>	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Mudflat Pottery Studio</b>	\$525	14 Weeks	3 hrs	\$38	\$13	25 lbs <sup>5</sup>	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Pottery Northwest</b>	\$350	10 Weeks	3 hrs	\$35	\$12	25 lbs <sup>5</sup>	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Kirkland Arts Center</b>	\$280 Beg. \$340 Int./Adv.	8 Weeks (Beg.) 10 Weeks (Int./Adv.)	3 hrs	\$35 Beg. \$34 Inter./Adv.	\$12 Beg. \$11 Inter./Adv.	25 lbs <sup>5</sup>	No	Yes	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Includes all levels, unless otherwise noted; member and resident discounts are not shown

<sup>2</sup> All but Boulder Potters Guild and Mudslingers offer unlimited use of open lab hours. Boulder Potters Guild includes 3 hours with class fee and Mudslingers gives 2 sessions.

<sup>3</sup> Summer session is 8 weeks

<sup>4</sup> The Clay Studio sells each 25 lb bag of clay for \$14

<sup>5</sup> Additional clay can be purchased in 25 lb bags for \$23 each at Mudflat Pottery Studio, \$15 at Pottery Northwest, and \$10 at Kirkland Arts Center

Figure 11 above compares the Pottery Lab's pricing structure to that of local ceramics organizations and the benchmark organizations. In this context, the Pottery Lab's class prices

are higher than those of the local organizations, but lower than any of the benchmark organizations. The price per session and per hour of class time is similar to the benchmark organizations and a few of the local organizations. From this comparison, it appears that the Pottery Lab's class price, session length, and class duration are all on par with organizations in the industry, but if they do not adequately cover costs, prices must be increased to meet them.

### Included in Class Fee

The fee for a Pottery Lab class includes 50 pounds of clay, glazes and firings, as well as unlimited access to Open Lab hours, which take place whenever the Pottery Lab is open and classes are not in session. Compared with other organizations, the Pottery Lab provides more clay with its class fee. The majority of organizations in Figure 11 include one, 25 pound bag of clay with their class fee. Additional bags of clay are available for purchase from the benchmark organizations; bag prices range from \$10 at the Kirkland Arts Center to \$23 at Mudflat. According to the Pottery Lab staff, many students only use one bag of clay, approximately 10% use four bags, and average use is two bags. MMC heard from many interviewees and benchmark organizations that more advanced students use more clay while beginning students use very little. A number of organizations pointed to the common practice of including the cost of firing and glazing in the cost of clay, thereby including all direct costs in the bag fee. For example, Pottery Northwest said they use a 100% markup on their clay, which sells for \$15 per bag. At the Pottery Lab, each bag of clay costs the organization \$8; this is the fee charged to students for each additional bag of clay beyond the two included in the class price. While the Pottery Lab staff knows the cost of the clay itself (\$8 per bag), it is unclear whether the fully loaded price has been determined through internal analysis. The Pottery Lab believes the fully loaded price, including clay, glazing, and firing, is \$16, but this cost is not reflected in the prices charged to students for additional bags of clay.

Nor is it clear if a cost analysis has been conducted to determine if class prices themselves accurately reflect the true cost of clay, glazing, and firing. For example, according to the class program sheets, the same expense for clay, glazing, and firing (\$582.50) is assumed for all adult

classes, whether beginner, intermediate, or advanced. This approach does not reflect that beginners use less clay than advanced students. Class prices should reflect these differences in the cost of materials.

**Recommendation: Accurately account for all direct and indirect class costs.** Conduct a thorough analysis of all direct and indirect costs associated with Pottery Lab classes and adjust class minimums and pricing as appropriate. While class prices are similar to those of other organizations, it is most important that class fees cover the resources utilized in producing a class. Variable pricing based on class level (beginner, intermediate, advanced) would more accurately reflect the true cost to the organization.

**Recommendation: Include one bag of clay in class fee and charge full price for each additional bag.** Based on the class cost analysis above, the Pottery Lab should fully load the cost of additional bags of clay to include glazing and firing costs in each bag.

**Recommendation: Institute a membership program.** As the Pottery Lab looks to the future as an independent nonprofit, different revenue sources will be required. The popularity of classes provides an opportunity to draw students closer to the organization through a membership program that offers discounts and other benefits. Three of the four benchmark organizations have membership programs (see Figure 12); the main reason to join each program is to receive

**Figure 12. Membership Programs at Benchmark Organizations**

Organization	Number of Members	Basic Membership Fee	Benefits
The Clay Studio	500	\$50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member rate on classes and workshops</li> <li>• Exclusive shopping events</li> <li>• Exhibition previews and members-only receptions</li> <li>• Admission to lectures and public programs</li> <li>• Acknowledgement in publications</li> </ul>
Mudflat Pottery Studio	250	\$125	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member rate on classes and most workshops</li> <li>• Discount on purchases of Open Studio sales and at Mudflat Gallery</li> </ul>
Kirkland Arts Center	400	\$50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member rate on classes</li> <li>• Invitation to select artist opportunities including exhibits and sales</li> <li>• Discount at art supply stores</li> </ul>

a class discount. The benefits at these organizations are more expansive than what could be offered now at the Pottery Lab since they have more variety in programming, but benefits might include discounts on class fees, special access to pottery sales, invitations to events, and discounts at local art supply stores. This will never become a significant source of income, but members are the beginning rung on the donor ladder, and as people become closer to the organization, they are more likely to give larger donations over time.

### ***Open Lab***

The physical space required to house the necessary equipment makes at-home practice of the ceramic arts prohibitive for most casual students and hobbyists. Even some working artists lack the set-up to practice in their own home. Experienced students who are not professional-level gravitate to studios such as the Pottery Lab for the equipment, practice time, and community that such programs provide. While ongoing education may motivate certain students, anecdotal evidence indicates that most advanced students are interested in the Open Lab time. Because the Pottery Lab only offers lab time to class registrants, some advanced students take classes again and again, many times at levels far below their ability. As explained by the Pottery Lab staff, “We offer beginning and intermediate classes but students often sign up for the time slot, not the actual level of instruction. You could have beginners in an all levels class or advanced students in the beginning class.” The result can be frustration on the part of beginners who experience a class with very few other beginners. One former student noted, “It seemed like everyone was already an expert” in their beginner class.

The survey of former Pottery Lab students echoed this concern and revealed a general frustration with the preponderance of advanced students. One survey respondent said, “The studio seemed to be a little cliquy with people who had clearly been there for a while...Not so inviting for a first timer.” Another referred to the long-time students as an “exclusive club.” It goes without saying that having a dedicated group of repeat students is beneficial to the Pottery Lab. In fact, the Pottery Lab should hope to keep these valued students while building up the roster of beginning students. The presence of so many advanced students becomes a

problem only when instruction and a welcoming environment are sacrificed. A few survey respondents and interviewees said that instruction was impacted by the presence of so many advanced students. For example, one survey respondent said, “The beginners in the mixed beginner/intermediate class we took received little instruction and guidance.” Another said, “I was looking for actual instruction. Not just a place to work.”

The appeal of the Pottery Lab to experienced students is clear. According to the Department’s *Pottery Lab Information Sheet*, the Pottery Lab is open on average 75 hours per week each semester. Of that time, approximately 20 hours, or 27% of the operating hours, are dedicated to adult, teen, and pre-teen classes on the first floor; another 3.5 hours (5% of operating hours) are dedicated to EXPAND’s Journeys Program, which serves adults with Traumatic Brain Injuries. The remaining 51.5 hours, or 69% of operating hours, are available as Open Lab. Numerous interviewees and survey respondents commented on the “generous” Open Lab hours as a major asset of the Pottery Lab.

Two of the benchmark organizations appeal to advanced students by offering classes without instruction for experienced students. The Clay Studio’s *Studio Passport* allows access to all open studios not being used for instruction. The class is limited to returning intermediate and advance students; it costs \$280 per student, which is a 5% discount on the full class price. Similarly, Mudflat’s *Independent Study* gives students access to the studio during open lab time, also for a 5% discount on the full class fee.

**Recommendation: Formalize the existing independent study program at the Pottery Lab.** List the class in the *Recreation Guide* at a reduced price of 5% off. By allowing advanced students to have access to Open Lab hours for a slightly reduced fee, more space would be available for beginners and other new students in the existing class structure. If samplers and other introductory programs are offered, it will be essential to ensure there is room for new students.

A few interviewees suggested offering Open Lab hours for an hourly fee. In such a scenario, students could buy a punch card of up to 10 hours of lab time. After discussing the options with

the benchmark organizations, MMC feels that a full, semester-long class is a better fit for the Pottery Lab because it ensures a long-term commitment and a base level of income associated with Open Lab time. If hourly Open Lab time is available for purchase, the Pottery Lab runs the risk of cannibalizing its classes by removing a number of the advanced students and possibly not being able to replace the income lost.

**Retail Sales**

Retail sales during the Pottery Lab’s *Pottery Sales* constitute the second significant income stream for the organization (see Figure 13). In past years, there have been three sales: June, September, and December. Each sale takes place over a weekend, with five hours of operations each day. The Holiday Sale in December 2010 was an independently operated event not affiliated with the Pottery Lab, even though it was organized by individuals who know each other through their work at the Pottery Lab. In previous years, this sale was held at the Pottery Lab. This change accounts for the drop in retail sales revenue from 2009 to 2010.

