



September 19, 2025

Assemblywoman Danielle Monroe-Moreno, Chair
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Vice Chair
Legislative Counsel Bureau
401 South Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701
Interim Finance Committee
IFC@lcb.state.nv.us

Subject: Final Expenditure Report for Assembly Bill 525 [AB525] and Senate Bill 341 [SB341] from the 82nd Legislative Session 2023

Dear Chair Monroe-Moreno and Vice Chair Dondero Loop,

On behalf of the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, I am pleased to submit to you our Final AB525 and SB341 Expenditure Report pursuant to AB525 Section 55.2 and SB341 Section 35.2 "Prepare and transmit a final report to the Interim Finance Committee on or before September 19, 2025, that describes each expenditure made from the money appropriated by this act from the date on which the money was received by the entity through June 30, 2025." The Pioneer Center received \$1,000,000.00 from AB525 and \$1,000,000.00 from SB341, for a total award of \$2,000,000.00. In the following paragraphs, I will offer some context of our nonprofit's work, break out the expenditures associated with each bill, and provide you with information about the overall renovation project that we are undertaking at the Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts.

Located in the historic heart of downtown Reno, the Pioneer Center is the premier performing arts venue in northern Nevada, operating continuously since opening for business in 1968. The facility is owned and operated by Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts, a private 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established in 1988 to preserve the theater as a home for local arts organizations. The mission of the Pioneer Center is to cultivate exceptional performing arts experiences in our historic venue and throughout the region as we envision a community that is connected, enriched, and inspired through the power of live performance. Our venue is listed on the National, Nevada State, and City of Reno Registers of Historic Places, and we are a proud member of the League of Historic American Theaters, The Broadway League, and the International Association of Venue Managers.

The Pioneer Center houses a 1,500-seat mainstage proscenium theater and additional event and support spaces. Since 1995, we have presented the *Broadway Comes to Reno* series, bringing national tours of Broadway musicals directly to our community. We also host productions by three local resident



companies: Reno Philharmonic Orchestra, A.V.A. Ballet Theatre, and Artown; as well as other local and touring arts groups. We produce the annual *Dog Days of Summer Dance Festival*, a three-night, free community performance concert featuring commissioned works by local dance companies and serving as a spotlight benefit for the SPCA of Northern Nevada. We also produce educational outreach performance programs Golden Encore for seniors and Pioneer Center Youth Programs for K-5 children that spread our mission beyond our walls to other venues across 9 northern Nevada counties.

In the recently completed 2024-2025 season, we produced and/or hosted 319 performances and events that served more than 160,000 patrons. As the largest nonprofit regional performing arts center in northern Nevada, the Pioneer Center is proud to be a leader in the field. Our Board and staff value that we are stewards of a longstanding cultural treasure and feel great responsibility to the community and future generations to ensure the viability of this beloved historic venue for decades to come.

Assembly Bill 525: \$1,000,000.00 to be used for a renovation project

The historic Pioneer Center was constructed in 1967 and has not undergone a major overhaul renovation in its history. While cutting edge technology of the late 1960s was at the forefront of its design at the time, theater production, audience expectations, and operating systems have changed dramatically over the past 6 decades. The funding provided in AB525 was instrumental in allowing us to make immediate upgrades that benefit our patrons, artists, and staff while also focusing on the future viability of this structure for generations to come.

Immediate Impact

New Staff Offices and a Flex Event Space: The 175-seat Pioneer Underground Cabaret Theater (used from 2000-2019 by a resident comedy club, hypnotist, and magic act) was no longer serving as a viable second space that could best meet our mission. Also, our full-time staff size has doubled since 2021 to better meet the opportunities and demands of our growing community. This growth requires additional centralized staff offices as current employee workstations were overcrowded and scattered throughout the building. Additionally, our rental clients needed a flexible event space that can serve many uses--from a VIP reception area to a union-approved rehearsal studio to a classroom and workshop space to a black box flex theater, and more. The funds in AB525 allowed us to demolish the infrastructure of the Underground Cabaret Theater, perform necessary asbestos abatement, and convert the open square footage into a combination of staff offices and multipurpose flex use space. This renovation accounts for \$450,806.00 of the funds. Pioneer Center cash reserves made up the remaining difference of \$1,347.53.

Outdoor Plaza: Low lighting and degrading surfaces on our entrance plaza have been in need of aesthetic and functional upgrades for some time. These funds allowed us to fabricate and install new



light poles (based upon the design of the original lighting structures from 1967) and to repair and resurface the entire plaza. This renovation accounts for \$126,827.26 of the appropriated funding. The Pioneer Center used cash reserves of \$22,630.64 to cover the balance of expenses for this project.

