

Visual Aid

1) How has the current economy affected the need of services that you give to the community?

Artists need the tools of their trade to make a living and tell their stories through creating art. When artists become ill, they are confronted with the difficult decision of choosing between maintaining their health or art careers. With the dramatic increase of unemployment this past year, and with the cuts in public health budgets (such as ADAP and MediCal) that assist with medical expenses, artists are even harder pressed with the possibility of having to give up making their artwork.

Each year, 77 professional, visual artists suffering from disabling, life-threatening illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and Breast Cancer benefit from Visual Aid's programs. Serving Bay Area Visual artists from diverse backgrounds, the organization encourages artists to remain active participants in the larger arts community.

2) How has the current economy affected the donations of goods and services that your organization receives?

In 2009 Visual Aid saw a drop of approximately 40% in individual donations, directly affecting our budget.

Visual Aid gives out free art supplies to member artists through our Art Bank. This past year there was a dramatic decrease of art supplies from suppliers and retail stores, directly affecting the artists in our program.

3) How have the services that your organization provides to the community affected our local economy?

Each year Visual Aid gives our clients thousands of dollars worth of vouchers that they spend at art supply stores around the Bay Area. Our clients use these supplies to create their artwork, often selling the finished pieces. When our artists make a sale it allows them to further support our local economy by paying bills and living expenses, buying more art supplies, and making other purchases from local businesses. Organizations that make in-kind donations to us, such as art supplies for our clients, also receive tax deductions.

In addition to the 77 clients that Visual Aid supports, it also supports three full-time employees. These employees also support our local economy with the pay provided by Visual Aid.