**Figure 13. Pottery Lab Revenue from Retail Sales**

Year	Revenue	% of Operating Budget
2008	\$29,107	10%
2009	\$24,841	8%
2010	\$16,619	6%

The direct and indirect expenses associated with the sales have never been calculated. In order to estimate these costs, Pottery Lab staff were asked to account for their hours. Based on this information, staff spend 132 hours on each sale, or 264 hours for two sales in one year. Using 2010 hourly rates, this equates to almost \$6,900. In addition, there are direct expenses such as those associated with the “throw-a-thons” used to make pieces for the sale, advertising, postcards to announce the sale, and postage. Assuming a range of \$3,000 to \$5,000 in direct costs for each sale, the Pottery Lab might spend \$6,000 to 10,000 for two sales; when added to the staff expenses, it appears that the sales either break even or may lose money (\$12,900-\$16,900 in expenses, \$16,619 in revenue in 2010).

Retail sales can be an important program component; the outreach necessary to draw visitors increases awareness of the program, and purchases are perpetual reminders of the program to

the purchaser. At the same time, an accurate accounting of the costs associated with the sales is necessary.

**Recommendation: Evaluate the true cost of Pottery Sales.** With an analysis of all costs associated with the Pottery Sales, changes can be made to ensure that the sales provide net revenue to the organization.

**Recommendation: Organize a volunteer committee to spearhead Pottery Sales.** Just as the Holiday Sale is now organized by volunteers associated with the Pottery Lab, other sales can be produced in this way. Once all expenses are understood, efforts should be made to alleviate costs, such as the significant amount of staff time dedicated to Pottery Sale preparations.

### ***Staffing***

The Pottery Lab functions with two full-time staff, as well as part-time instructional staff and volunteers. Until this summer, the Pottery Lab benefitted from one additional full-time employee; with the departure of that staff member, the Department has decided to fill the role with seasonal/part-time support until this assessment is complete and an informed decision about staffing needs can be made. Spending on personnel constitutes approximately 80% of the Pottery Lab program's operating budget. On top of this amount, the program benefits from Department staff assistance, which is not included in the program's official budget or the above quoted percentage (see p. 10 for indirect Department costs that are not included in the Pottery Lab budget).

With a small staff, each full-time employee has a broad role, including administrative tasks, facility needs, programming, and teaching. For example, the Program Coordinator estimates that she spends 29% of her time on administration, 27% on facility, 18% on programs, and 24% on teaching. This "all hands on deck" approach is common in small programs and organizations that lack the financial resources to allow staff specialization, and it is likely that this approach has grown organically with the program itself. The Program Coordinator does not take the

executive leadership role found in independent organizations or those with a larger budget; in those organizations, a director, as opposed to a program coordinator, might be responsible for setting the overall vision, overseeing business operations, artistic planning, and staff management.

As a Department program, Pottery Lab staff appear to function more as program implementers. As such, each full-time staff member fulfills tasks that range in scope from managerial to artistic to menial. The result is an inefficient use of staff time that is focused – by necessity – on day-to-day needs. One often-cited example in MMC’s interviews is the amount of staff time used to move ceramic pieces from the upstairs drying racks to the downstairs kilns. As one Pottery Lab student said, staff time is used inefficiently by handling “each of the hundreds of pots that move up and down the stairs from glazing to firing to the finished shelves.”

Given the challenges facing the program, this is a logical time to re-evaluate staff roles and consider what staff structure will help the Pottery Lab to run efficiently and effectively in the future. Although the Pottery Lab is over 55 years old, it exhibits many of the qualities of a program in its infancy, with an informal organizational structure and staff roles. Organizations or programs in their infancy often face a crisis when this informal structure clashes with increased need for accountability, and a reorganization takes place. The changes recommended in this report are intended to transition the Pottery Lab into the next phase of organizational development, which includes increased professionalism in operations and management.

***Recommendation: Reorganize staff to reflect expertise and skills required.*** In order to implement these recommendations, the Pottery Lab must be staffed with certain skills and expertise. Most important, the Pottery Lab should be managed by an Executive Director type of position, in place of a Program Manager. This role should encompass long-term planning, strategic decision-making, business and financial oversight, artistic planning, and staff management. Teaching and manual labor should not fall to this staff member.

Other staff roles should focus on facility needs, marketing, and program implementation; this may require less teaching for all full-time staff. MMC recommends researching the possibility of dedicating one or more part-time positions to the firing of kilns and loading and unloading of student work; these duties take up a significant amount of staff time that could be used more effectively elsewhere. A certain level of expertise is required to work with the kilns and MMC suggests that the devoted group of Pottery Lab students and artists may yield a few candidates for a paid position. If not, posting the position and providing training is certainly a possibility. Any changes to the staffing of kiln duties should be made in concert with the analysis of kiln usage recommended in the *Facility* section (see p. 14).

### ***Awareness***

Those closest to the Pottery Lab, including its staff and students, are keenly aware of its offerings, but time and again, assessment interviewees said that those outside this core group know little about the Pottery Lab. Current marketing and advertising efforts are limited to the Department's quarterly *Recreation Guide*, which lists all classes and advertises the pottery sales. Limited additional advertising related to the pottery sales is covered by the local paper and emails are sent out to advertise events, classes that are not full, sales, special events, and other happenings. These media sources appear to be enough to attract first-time and return students, but if changes are made that open up spaces for more students, greater effort will need to be paid to ongoing institutional marketing.

**Recommendation: *Increase marketing of the Pottery Lab.*** If the Pottery Lab expands into a larger facility, marketing and advertising will be increasingly necessary. In the meantime, the Friends of the Pottery Lab suggested a number of free or low cost avenues for marketing the organization, such as the Boulder County Arts Alliance, Craigslist, Boulder Arts Resource, and Boulder Weekly. With staff time at a minimum, MMC recommends working with the Friends of the Pottery Lab to find volunteers to spearhead these efforts.

## ***Designation within Parks and Recreation Department***

Throughout the assessment process, the Department has reiterated its desire to continue the Pottery Lab program, but economic uncertainties have resulted in actions that lead Pottery Lab supporters to doubt the true level of support. Many interviewees said that if the Department continues to be involved with the Pottery Lab, as is expected, it will be important for them to communicate their support for the arts in Boulder. As one interviewee said, “This should be articulated as a commitment from the City.” In addition, many interviewees expressed hope that this articulation of support will include transitional funding for the Pottery Lab as it begins to operate as part of a public-private partnership.

The status of the Pottery Lab as a program of the Department was confusing to several interviewees. The Department provides other visual and performing arts programs, but its main focus is on Boulder’s parks and facilities, and recreation activities. One interviewee said the Pottery Lab is low on the City’s priority list because, “Boulder is a recreation-driven community, not an art driven community.” Another interviewee said, “As part of Boulder’s Parks and Recreation Department, [the Pottery Lab] must compete with sports and exercise facilities and programs. In a town that is widely known for sports and fitness, I think the Pottery Lab has not had the attention it deserves as it competes for funds.” More than one interviewee believes there is a “prejudice about supporting arts under recreation.”

Many interviewees question if the Pottery Lab should be moved to the Library and Arts Department, which oversees arts and library programs in the community. The central question is whether or not the Pottery Lab fits within the mission and vision of the Parks and Recreation Department. The Department’s guiding principles, which are the basis for decision making for its programs, are:

- ❖ Champion diversity
- ❖ Contribute to personal health and wellness
- ❖ Ensure that youth are a priority
- ❖ Maintain and protect our facilities and programs

- ❖ Prioritize available subsidy to introductory level classes and programs
- ❖ Pursue a sustainable financial model for recreation programs and facilities

The Pottery Lab contributes to the mental health and wellness of participants and offers classes for youth. But it is clear that the Department's programs focus on building competency in its participants, gaining skill through entry level classes and programs, and while teaching the ceramic arts to beginners is one important aspect of the Pottery Lab's operations, it is not the only focus. The recommendations in this report would allow for an increase in beginning students in order to keep the organization vibrant and dynamic. But the degree to which the Pottery Lab fits within these guiding principles must be resolved and articulated clearly to the public.

**Recommendation: Revisit the City department within which the Pottery Lab resides.** Moving the Pottery Lab has been discussed by the City in its efforts to eliminate overlaps in departments, but given the current management assessment of the program, MMC believes it is worth another look. It is possible that moving the program to Library and Arts could be detrimental in funding terms; one Department interviewee questioned whether or not Library and Arts can fund operations. This should be investigated further to ensure that the Pottery Lab program is housed within and/or partners with a department whose goals and principles logically encompass the Pottery Lab.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

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For over 55 years, the Pottery Lab has been a community resource for quality instruction in the ceramic arts. The program is beloved by most that use it, but suffers from limited awareness in the greater community. At the same time, the current economic climate has impacted the Department's ability to fund the Pottery Lab program in the long-term, and as a result, fundamental changes must be made to current operations to establish the program's financial self sufficiency. This includes growing its programmatic offerings, conducting analyses of the true costs of all revenue generating areas, and adjusting operations as appropriate. Incremental short-term changes to classes and pricing might help the program break even, but the underlying flaws in the Pottery Lab facility and finances must be addressed to ensure long-term viability. MMC believes the path forward includes establishing a private nonprofit entity to partner with the Department, and securing a larger, more accessible, facility.