A Major Step Toward the Future

In July 2023, our staff and Board members attended the League of Historic American Theatres national conference to learn more about historic theater renovations. Upon our return, we distributed an RFQ and RFP seeking a specialized architectural firm to create a master plan for a major renovation of our unique cultural asset. We organized a Facility Committee comprised of staff, Board members, and community subject matter experts who devoted 10 months to a comprehensive process of vetting and interviewing qualified firms from across the country through a series of site visits, panel interviews, and group presentations. No funds from the Legislative award were used toward this selection process.

By July 2024, we awarded the contract to DLR Group, a national firm with extensive experience in a wide range of cultural and educational disciplines, including historic theater restorations and renovations. DLR Group's portfolio includes many successful projects nationwide that began with a master plan and ended with a renovated, reinvigorated, and reimagined cultural center. No stranger to working in northern Nevada, DLR Group designed and built the newest University Arts Building on the University of Nevada, Reno campus. The firm's approach to aligning theater venue renovations with the economic goals of local municipalities and the desires of user groups has frequently resulted in spurring urban core revitalization across the country.

Our AB525 appropriation was used to fund this master planning process - the first critical step in the major renovation of this historic structure. This process kicked off in October 2024. Stakeholders from across our community were invited to contribute their ideas as a part of this master planning process, helping to envision the next chapter for our historic theater and building connection with this future renovation project from the very beginning. The master plan took several months of collaboration with a variety of expert consultants, and DLR Group delivered a comprehensive master plan document including assessment and identification of all key areas for renovation, recommended phases for work to take place, scoping of project costs, and concept design imagery. We now have a solid understanding and cohesive vision as we continue forward. We expect that this major facility renovation will take place in phases over the course of several years, and the master plan is the road map that will guide us through this future process. AB525 made the critical foundation of the renovation process possible. The renovation master plan with DLR accounts for \$422,366.74 of the funds.



Senate Bill 341: \$1,000,000.00 to be used for a capital improvement project

The funding provided to us in SB341 allowed us to address several factors related to owning and operating an historic structure that exists centrally as a public gathering space. Additionally, theaters require unique capital improvements that other gathering spaces do not. The necessary upgrades listed below would have put a tremendous financial strain on our nonprofit; this funding allowed us the freedom to make substantial upgrades in a short amount of time. The improvements directly affect public safety, patron experience, artist and staff needs, and the future viability of our facility itself. This report breaks these capital improvements into 7 specific categories:

Building Upgrades

This category accounts for \$75,526.91 of the funds. In-kind labor was donated, adding the value equivalent of an additional \$1,899.00 to the project. Building upgrades include creating a dedicated office space within our Exhibition Hall footprint for our expanded Facilities Team, adding safety treads on our Stage Door and emergency egress staircases, adding Stage Door hardware and a digital entry system that improves security, putting new carpeting in the passenger elevator and a staff office, installing elevator door restrictors for safety and leak detection sensors in sensitive mechanical areas of our facility, and Wi-Fi system upgrades.

Security Upgrades

This category accounts for \$138,915.50 of the funds. It includes purchasing a walk-through weapons detection system for patrons entering the building. We chose the model used at major performance theaters across the nation that proves to be both efficient and accurate. We also upgraded our security camera system.

Property Upgrades

This category accounts for \$88,078.00 of the funds. We own and maintain the entire city block that our facility occupies. The existing landscaping proved to be riddled with problems, from public safety to high maintenance upkeep. We were able to redesign the landscaping using plants and materials that are beautiful, reduce water usage, and solve the previous safety and upkeep issues. We also commissioned 2 artist-designed bike rack sculptures. The designs were chosen through an RFP process with evaluation by the City of Reno Arts & Culture Commission. Concrete repairs to the plaza that were necessary prior to the resurfacing project were also in this category.

Auditorium/Performance Upgrades

This category accounts for \$528,239.35 of the appropriated funds. Pioneer Center cash reserves and patron donations covered the \$19,337.36 balance of these bills. We were able to replace outdated theatrical equipment with new items that will remain relevant for years to come, while also making



improvements to the patron experience. These capital improvements included the purchase and installation of 3 new state-of-the-art spotlights required by Broadway touring productions. We bought a new LED color-changing “star” curtain, projection screen scrim backdrop, and other theatrical stage curtains with motors. We refurbished our moving lights, purchased new stage side lighting, and purchased dimmable LED house lighting equipment. We purchased leg extensions for our portable platform risers that now allow clients greater versatility in platforming height. We made several sound equipment upgrades that include our auditorium loudspeaker system, new speakers, ClearComm backstage communication system, and the addition of acoustic panels. Additionally, we made upholstery repairs to auditorium seats and acquired more Assisted Listening Devices as their use has proven popular amongst our older and hard of hearing patrons.

