

Peninsula Players Theatre Summary

Number of employees: Five full-time staff members and a company of 60+ at the height of any given season.

Number of volunteers: 150+

What is your Mission Statement?

The theater's mission is to support, without reservation, the most exciting theater company possible; to preserve the Theatre in a Garden's natural beauty; to provide artists the freedom, tools, and facilities they require to entertain, uplift, and inform our audiences; to foster future generations of theater professionals through the internship program; and to maintain fiscal policies that ensure the future security of the theater.

What is the main source of your funding and what percent of your funding does that source provide?

Due to strong fiscal management and budgeting, the theater's primary source of revenue is ticket sales, which is relatively rare in the world of not-for-profit theater. Many theater organizations rely heavily on unearned income such as sponsorships and grants, as well as corporate and public contributions to function. Ticket sales account for 78% of earned income.

What is the geographic scope of your services throughout Door County?

Peninsula Players Theatre has been entertaining Door County audiences with live performances since its founding in 1935. While programming generally happens on-site in Fish Creek, the scope of Peninsula Players Theatre and its reputation is known nationwide due to nearly the 35,000 visitors it welcomes each season.

Explanation of how you serve Door County including primary programs your organization offers to the community.

Peninsula Players Theatre has presented more than 600 plays/musicals to Door County audiences - more theater than most people in major cities see in a lifetime. When the theater began in 1935, 10 shows were performed each season. Today, Peninsula Players Theatre produces five plays/musicals in its 18-week season between June and October. Each summer production runs between 2-3 weeks with a fall production running 6-7 weeks. By presenting a mix of plays from murder mysteries and family comedies to gripping dramas and elaborate musicals, the theater offers a great variety during the span of a season.

The organization holds a reputation for presenting challenging works beyond the scope of a typical summer-stock theater. In fact, Peninsula Players Theatre operates similarly to regional theaters across the United States. There is no other theater that produces the same quality work within a 175-mile radius. Audiences have responded to the theater's programming by returning season after season, keeping it thriving for 88 years.

Another artistic program is the annual winter play reading series, The Play's the Thing. These free, public readings provide the community with the enriching opportunity to hear plays read aloud which may not normally be produced at the theater due to their size, nature and/or complexity. It also gives the organization the opportunity to garner interest in productions that have the potential and ability to be fully produced during the season. The first reading is produced in coordination with the Door County Library's program, Door County Reads.

Peninsula Players Theatre's company members work together with local actors to produce these readings and host post-show discussions immediately following each performance. The discussions allow the public to ask questions about what they have experienced, reflect on the themes of the plays and emotions evoked because of the reading. Post-show discussions also give the cast the chance to gain thoughtful insight on character development. The Play's the Thing attendance has increased every year since its inception.

Peninsula Players Theatre facilitates a competitive and popular internship program that provides college students/graduates the opportunity to learn from the theater's in-residence professionals by working side-by-side. This intensive residential program allows for a true apprentice learning experience. Interns rotate assignments for each production through various theatrical fields. This immersive model prepares interns for life after their Peninsula Players Theatre experience and provides a well-rounded education.

Unique, in-house workshops are another way the organization works to further educate our junior staff and interns. Various production and administrative topics such as stage combat, auditioning, interviewing, stage management, improvisation and resume building are taught by Peninsula Players Theatre's in-resident professionals. Providing workshops, as part of the internship program, furthers these young professionals' arts education.

The organization provides free educational programming to the community throughout the season. Pre-show seminars are hosted by experts in various fields who are enlisted to impart their knowledge to patrons pertaining to show-related topics. These pre-show seminars have high attendance rates and are vital to the theater's community outreach. Post-show discussions provide another form of education and outreach. Patrons are invited to stay after select performances, thus giving them the opportunity to ask the cast, artistic team and crew questions about what they have just experienced. Patrons learn about the organization's history as well as the various crafts required to produce each show at Peninsula Players Theatre through its backstage tours. Tours are provided on select days throughout the season.

The theater continues to work with local high schools to provide arts education. The theater invites area schools to attend a student matinee to introduce them to Peninsula Players Theatre. In some cases, this is the first time students have been exposed to theater. Each school group is provided with a study guide created by the

organization with questions, discussion points and topics for further study. These special student matinees are also supplemented with talk-back sessions following the performance.

This year, the theater was pleased to celebrate the sixth year of the Peninsula Players Theatre Scholarship. This \$500 scholarship is available to one graduating senior from each local high school (five total) majoring or minoring in arts management, music or theater. This scholarship recognizes students for their exceptional achievement in and enthusiasm for the performing arts. Beyond the recognition of their extraordinary work, recipients received four tickets to any two performances during the season and a Peninsula Players Theatre sweatshirt. Peninsula Players Theatre is thrilled to be able to continue this kind of programming with high school students in the future.

How would you define the impact your organization is making in Door County?

There are several ways Peninsula Players Theatre positively impacts Door County. The theater provides cultural enrichment through its high-quality productions; community engagement through its free outreach programs; preservation of Door County's natural beauty further enhancing its appeal as a cultural and recreational destination; and historical significance by maintaining America's oldest professional resident summer theater.

Peninsula Players Theatre is also directly responsible for inspiring the creation of many cultural institutions in Door County who together have created a strong economic impact by attracting much needed visitors each season.

During a regular season, the theater welcomes over 35,000 patrons through its doors. Those patrons spend valuable revenue in the community through overnight stays, restaurant spending, shopping, and ancillary needs. In tandem with the Wisconsin Arts Board, the theater participated in the Americans for the Arts' Economic Prosperity study in 2015 and 2022. This nationwide study measures the economic impact of the nonprofit arts and culture industry. 2015's study revealed that, based on annual attendance, Door County's arts organizations are responsible for over \$24 million worth of economic income brought to the community, over \$2 million of that from Peninsula Players Theatre, driving visitor spending, room tax, sales tax, etc. The theater supports the vital tourism backbone which is critical both in Door County and the State of Wisconsin as a whole.

What is your annual budget?

The theater's annual budget is \$2 million.

If you were to receive a donation from 100+WWC, how would that donation be used?

A donation from the 100+WWC would be used to purchase a sprinter van for the theater's production team. Peninsula Players Theatre is hoping to purchase a used 2023 high top sprinter van with 20,000 miles between \$40K-\$50K.

A new production van is a critical need for our operations. The current van, purchased used over 20 years ago, has logged over 200,000 miles of transporting set pieces, costumes, props and production materials. It is an essential tool used every day during the production season and must be replaced in order to continue to provide the high-quality programming our audiences and community have come to know and expect. Safety is also a paramount concern. The outdated van lacks modern safety features, putting company members who rely on it at greater risk during transport. In addition, its condition makes it less reliable for transporting heavy and often delicate production items, especially when making long trips to Milwaukee and Chicago.

Investing in a new production van would greatly enhance operational efficiency and safety. A reliable, modern vehicle would reduce maintenance costs, ensure the company's ability to deliver high-quality performances, maintain professional standards and safeguard the well-being of our team. It would also reflect our commitment to responsible stewardship of resources, providing the tools needed to continue serving our community with engaging and inspiring theatrical experiences. This donation would directly support our mission and the ongoing vitality of our productions.