The transition to a public-private partnership should begin immediately to ensure that additional revenues are in place before the Department's support is depleted. The Pottery Lab cannot remain a "hidden gem" if it hopes to survive. The future direction described in this report comes with inherent challenges, but if implemented with thoughtful and strategic leadership, the Pottery Lab can serve the community in even more meaningful ways.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

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### **City of Boulder Parks and Recreation**

Alice Guthrie, Recreation Superintendent  
Kirk Kincannon, Parks and Recreation Director  
Teri Olander, Recreation Administrator  
Myriah Conroy, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  
Michelle Estrella, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  
Bob Yates, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board  
Marcelee Gralapp, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

### **Pottery Lab**

Ron Broome, Friends of the Pottery Lab  
Loretta Cihacek, Friends of the Pottery Lab  
Dan Dell Agnese, Student  
Ann Fontenot, Friends of the Pottery Lab  
Christy Gunter, Friends of the Pottery Lab  
Rosemary Hegarty, Instructor  
Kevan Krasnoff, Student  
Mary Jane Mortimer, Student  
Denise Peireanlt, Parent of Student  
Nancy Utterback, Program Coordinator  
Aaron Winston, Facility Services Assistant

### **Community Members and Other Stakeholders**

Gina Earles, Studio Arts  
Lois Edgar, Boulder Potters Guild  
Donna Gartenmann, Arts Community  
Paul Hefron, Studio Arts  
Jim Lorio, Studio Arts  
Emilie Parker, Clay Arts

### **Benchmark Organizations**

Wally Bivins, Executive Director, Pottery Northwest  
Lynn Gervens, Executive Director, Mudflat Pottery Studio  
Amy Sarner Williams, President & CEO, The Clay Studio  
Christopher Shainin, Executive Director, Kirkland Arts Center

**APPENDIX B:  
STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS**

**1. How would you describe your proficiency in the ceramic arts prior to taking a class at the Boulder Pottery Lab?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Beginner		76.3%	90
Intermediate		13.6%	16
Advanced		10.2%	12
		answered question	118
		skipped question	0

**2. Had you taken other pottery classes before the class you took at the Pottery Lab?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		40.7%	48
No		59.3%	70
		answered question	118
		skipped question	0

### 3. How did you feel about the class fee that you paid at the Pottery Lab?

		Response Percent	Response Count
It was too high		11.0%	13
<b>It was fair</b>		<b>78.8%</b>	<b>93</b>
I was willing to pay more		10.2%	12
<b>answered question</b>			<b>118</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>0</b>

### 4. How satisfied were you with your experience at the Pottery Lab? [Use a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being not satisfied at all and 5 being very satisfied]

		Response Percent	Response Count
1		2.6%	3
2		4.3%	5
3		11.1%	13
4		24.8%	29
5		<b>57.3%</b>	<b>67</b>

Please explain your answer:

65

<b>answered question</b>			<b>117</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>1</b>

**5. How likely are you to take another class at the Pottery Lab? [Use a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being not at all likely and 5 being very likely]**

		Response Percent	Response Count
1		12.7%	15
2		7.6%	9
3		16.9%	20
4		22.9%	27
5		39.8%	47
Please explain your answer:			53
<b>answered question</b>			<b>118</b>
<b>skipped question</b>			<b>0</b>

**6. Do you have any other comments or feedback?**

	Response Count
	68
<b>answered question</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>skipped question</b>	<b>50</b>

**Q4. How satisfied were you with your experience at the Pottery Lab? [Use a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being not satisfied at all and 5 being very satisfied]**

1	Excellent fascility and wonderfull staff	Sep 15, 2011 6:19 AM
2	My daughter enjoyed going	Sep 6, 2011 8:37 AM
3	excellent teacher, facilities were fine, the open studio hours are a real benefit for those of us who have no home studio space	Aug 30, 2011 8:45 AM

**Q4. How satisfied were you with your experience at the Pottery Lab? [Use a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being not satisfied at all and 5 being very satisfied]**

4	The teacher was fantastic and very helpful	Aug 25, 2011 8:51 AM
5	The staff were accessible and VERY helpful, not just in classes but also during open hours. The facility is very well organized - I took classes 15 years ago at the Lab and it was not as well organized. Clearly a lot of thought and work has gone into the place.	Aug 25, 2011 5:52 AM
6	The availability of open lab times throughout the week enabled me to get a few pieces done during the duration of the class. Thank you.	Aug 24, 2011 10:23 PM
7	Its an amazing facility to learn in. The staff has great depth of knowledge and experiance in ceramics!	Aug 24, 2011 8:20 PM
8	great staff and good glazes	Aug 24, 2011 7:31 PM
9	I felt that instructors worked hard to provide a professional atmosphere for optimal learning. High standards were maintained regarding attendance, organizing work to meet during deadlines, etc., quality of craft, as well as work area awareness.	Aug 24, 2011 2:23 PM
10	My daughter loved and wants to pursue pottery.	Aug 24, 2011 10:30 AM
11	Aaron was a good, patient and inspiring teacher.	Aug 23, 2011 11:57 PM
12	I learned a ton. Instructors and staff very knowledgeable and helpful. If you want all my feedback give me more space to type in next time.	Aug 23, 2011 12:25 PM
13	Most of stuff went missing	Aug 23, 2011 12:10 PM
14	My teacher, Chris, was amazing.	Aug 23, 2011 11:40 AM
15	my kids loved it.	Aug 23, 2011 10:48 AM
16	Facilities are small, crowded, and little storage for projects in progress. Instruction was spotty, and instructor was stretched thin with such a large group of students	Aug 23, 2011 6:32 AM
17	I received little to no instruction and failed to complete a single project during the class. I was incredibly disappointed that I had nothing to show for myself-and felt uncomfortable even asking the teacher for help during class.	Aug 22, 2011 10:29 PM
18	I didn't like how much time the instructor spent on demonstrations- hands on practice would have been more beneficial than watching. I also didn't like how many other students didn't watch the presentation because they seemed to feel they were more advanced.	Aug 22, 2011 10:06 PM
19	too much lecture time not enough lab time	Aug 22, 2011 8:41 PM
20	My son enjoyed the experience.	Aug 22, 2011 8:21 PM
21	great for the price.	Aug 22, 2011 8:18 PM
22	We have enjoyed the instructors for the children's pottery classes very much and	Aug 22, 2011 7:58 PM

**Q4. How satisfied were you with your experience at the Pottery Lab? [Use a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being not satisfied at all and 5 being very satisfied]**

	appreciate the opportunity to take a class together as a family.	
23	The Pottery Lab is a wonderful, supportive environment that fosters both love of learning as well as fellowship. It is a rare mix of talented individuals that come together as a community due to a shared interest who otherwise might never cross paths. Housewives sit down at a wheel next to university students or engineers and all are engaged in fascinating conversations about clay and technique, which then leads to more personal topics, relaxation, and connection with others.	Aug 22, 2011 7:50 PM
24	Space is a bit cramped.	Aug 22, 2011 7:35 PM
25	This is a phenomenal studio, great instructors and facility. Loved it!	Aug 22, 2011 7:11 PM
26	A definite "in" crowd on Saturdays; kept losing pieces	Aug 22, 2011 6:50 PM
27	I thought the teacher was good and I loved the atmosphere	Aug 22, 2011 6:39 PM
28	Pottery lab rocks, teachers are great and the open lab hours are convenient.	Aug 22, 2011 5:53 PM
29	An incredible community of artists and novices willing to share ideas, successes and failures.	Aug 22, 2011 4:13 PM
30	Did not like dealing with shelves filled to capacity: hard to find my pieces; some were never found. If they broke during firing, it would be nice to know that information.	Aug 22, 2011 2:27 PM
31	My daughter and I had a great time. The teacher was helpful and knowledgeable. The class size was just right.	Aug 22, 2011 2:25 PM
32	There is a lot of talented people with much to share and teach at the Pottery Lab, I was not very satisfied with the person process of my pots moving through the drying to firing stage	Aug 22, 2011 2:17 PM
33	It was a good launching pad for my son and myself, but very limiting for kids and their parents....especially after taking it for several years in a row there.	Aug 22, 2011 1:48 PM
34	Not a great kids' teacher	Aug 22, 2011 1:31 PM
35	Instructors were great, but not enough time to make- up missed classes, and just too many rules.	Aug 22, 2011 1:26 PM
36	would have loved to have had more time per session	Aug 22, 2011 1:21 PM
37	Way too cheap! And free time to use the lab?! Crazy!	Aug 22, 2011 1:06 PM
38	Kids got frustrated sometime	Aug 22, 2011 11:57 AM
39	cost and distance from my home in Gunbarrel were excessive	Aug 22, 2011 11:35 AM
40	One of the best facilities in the country.	Aug 22, 2011 11:29 AM
41	Seemed more like an already established, somewhat exclusive club.	Aug 22, 2011 10:45 AM

**Q4. How satisfied were you with your experience at the Pottery Lab? [Use a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being not satisfied at all and 5 being very satisfied]**

42	Loved all the lab hours offered. Everyone is very friendly.	Aug 22, 2011 10:28 AM
43	Presenter was very skilled and prepared	Aug 22, 2011 10:28 AM
44	I loved my instructors. The atmosphere of cooperation and support that Nancy, the director, has instituted has resulted in a caring, supportive, environment that is unique to any studio experience I have ever had. The pottery lab participants have become a community, and are not just there to throw pots.	Aug 22, 2011 10:16 AM
45	My young daughter took a group class, and it was a very good class.	Aug 22, 2011 9:51 AM
46	daughter never got her finished product	Aug 22, 2011 9:49 AM
47	The beginners in the mixed beginner/intermediate class we took received very little instruction and guidance.	Aug 22, 2011 9:48 AM
48	it wasnt clear to me who was the instructor. I was new and the rest of the people knew their way around. I felt like I was catching up all the time.. wasnt as relaxing as I expected it...	Aug 22, 2011 9:45 AM
49	It was a childrens class and both of my children enjoyed it very much	Aug 22, 2011 9:31 AM
50	Nice space and supplies, especially the glazes. I did not like Nancy or the managing staff.	Aug 22, 2011 9:29 AM
51	more than a class, it is a wonderful community open to share with all!	Aug 22, 2011 9:26 AM
52	The staff was amazingly skilled and talented. I learned pottery and grew in my skills.	Aug 22, 2011 9:24 AM
53	Instruction was not very helpful, lab in general was not very welcoming to newcomers	Aug 22, 2011 9:18 AM
54	too many enrollees for the given space	Aug 22, 2011 9:17 AM
55	Loved it!	Aug 22, 2011 9:14 AM
56	The instructor was very effective; facilities are in good shape.	Aug 22, 2011 9:11 AM
57	To many people in a small space.	Aug 22, 2011 9:11 AM
58	My daughter had fun and learned basic pottery stuff.	Aug 22, 2011 9:07 AM
59	Mostly very satisfied, until class sizes began increasing	Aug 22, 2011 8:55 AM
60	My 4 year old child took a class with Aaron. It was a really wonderful experience for her. Thank you.	Aug 22, 2011 8:53 AM
61	It was an awesome experience and community!	Aug 22, 2011 8:53 AM
62	Aron was awesome!	Aug 22, 2011 8:49 AM
63	my daughter liked it	Aug 22, 2011 8:45 AM

**Q4. How satisfied were you with your experience at the Pottery Lab? [Use a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being not satisfied at all and 5 being very satisfied]**

64	Too long ago -- don't really remember	Aug 22, 2011 8:44 AM
65	The instruction was very good and I was happy with this aspect. The nightmare was in retrieving the fired pots for glazing ... I never found several of my pots and would spend 15 minutes hunting for the pots at the beginning of each class. I've taken other classes elsewhere and never have had this problem. I hope this is the kind of feedback you are looking for.	Aug 22, 2011 8:41 AM

**Q5. How likely are you to take another class at the Pottery Lab? [Use a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being not at all likely and 5 being very likely]**

1	excellent teachers and facilities; good fellowship among the potters of all levels; I believe in community support for the arts--Boulder supports the recreation centers and this is just about the only art/craft center in the city that is available to the public--the private pottery labs/studios are closed to people like me who are not professionals...we need this space and opportunity as much as gymnasts and swimmers and tennis players need theirs...we are all part of this community.	Aug 30, 2011 8:45 AM
2	I have moved to Denver since and am considering commuting for a class. I have tried other places in Denver and did not like the classes as well as I did at the Boulder Rec Center	Aug 28, 2011 8:49 AM
3	It was such an enriching experience: learning, community.....	Aug 25, 2011 5:52 AM
4	I'm on a very limited income, and it's difficult for me to pay for classes, but I have had such a wonderful time at the Lab that I won't let this stop me.	Aug 24, 2011 10:23 PM
5	i am already signed up for the fall session	Aug 24, 2011 7:31 PM
6	Excellent idea.	Aug 24, 2011 2:23 PM
7	Have to wait for the end of soccer season.	Aug 24, 2011 10:30 AM
8	The atmosphere and attitude at the potter lab is very conducive to creative expression.	Aug 23, 2011 11:57 PM
9	If I still lived in the area I'd definitely take more classes.	Aug 23, 2011 12:25 PM
10	I have since taken smaller classes with local artists in their studio	Aug 23, 2011 6:32 AM
11	Too much money, not enough hands on instruction guidance.	Aug 22, 2011 10:06 PM
12	Now that he is in school full time, it is a challenge to decide which classes to do. He loved pottery, though.	Aug 22, 2011 8:21 PM
13	athletic activities demanding more time.	Aug 22, 2011 8:18 PM

**Q5. How likely are you to take another class at the Pottery Lab?****[Use a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being not at all likely and 5 being very likely]**

14	I did the mom and kid class and my kids are getting older.	Aug 22, 2011 8:08 PM
15	My children will likely take a class or summer camp at the Pottery Lab, and I would like to take an adult beginner class sometime while they are in school.	Aug 22, 2011 7:58 PM
16	My life would not be balanced without time with clay and friends at the Pottery Lab.	Aug 22, 2011 7:50 PM
17	Already signed up for the next session.	Aug 22, 2011 5:53 PM
18	I enjoyed it so much I want to take more and my daughter saw how much I liked it and decided to take a class too.	Aug 22, 2011 4:13 PM
19	No longer live in Boulder	Aug 22, 2011 3:08 PM
20	perhaps I would try a different time of year (NOT November) when it might not be so crowded.	Aug 22, 2011 2:27 PM
21	I would love to take another pottery class with my younger child.	Aug 22, 2011 2:25 PM
22	We find the Arvada Center offers much more for kids and even adults. If the Pottery Lab here were to follow that model, we would be more likely to come back, though there is quite a bit of snobbery in Boulder among the ceramics artists who think they are better than everyone else, and a spirit of competition and not one that is nurturing.	Aug 22, 2011 1:48 PM
23	See above	Aug 22, 2011 1:31 PM
24	My daughter took the class and she's not interested anymore.	Aug 22, 2011 1:06 PM
25	if I have time	Aug 22, 2011 12:33 PM
26	In the beginning, I had absolutely no art experience, this offered me a sort of therapy which benefited myself, my job and opening my creative side, which I never knew I had.	Aug 22, 2011 12:06 PM
27	I moved from Boulder, otherwise I would take another class.	Aug 22, 2011 11:51 AM
28	cost, time and distance factor into future decisions	Aug 22, 2011 11:35 AM
29	Enrolled for this Fall	Aug 22, 2011 11:29 AM
30	I was looking for actual instruction. Not just a place to work.	Aug 22, 2011 10:45 AM
31	When another weekend workshop is offered	Aug 22, 2011 10:28 AM
32	i am moving	Aug 22, 2011 10:16 AM
33	If the current director and staff are retained I will take classes at the pottery lab for as long as I live in Boulder. If they were to change, and the atmosphere of the studio environment changed, I will undoubtedly stop.	Aug 22, 2011 10:16 AM
34	If time permits	Aug 22, 2011 9:51 AM

**Q5. How likely are you to take another class at the Pottery Lab?****[Use a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being not at all likely and 5 being very likely]**

35	depends on availability and our schedule	Aug 22, 2011 9:49 AM
36	I might take a class, but would make sure the class size was small and that it was geared only towards beginners.	Aug 22, 2011 9:48 AM
37	I don't know. I would like a more structured class...	Aug 22, 2011 9:45 AM
38	I wish that the schedule was offered to more pre teens and teens as it is a great after school activity option through out the year.. Additionally, it has always been extremely difficult to take a camp the one week before school starts in August, couldnt you arrange for once to have the camp offered another time in the summer besides the last week of break??	Aug 22, 2011 9:31 AM
39	Did not feel welcome,	Aug 22, 2011 9:29 AM
40	what a wonderful opportunity for all ages and abilities	Aug 22, 2011 9:26 AM
41	I'm having a difficult time with all the games the park & rec. Dept have played. The pottery lab is a gem, the staff is amazing, but if the dept. keeps trying to destroy it I don't want to be apart of it. My life and career are stressful enough - the lab is my recreation. I'm loosing the desire to be there with all the added stress and I can't afford any higher fees.	Aug 22, 2011 9:24 AM
42	Did not enjoy my experience, not worth the money	Aug 22, 2011 9:18 AM
43	left in middle of session - facilities are too crowded for # people in class	Aug 22, 2011 9:17 AM
44	I may sign up for another class later this year.	Aug 22, 2011 9:11 AM
45	Prices have gone up to much.	Aug 22, 2011 9:11 AM
46	depends upon my daughter's interests.	Aug 22, 2011 9:07 AM
47	parking is difficult.	Aug 22, 2011 9:06 AM
48	Depends. Need more space, or fewer people per class	Aug 22, 2011 8:55 AM
49	I would totally take another class if I lived in Boulder! I am in Illinois now, but if we return, I will be back!	Aug 22, 2011 8:53 AM
50	Great as a family - wish there were more "family" options	Aug 22, 2011 8:49 AM
51	class is good but it's too far from Louisville where we live	Aug 22, 2011 8:45 AM
52	Too busy with other activities	Aug 22, 2011 8:44 AM
53	If I lived in Boulder (I live in Estes Park) and was able to use the open hours more, it would have been more worth it.	Aug 22, 2011 8:36 AM

**Q6. Do you have any other comments or feedback?**

1	It's probably obvious that I am a really avid supporter of the arts, especially those	Aug 30, 2011 8:45 AM
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## Q6. Do you have any other comments or feedback?

available to the community including children, handicapped, seniors, and others. When I needed hand therapy, there was no other available place for such pottery in the city. Plus, the costs of the lab may be high but the facility can't be so costly as the rec center per user....this lab and the associated classes and studio space are one of the few arts/crafts facilities open to the public in Boulder and belong, importantly, in the community roster of recreation/re-creation facilities. Please keep it public...if it becomes privatized, many of us will be forced or fazed out, I'm sure.

- |    |   |                       |
|----|---|-----------------------|
| 2  | I have immensely enjoyed my experience at the pottery lab, I like the people, students, staff and I have learned a lot. My 93 yr old mother has taken classes at the pottery lab also and love it. It is very important to me, my family and community.   | Aug 28, 2011 7:53 PM  |
| 3  | Everything about the class was fun. Aaron was a great teacher!  | Aug 28, 2011 7:06 PM  |
| 4  | I really loved Nancy's teaching style!  | Aug 28, 2011 8:49 AM  |
| 5  | I took a class with Aaron. He was great!  | Aug 26, 2011 9:01 AM  |
| 6  | I really enjoyed the uniqueness of the facility.  | Aug 25, 2011 8:51 AM  |
| 7  | The pottery lab is an amazing place that serves a wide variety of people: a range of ages, a range of socio-economic status.... It contributes to Boulder's sense of community. It contributes to the arts in Boulder, making arts more of a participatory event. I cannot stress how helpful the staff have been. The only glich was when one staff left and there was a hiatus in getting his work covered (especially firing kilns), but the remaining staff worked hard to not have it impact the students. | Aug 25, 2011 5:52 AM  |
| 8  | I am very happy with the beginner pottery course I took, with all the great people I met, and with what I learned while creating a few pieces of pottery. I can hardly wait for the next class to begin! Please let me know what actions I can take to ensure that the Pottery Lab continues to be a wonderful resource for the community.  | Aug 24, 2011 10:23 PM |
| 9  | The pottery lab is the gem of the city of Boulder. I have taken classes here since I was a child and my children have also taken classes here. I hope the City of Boulder will continue to support this unique facility. There are so many lives touched by this program - it needs to survive and prosper!!!!  | Aug 24, 2011 8:20 PM  |
| 10 | I have taken clay classes at the Arvada Center and they are considerably more reasonable.   | Aug 24, 2011 7:31 PM  |
| 11 | I love my Wed night class! This is my 3ed year. Aaron is a wonderful teacher!!  | Aug 24, 2011 5:21 PM  |
| 12 | At the risk of sounding repetitive, I just want to add that pottery is probably the most therapeutic of all handiwork crafts and is on par with just about any other meditative type of practice for its aid in increasing healing and focusing attributes.   | Aug 24, 2011 2:23 PM  |
| 13 | My daughter (Age 10) takes the classes and enjoys them very much  | Aug 24, 2011 11:06 AM |
| 14 | The pottery lab provides great opportunities for the youth to expand their artistic background.   | Aug 24, 2011 10:30 AM |

**Q6. Do you have any other comments or feedback?**

15	The Pottery Lab is a wonderful part of our community and we are very happy with our experience!	Aug 23, 2011 11:57 PM
16	The staff manage and administer a variety of classes very well that teach quality ceramics fundamentals to kids, teens, adults, and mentally challenged customers. They do so efficiently as can be with the space and apparent budget constraints they are given. I give two thumbs up to the management of the pottery lab and support their efforts as a former student and as a former paying customer.	Aug 23, 2011 12:25 PM
17	Please keep this program going. It is truly fantastic.	Aug 23, 2011 11:40 AM
18	Aaron is a fantastic instructor- knowledgeable, but encouraged us to use our own creativity. Taught good techniques, and made the class feel fun--not at all stressful!	Aug 23, 2011 7:24 AM
19	While quaint ( and very close to my house) the firehouse house is too small. I think the program has outgrown the building.	Aug 23, 2011 6:32 AM
20	This is truly a wonderful program. If the rates need to be a bit higher it would be worth it, but please don't increase them terribly much. I'd like to take more classes with my son, and we do have a limited budget.	Aug 23, 2011 12:05 AM
21	I would have seriously appreciated a refund or free entrance to another class. Any instruction i received during my class came from fellow classmates who had a minute to spare, and much more experience than I	Aug 22, 2011 10:29 PM
22	The studio seemed to be a little cliquy with people who had clearly been there for a while and had established their own rhetoric. Not so inviting for a first timer.	Aug 22, 2011 10:06 PM
23	This lab is great and a wonderful community resource. Thank you for continuing to offer classes.	Aug 22, 2011 8:18 PM
24	I live in Boulder county so I paid about \$50. more than the people in the city paid. That's why I thought the price was to high.	Aug 22, 2011 8:13 PM
25	We LOVE the Pottery Lab!	Aug 22, 2011 7:58 PM
26	The Pottery Lab costs money, but it provides a community resource that is not found anywhere else in the city: a public facility where people of all ages, means, skills, as well as physical and mental ability can come together to share a common passion. It needs to continue as a public, affordable institution or a resource will be lost that cannot be replaced.	Aug 22, 2011 7:50 PM
27	I think the lab is a great asset. It is particularly great for families.	Aug 22, 2011 7:43 PM
28	Like the classes at the Boulder Guild	Aug 22, 2011 6:50 PM
29	My two boys, ages 7 and 8 did the clay camp two years in a row, and they loved it!! Thank you for giving them such a rewarding and peaceful experience!	Aug 22, 2011 6:28 PM
30	great program for my kids!	Aug 22, 2011 6:27 PM
31	This is an incredible resource. I was impressed by the mix of community members (CU students to retired business folk) all creating together. I found this especially impressive being that it was so near campus where there can be	Aug 22, 2011 4:13 PM

**Q6. Do you have any other comments or feedback?**

conflicts between students and residents, but no sign of that at the Pottery Lab!  
It was a great mix of the Boulder community.

32	The pottery lab classes for teens are a treasure. It was the highlight of my daughter's summer. Thank you for offering it. The instructor and entire experience was excellent. (Also, as for answer #3 about cost -- I was pleased it was affordable as we are budgeting, but I suppose I would have been willing to pay more as we value the class so highly and would hate to see it go away.)	Aug 22, 2011 3:31 PM
33	This was a very important place for me while in college. As CU students, we could only take ceramics after a year of art history.	Aug 22, 2011 3:08 PM
34	Can't wait until the next session.	Aug 22, 2011 3:04 PM
35	Instruction was good and people working there independently were generally very nice - sometimes helpful if asked. It worked amazingly well to have all levels of potters together in the same space. Although the firehouse has character, the program would benefit if moved to a larger space.	Aug 22, 2011 2:27 PM
36	The pottery lab is a wonderful and integral part of our community. It really provides everyone with an opportunity to explore their artistic endeavors.	Aug 22, 2011 2:25 PM
37	We wish we could take classes here that were more like those at the Arvada Center (parent/child classes there). There, the teachers are totally supportive and helpful; they let kids try anything, even making a 24-inch tall sculpture. Kids and parents can use any glaze, glaze their own pieces, etc. In Boulder, we are limited even in the amount of clay we are allowed to use--and we can only use terra cotta. It is not a place folks can grow, sadly.	Aug 22, 2011 1:48 PM
38	I appreciate the open lab hours, but it would be great if there were more evening times.	Aug 22, 2011 1:26 PM
39	I did a class with my child so I wasn't expecting to become a master potter. The class was appropriate for the description. If I were trying to really get skills at pottery I would be willing to pay more and/or seek classes with a private organization.	Aug 22, 2011 1:06 PM
40	The Pottery Lab is a wonderful place. The current manager of the pottery lab is not so wonderful. I would like to see the Pottery lab continue in the same vein as it is, but with the manager replaced, either with Aaron Winston (who knows the lab well and would be very good and willing to improve things) or someone else.	Aug 22, 2011 12:30 PM
41	In the beginning, I believed it was financially affordable, but has been raised over fifty dollars more since I began.	Aug 22, 2011 12:06 PM
42	My only complaint was that there was never a single piece of communication and most of my pieces that I worked so hard on were thrown away. I am sure my teacher told me to write some little note about it, but there was no signage about the closing of the lab over a break and nothing about "recycling" our pottery if it didn't have a note on it before break. I haven't cried in a long time, but that made me cry and I was very angry.	Aug 22, 2011 12:00 PM
43	I really like location - very historic, cozy (especially) in winter, unique site, has a special vibe.	Aug 22, 2011 11:57 AM
44	I hope we will continue to have the Pottery Lab as it is a beneficial part of the city	Aug 22, 2011 11:35 AM

**Q6. Do you have any other comments or feedback?**

programs

- |    |  |                       |
|----|--|-----------------------|
| 45 | This should be privately owned. The city is subsidizing a club for mostly the same group of people.  | Aug 22, 2011 10:45 AM |
| 46 | Please notify me when you schedule another weekend workshop. Thank you.  | Aug 22, 2011 10:28 AM |
| 47 | They do a great job with the resources they have. This town needs the pottery lab!   | Aug 22, 2011 10:16 AM |
| 48 | As a newer resident to Boulder (4 years) I don't understand all the background and contention that seems to exist between the Parks and Rec and the Pottery Lab. It almost seems at times vindictive and directed at the very people who make the pottery lab what it is. I can not imagine what that place would be like without Nancy's (and her staff's) particular guidance. Though I have been in many other studio situations, this has been my first experience with pottery. The caring, supportive, environment has been unique in my experience. It almost goes without saying that Nancy is incredibly talented as an artist, but she is by far the best overall arts teacher I have ever had. If she were to leave I would most certainly leave too. I can take pottery classes anywhere, and fortunately for me I can afford to. I choose to continue at the Pottery Lab because I love going there, I love the clay, I love the old building with all it's issues (despite the fact that my child is disabled and requires significant help on those scary stairs. Where is the elevator?); and I love the community. Isn't community part of what you are trying to foster through Parks and Rec? I've already signed up for the two sessions that go through the end of the year and at that time when decisions are reached about management of the Pottery Lab I'll make my decision about anymore. This isn't an attempt at extortion, it's just how I feel about the issue. Thank you for asking for my input. | Aug 22, 2011 10:16 AM |
| 49 | I think the pottery lab is a fabulous city facility that is a major asset to the community.  | Aug 22, 2011 9:51 AM  |
| 50 | Maybe more assistants might have addressed the problem. Or assistants that were really assisting instead of working on their own projects.   | Aug 22, 2011 9:48 AM  |
| 51 | My son, Max, age 6, loved the classes!   | Aug 22, 2011 9:40 AM  |
| 52 | My son, age 6, took the pottery class and loved it. The instructor gave a the kids a great introduction to working with clay, and my son was very proud of his finished pottery pieces. I know he would like to take another class this fall.  | Aug 22, 2011 9:32 AM  |
| 53 | See above  | Aug 22, 2011 9:31 AM  |
| 54 | I felt that it was almost like an exclusive club, hard to feel welcome in the environment. But the equipment and supplies are very good. Need a new staff.   | Aug 22, 2011 9:29 AM  |
| 55 | parents should try exploring with their children here what a wonderful way to experience your child's perspective, by learning together  | Aug 22, 2011 9:26 AM  |
| 56 | I miss the pottery lab that I have grown to love and be nurtured in my abilities. It seems like another example of big government and P & R can't seem to see that Boulder is a prime location to have its programing grow. Be an example to the rest of the world of how to make a difference in government - grow, be strong and thrive. Stop hurting the people while city leaders get richer and continue to make unnecessary cuts. When the older money of Bldr. stops where is the   | Aug 22, 2011 9:24 AM  |

**Q6. Do you have any other comments or feedback?**

money going to come from if you get rid of all the programming. Bad decisions are being made. I asked 10 years ago what the city was going to do to keep small business owners in boulder and for the middle class to want to live there. Well, you didn't do anything - I am one who's business is going elsewhere, because its not worth it to stay in Boulder. This is one of the only recreational programs that anybody regardless of age or ability that the city has. Please city council - make a difference.

57	When you say you're going to offer a class for people of all levels, experiences, etc., you should make sure that the instructor is willing to do that. It was a waste of time to sit through the demonstrations and those who didn't need instruction on certain things wasted an hour of their class waiting to be allowed to work again. The open lab hours we also not accommodating to those who work full-time. The price was way too high for the amount of time spent in class. It would make more sense to pay a flat fee for the class and a separate fee for the amount of clay used.	Aug 22, 2011 9:18 AM
58	The Boulder Pottery Lab is a wonderful environment for all ages to learn, have fun, and interact with experienced potters.	Aug 22, 2011 9:16 AM
59	Great class, great instructor, great students. Really enjoyed creating the pieces.	Aug 22, 2011 9:14 AM
60	When I took my class, the staff were all very helpful and supportive. It was a fun and rewarding experience.	Aug 22, 2011 9:11 AM
61	My daughter enjoyed the class but wasn't wowed by it.	Aug 22, 2011 9:07 AM
62	Space and parking could be improved.	Aug 22, 2011 9:05 AM
63	I moved to Thailand but I wish I could teleport to a pottery class in Boulder	Aug 22, 2011 8:55 AM
64	Took many classes. Last time, there were a lot more people, and lots of my stuff went missing or showed up damaged after being missing. Above a certain number of people in that space, and rules were ignored. My last session of the many I did was not much fun.	Aug 22, 2011 8:55 AM
65	I am glad we have a pottery lab	Aug 22, 2011 8:51 AM
66	I don't remember what I paid for the class, so I can't really comment on the price. Also, we LOVE, LOVE, LOVE the historic fire station and encourage you to preserve it regardless of any changes to the pottery lab's classes. It's one of the most interesting, charming, and beautiful buildings in Boulder.	Aug 22, 2011 8:44 AM
67	We took a children's class; it was a great introduction to pottery. The kids loved it, I was really happy with the instruction and the class space was good.	Aug 22, 2011 8:39 AM
68	Good staff, good atmosphere.	Aug 22, 2011 8:36 AM

## APPENDIX C: BENCHMARK STUDY

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What follows is an overview of four ceramics programs selected by MMC for their variety in size, scope, programming, and operations. This is not intended as a group of comparable organizations; rather, their differing approaches offer myriad examples of potential future directions for the Pottery Lab. Included are The Clay Studio, a relatively large organization with expansive on-site and outreach programs; Kirkland Arts Center, a multidisciplinary arts organization with a substantial ceramics program; Mudflat Pottery Studio, a growing ceramics organization with a new facility; and Pottery Northwest, a ceramics program close in budget and facility size to the Pottery Lab. For a comparison of the four benchmark organizations, see the *Benchmark Organizations* section.



**Mission:** To promote and develop the ceramic arts and the work of new clay artists.

**History:** The Clay Studio (Studio) was founded in 1974 by five artists in need of workspace. It was envisioned as a stepping stone for students fresh out of art school, offering affordable studio space and shared equipment. Within a short time, the Studio shifted from an inward focus to an outward educational and community focus. The Studio was incorporated as a nonprofit in 1979.

Today the Studio's programs are geared toward promoting access to the ceramic arts for all levels of interest and proficiency. Its *Claymobile* program, which travels throughout the region, has become a local and national model for art educational outreach. The Studio is both a community oriented art center and a national and international focal point for ceramic arts.

**Facility:** The Studio is in the final third of a 30-year lease on the 15,000 square foot building in Philadelphia's Old City neighborhood. It is a vital part of the neighborhood, having taken a leadership role in the revitalization of the area through the development of its own multi-use arts building and the promotion of the Old City gallery district.

**Users:** Approximately 32,000 people engage with the Studio each year, including 1,500 students on-site, 1,800 students through outreach activities, and 65 in-house artists. The majority of the

Studio's audience is college-educated and/or active/retired professionals. Research shows that 65% are female and 35% are male, with 96% residing in Center City or the surrounding suburbs. Further, 70% fall between the ages of 25-64, and 8% are over 65, with 25% falling in the low-to-moderate income bracket, while 75% are middle-to-upper income.

**Programs:** The Studio's programs include:

- Clay classes, workshops, and kids camps (see below)
- Social hands-on events, such as *Date Night* (see below)
- *Claymobile* outreach program in schools, community centers, etc. (see below)
- Gallery exhibitions
- Retail offerings in the shop
- Artist residencies and international guest artist residencies
- Work exchange professional development
- Lectures, gallery talks, tours, etc.

### Classes

Clay classes are offered over four semesters each year. All but the summer semester are 10-weeks in duration; the summer semester is eight weeks long. Classes meet once per week.

- Adult classes cost \$295 for 10 sessions, with each class lasting three hours
- There are no classes targeted at teens and pre-teens
- Parent and child workshops are \$35; half-day, week-long camps for children are \$165
- Class fees include glazes and firings, and unlimited access to the studio during open lab hours. Clay must be purchased at the Studio; it costs \$14 per 25 pound bag. Tools can be purchased at the Studio's tool store.

### Studio Passport

For those with prior experience who want to utilize the studio space without taking a class, there is the *Studio Passport*, which allows access to all open studios. Each studio is overseen by a monitor. No technical demonstrations are included. The *Studio Passport* is limited to returning intermediate and advanced students. The fee is \$280, a 5% discount on the full class price; this price is further reduced for members.

### Samplers, Date Night, and First Fridays

The Studio's President and CEO, Amy Sarnier Williams, notes that time and cost are the biggest barriers to participation in one of the Studio's classes. To address this, a number of shorter, introductory offerings are presented:

- The five-week mini *Clay Studio Sampler* teaches students a new technique each week. The class costs \$195, compared to \$295 for a full 10-week session.
- *Date Night* (“get a little dirty on a Friday night!”) is a two-hour class offered once per month at \$35 per person. Beer, wine, and snacks are provided. For an additional fee, the Studio will glaze, fire, and ship the resulting work to the student.
- The Studio stays open from 5 to 9 pm as part of *First Fridays*. Each time, 1,200 to 1,800 people visit the Studio. On select First Fridays, contact information is collected for small groups who are guided through a free, hands-on project, such as making a ceramic ornament, to introduce them to ceramics.

### Claymobile

Started in 1994, the *Claymobile* is the Studio’s award-winning mobile ceramic art program that partners with schools, community based organizations, and social service agencies in greater Philadelphia to bring hands-on art education to some of the region's most underserved communities. Staffed by artists with expertise in ceramics and experience teaching in diverse settings, the *Claymobile* van contains all of the equipment and materials needed to turn any classroom into a ceramics studio. A *Claymobile* Residency includes a series of weekly ceramics classes led by a professional clay artist and assistant. The residency length is usually 6-12 weeks and costs \$2,400 (for 6 weeks). For those who cannot afford the full fee, partially to fully subsidized residencies are offered. The program costs about \$250,000 per year, including staffing and overhead; that sum is offset by grants, making the program break even.

The *Claymobile* program serves nearly 2,000 low income and minority K-12 students annually (75% African American, 8% Caucasian, 13% Latino, 3% Asian); 75% of these children have never had any form of art education. Since 1994, the program has partnered with over 280 regional institutions, and has grown to become a core part of the Studio’s educational mission.

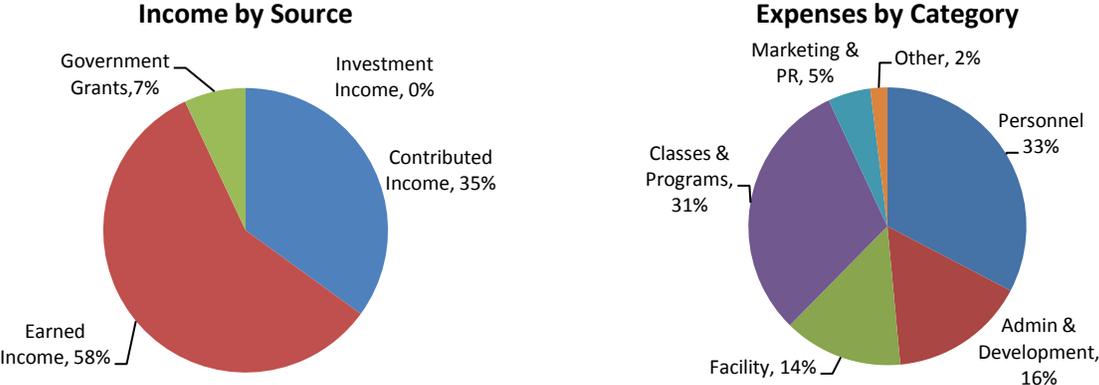
### Gallery/Shop

The Studio’s on-site shop was expanded in 2007 to 700 square feet, with direct street access. The shop complements the Gallery, which is a “lost leader”; it does not break even. As such, the organization has put a great amount of work into building the shop, including an online shop, where over 100 artists are shown. The artist receives half of the sale proceeds. All membership discounts are absorbed by the Studio, none by the artist.

**Governance:** The Clay Studio is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a Board of Directors. There are 12 full-time and one part-time staff members, as well as 14 volunteers.

**Operating Budget:** The operating budget is approximately \$1.5 million. The charts below show a healthy balance between earned and contributed income, with slightly more dependence on earned sources, such as classes. The organization is considering an upcoming capital campaign to raise \$5 million for the purchase of a new building with additional space. In order to raise the necessary funds, the Board will be further developed to ensure the resources are in place to complete the campaign.

**The Clay Studio Income and Expenses**





**Kirkland Arts Center**  
*Kirkland, Washington*  
www.kirklandartscenter.org

**Mission:** Kirkland Arts Center (KAC) provides exemplary visual arts education in a dynamic, community culture. The cornerstone ceramic arts program attracts artists from the Northwest and further afield who share their expertise with students and teachers, and the Gallery's accessible, contemporary art exhibitions showcase innovative works that stimulate a lively public dialogue.

**History:** KAC was founded as the Creative Arts League in 1962 by a group of artists and citizens interested in providing local opportunities in the arts and concerned about the preservation of a Kirkland landmark, the Peter Kirk Building. From the beginning, the KAC has been a community-driven enterprise, and everything they do today is about the community of arts. For over 49 years, the KAC has owned and maintained this historic structure and transformed it into an exhibition gallery, community arts studio, and education facility serving students of all ages and skill levels.

**Facility:** Built in 1892, the Peter Kirk Building is three floors, 9,000 square feet, and is listed on the City of Kirkland Register and National Register of Historic Places. The building includes a Print Studio and a fully-outfitted Ceramics Studio. The Ceramics Studio is 1,200 square feet; an additional 600 square feet is used as a resident ceramic artist studio.

**Users:** About 6,000 youth and adults utilize the KAC each year. According to Christopher Shainin, KAC's Executive Director, the average student is a woman in her 40s with children just out of school.

**Programs:** KAC's programs include:

- Visual art classes for ages four and up, including ceramics, painting, printmaking, drawing, and mixed media (see below)
- Contemporary art exhibitions in the KAC Gallery (see below)
- Resident Ceramic Artists program
- Outreach programs, including *Art Opens Doors* (art classes, camps, and workshops for underserved youths) and *Jump Start* (free art classes for those who have lost their jobs due to the recession)

### Classes

Clay classes take place over four quarters. Class price depend on length and materials needed:

- Adult classes for beginners cost \$280 for eight weeks of instruction, with one, three-hour class per week. Classes for intermediate and advanced adults cost \$340 for 10 weeks of instruction; each class is three hours.
- Teen and pre-teen classes cost \$270 for nine weeks of instruction. Each class is two and one half hours.
- Class fees include 25 pounds of clay, glazes, firing, and open studio time. Additional clay can be purchased at \$10 per 25 pound bag.

### Intensives and Workshops

The intensives are typically for continuing students in December. Introducing ceramics to children is important, as well as offering classes with limited commitment. KAC offers a series of workshops for this purpose. Topics include wheel throwing, handbuilding, and ceramics in general. Each class includes four, three-hour sessions for a price of \$215 (compared with \$280 for a beginner class).

### Gallery

The KAC Gallery exhibits contemporary art and ideas, with a focus on emerging artists and curators, encouraging the development of new and innovative work. Through exhibitions and public programs, KAC Gallery nourishes experimentation, collaboration, and discourse in an effort to deepen our cultural understanding and experience. Exhibition programming includes an annual Members' Exhibit, annual Emerging Curator Initiative exhibition, a biennial ceramics exhibition, and a biennial KAC instructors' exhibition. Additionally, the KAC Gallery coordinates more than 20 satellite exhibitions annually at Kirkland City Hall, Kirkland Performance Center, Kirkland Public Library, and Evergreen Hospital. Since the exhibitions are free to the public, the Exhibitions program does not break even.

**Governance & Personnel:** KAC is a private nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a Board of Directors. In addition, three council groups advise the organization:

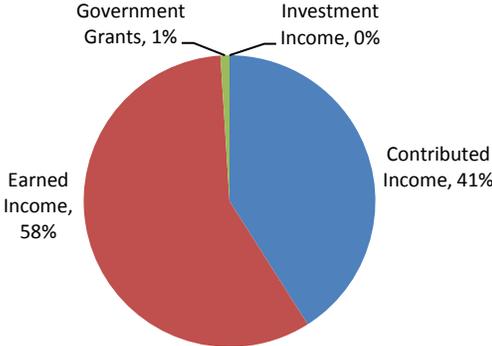
- *Advisory Council:* professionals, community leaders, and past KAC Board members who provide advice and support, and work to expand KAC's reach in the community
- *Guidance Council:* a capacity-building body of community leaders and professionals who provide expertise and services that inform and advise KAC's leadership
- *Creative Council:* a body of leading curators and artists who provide expertise and advice to KAC's Exhibitions Director

KAC employs four full-time and three part-time staff. The staff is augmented by 10 lead volunteers and interns, as well as another 200 volunteers.

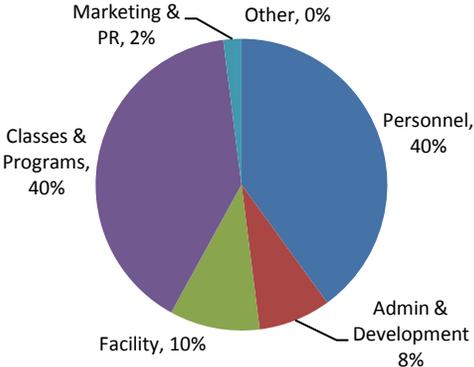
**Operating Budget:** KAC’s operating budget is approximately \$715,000, with a healthy balance of revenue derived from both earned and contributed sources.

**Kirkland Arts Center Income and Expenses**

**Income by Source**



**Expenses by Category**





**Mudflat Pottery Studio**  
*Somerville, Massachusetts*  
www.mudflat.org

**Mission:** To promote and expand awareness and interest in the ceramic arts

**History:** Mudflat Pottery Studio was founded in 1971 by local artists in search of work space. Since its grassroots start in a small, 2,000 square foot facility, the organization has continually transformed itself. Its move to a second location in Cambridge saw an increase in square footage to 4,000 and a budget of approximately \$20,000; the focus remained studio artists, with a few class offerings and outreach programs. The third move took place in the mid-1980s, when Mudflat moved to an 8,000 square foot, two-floor facility in Somerville. During this time, Mudflat began to shift its focus to put more emphasis on its classes for adults and children, as well as outreach to children and seniors.

Mudflat is in the midst of another transition, having purchased and moved into a new 16,000 square foot facility in 2011. The organization was running at full capacity and felt the need for more space, greater accessibility for the disabled, and the ability to better serve students and artists. With successful classes and programs, Mudflat was able to save \$1 million in surplus revenue; along with a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for \$300,000, their financial position allowed them to pursue this growth plan. Mudflat's Executive Director, Lynn Gervens, notes that the larger facility was desired to "have a higher quality workspace," not merely to fit in more classes and increase revenues. Today, Mudflat is engaged in its first semester in its new space; they are finishing a strategic plan, and looking toward increases in staff to fully build-out its new operations.

**Facility:** The facility is a 16,000 square foot former movie theater; Mudflat purchased the building from the City of Somerville. The Mudflat facility includes four classrooms; a seminar room for presentations, lectures, and visiting artist workshops; and 18 studio spaces for 34 clay artists.

**Users:** Approximately 300 adults and children use Mudflat on-site, and another 250 children engage with the organization through their outreach activities off-site. The audience consists of adults from age 18 to 80, from numerous communities in the greater Boston area, but primarily Boston, Somerville, and Cambridge.

**Programs:** Mudflat's programs include:

- Clay classes in wheelthrowing, handbuilding, sculpture, and technical topics (see below)
- Workshops, including visiting artists, one day introductions, and slide presentations; workshops for parents and children together
- Studio rentals for 34 professional clay artists (Resident Artists and Associate Artists)
- One-year artist residency
- Outreach programs, such as afterschool clay classes, field trips for school groups, and clay classes at senior centers and local schools
- Sale of artist work at the Mudflat Gallery (see below)

Classes

Clay classes are offered over three semesters each year, with each semester lasting 14 weeks. Classes meet once per week. There is an additional three-week semester in August, in which classes meet twice per week for six sessions.

- Adult classes cost \$525 for 14 sessions, with each class lasting three hours
- Teen and pre-teen classes cost \$250, and children's \$195. These classes are 10 weeks long, with each class lasting two hours.
- Class fees include 25 pounds of clay, glazes, and firings, and unlimited access to the studio during open lab hours. Additional clay can be purchased for \$23 per 25 pound bag; tools can be purchased for \$20. Students cannot purchase more than six additional bags of clay in order to avoid the studio being used for production work.

Independent Study

For those with prior experience who want to utilize the studio space without taking a class, Mudflat offers *Independent Study* each semester and during the August Semester. For a reduced price (\$500 for a full semester, \$210 for August Semester), students have unlimited access to the studio during open lab time. Membership discounts apply to Independent Study as well.

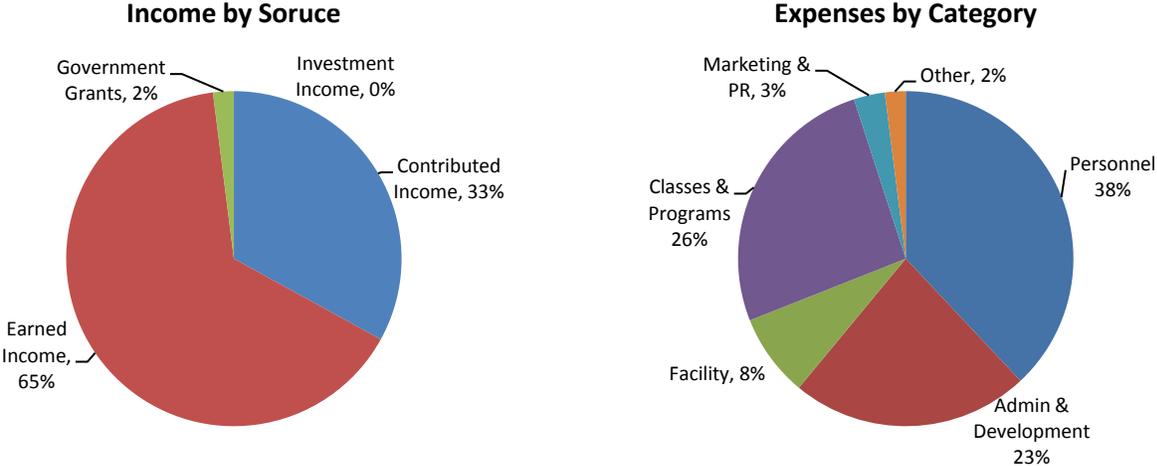
Gallery

Mudflat Gallery showcases claywork by 47 Mudflat artists, faculty, and students off-site at the Porter Square Shopping Center, about one mile away from the Studio. The Gallery is 400 square feet and is shared with a craft cooperative, although each group has separate space.

**Governance & Personnel:** Mudflat is an educational nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a Board of Directors. There are two full-time and 13 part-time paid employees, along with 10 volunteers.

**Operating Budget:** The operating budget is in a state of transition as the organization grows into its new facility. The Executive Director estimates an operating budget of \$750,000 that will grow to \$1 million when fully operational. In the past, Mudflat has relied almost entirely on earned income, which constituted 95% of all revenues. Prior to the new facility, fundraising involved solicitations for specific projects, not general operating support. With the new facility and enhanced operations, fundraising for operations has become a greater focus, as is reflected in the chart below.

**Mudflat Pottery Studio Income and Expenses**





**Pottery Northwest**  
*Seattle, Washington*  
www.potterynorthwest.org

**Mission:** To develop and promote excellence in the ceramic arts

**History:** Pottery Northwest originated as The Seattle Clay Club, an organization founded by a group of ceramics enthusiasts who traveled from Seattle to Montana to attend classes at the Archie Bray Foundation. Since its incorporation as a nonprofit in 1966, Pottery Northwest has served as an educational resource for community classes, professional workshops, and exhibitions with nationally and internationally recognized artists in the field. One of its most important functions is to serve as a professional facility for those with a serious commitment to ceramics as they prepare to establish their own studio. Toward that end, a vibrant artist residency program was established approximately five years ago, adding new energy and expertise to Pottery Northwest.

**Facility:** Pottery Northwest is a resident organization of the Seattle Center complex, which is home to more than 30 cultural, education, sports, and entertainment organizations. Their studio is 3,500 square feet; office, bathroom, and kiln space is in additional space nearby. Pottery Northwest's Executive Director, Wally Bivins, noted that, "The most demanding thing in ceramics is real estate." Although the tools and equipment are relatively inexpensive, they require a significant amount of space. Bivins described Pottery Northwest's studio as "quite luxurious," with two large class areas and a separate space (although no separating walls) for each artist in residence. At the same time, the organization has pursued a larger facility; for 10 years, Pottery Northwest was in negotiations for a space within a former naval property being given to the city. Pottery Northwest was to sublet the space from the University of Washington, but the parties did not come to agreement and abandoned the project in 2006. Bivins explains that increased space is always a consideration, but at this time, the trade-off required in the quality of the experience for students and artists is not worth the increased facility size and potential increase in revenue.

**Users:** Approximately 7,000 people participate in Pottery Northwest's classes and programs each year. Users include students, art patrons, tourists, drop-ins, and professionals in the field. Resident artists are on a professional track, while 98% of students in Pottery Northwest classes are recreational and only 2% are serious students.

**Programs:** Pottery Northwest's programs include:

- Clay classes for adults (see below)
- Workshops
- Artist Residencies (see below))
- Gallery exhibitions and sales (see below)

### Classes

Clay classes are offered over four semesters each year, with each semester 10 weeks in duration.

- Adult classes cost \$350 for 10, three-hour sessions.
- Class fees include 25 pounds of clay, glazes, firing, and open lab time. Students have access to the studio almost 24 hours per day, whenever classes are not in session. A security system allows students to know if someone will be on-site. Additional clay can be purchased at \$15 per 25 pound bag. Tools can be purchased for \$15.

In order to reflect the true cost of producing a class, Pottery Northwest has doubled its class fees in the last five years. The fee includes a 100% markup on the clay, which covers the firing fee as well. Enrollment has increased since the price increase.

Adults are the focus of Pottery Northwest. Occasional workshops or intensives are offered for younger people, but there is no youth curriculum. They experimented with a mobile outreach program ("pottery on wheels"), but the economy and school budgets made the program not viable.

### Artist Residencies

Five years ago, Pottery Northwest eliminated its *Studio Potter* program and replaced it with a smaller, but more robust *Artist Residency* program. Ten artists are chosen through an application process for a residency of six months to two years. Residents pay a studio fee, but if they teach at Pottery Northwest, the fee is waived. Bivins says the residents "are incredibly valuable as faculty." He says the residency program has "made a huge difference in the studio; a residency program provides a transfusion of new energy every few years."

### Gallery

Pottery Northwest has two gallery spaces, which alternate between exhibitions and studio space. The Gallery exhibits and sells the work of Pottery Northwest students, resident artists, and guest artists. Bivins said that the Gallery has "undersold itself" in the past and is not a

significant source of income, but it is an important part of Pottery Northwest’s mission for service and education. It is a connection to the larger community that is being developed as a stronger business unit. The location is a challenge, as most people coming to the Seattle Center are there for an event, not to shop; as such, approximately 90% of gallery sales occur at Pottery Northwest opening receptions.

**Governance & Personnel:** Pottery Northwest is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization governed by a Board of Directors. The Board continues to grow and evolve from its grassroots origin to a focus on advocacy and fundraising. Pottery Northwest is led by one full-time and two part-time staff; they are supplemented by 40 volunteers.

**Operating Budget:** The current operating budget is approximately \$260,000, of which 72% is derived through earned sources, such as classes, workshops, and gallery sales. Fundraising is relatively new for Pottery Northwest and currently includes one major event each year, grants from foundations, and donations from individuals. Contributed revenue continues to grow as the Board is becoming more involved in fundraising efforts. As Bivins notes, “Fundraising allows us to do more of everything.”

**Pottery Northwest Income and Expenses**