Patron and Artist Experience Upgrades

This category accounts for \$51,397.49 of the appropriated funds. Patrons consistently identify a desire for increasing the efficiency and capacity in our concessions spaces. These funds allowed us to address this in a meaningful way. We installed a new operating system for faster purchasing, constructed a location to accommodate concessions pre-orders, bought a new portable bar that meets health codes for mixed drinks for our upstairs lobby, and made upgrades to concessions fixtures, from sinks and plumbing to ice machines and dishwashers. Improvements to our backstage dressing rooms included new furniture and new flex space green room amenities for the comfort of the artists who use our facility.

Equipment Repairs

This category accounts for \$64,755.75 of the funds. Our HVAC system is original to the building. While an overhaul of the entire system is necessary in the forthcoming major renovation, the funds in SB341 allowed us the opportunity to perform upgrades and repairs that will extend the useful life and keep the system going in the meantime. We also made necessary repairs to our sump pump system, plumbing, and dome ventilation system.

Building Repairs

This category accounted for \$53,087.00 of the funds. These repairs had been deferred and SB341 made it possible to complete them. They included drywall repairs backstage, wallpaper repairs in the lower lobby, painting throughout the facility (backstage hallways, auditorium wings, and upper lobby), and repairs to our passenger elevator door locking system.

The attached spreadsheet provides an itemized breakdown of all costs described in the explanation above for both AB525 and SB341 appropriations. It also lists contributed values from specific donor funding or in-kind services that relate to these projects as well.



The Pioneer Center for the Performing Arts deeply appreciates the funding allotted to us through AB525 and SB341—it served as an investment in our nonprofit and the future of the northern Nevada region. The funds allowed our nonprofit the ability to make vital improvements that will be felt immediately as well as lay the groundwork for renovations that have the power to transform our community. The Pioneer Center has held a central place in the heart of downtown Reno for 58 years, and we are a leading player in its future legacy. As the City of Reno continues to aim for broad downtown revitalization, no one understands the ability of arts and culture to serve as a catalyst for economic growth better than we do. It's our lived experience. The arts are for everyone, and we are all stronger together.

Thank you again for your support of the Pioneer Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dennyse Sewell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dennyse Sewell
CEO

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PIONEER CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Project Expenditures
July 7, 2023 to June 30, 2025

Assembly Bill 525 - Renovations

| Category | Total Amount | Assembly Bill 525 | Other Funds and/or In-Kind |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Renovation Master Planning | | | |
| • DLR Group and Consultant Team - Master Planning | \$422,366.74 | \$422,366.74 | |
| Subtotal | \$422,366.74 | \$422,366.74 | \$0.00 |
| Renovation Projects | | | |
| • Pioneer Underground Conversion: Flex Space and Staff Offices | \$452,153.53 | \$450,806.00 | \$1,347.53 (Cash Reserves) |
| • Plaza Improvements: Lighting and Surface Treatment | \$149,457.90 | \$126,827.26 | \$22,630.64 (Cash Reserves) |
| Subtotal | \$601,611.43 | \$577,633.26 | \$23,978.17 |
| TOTAL | \$1,023,978.17 | \$1,000,000.00 | \$23,978.17 |
| Award Amount: | | \$1,000,000.00 | |

Senate Bill 341 - Capital Improvements

| Category | Total Amount | Senate Bill 341 | Other Funds and/or In-Kind |
|--|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Building Upgrades | | | |
| • Backstage Door Hardware | \$4,306.00 | \$4,306.00 | |
| • New Safety Stair Treads for Stage Door Entrance & Emergency Exit | \$37,499.87 | \$37,499.87 | |
| • New Carpet in Passenger Elevator & Staff Office | \$5,160.00 | \$5,160.00 | |
| • Elevator Door Restrictors | \$2,643.04 | \$2,643.04 | |
| • Leak Detection Sensors | \$17,018.00 | \$17,018.00 | |
| • Built New Office for Facilities Crew | \$7,269.00 | \$5,370.00 | \$1,899.00 (In-Kind Labor) |
| • Wifi Upgrades | \$3,530.00 | \$3,530.00 | |
| Subtotal | \$77,425.91 | \$75,526.91 | \$1,899.00 |
| Security Upgrades | | | |
| • Upgrading Security Cameras | \$23,446.50 | \$23,446.50 | |
| • OpenGate Patron Screening Security System | \$115,469.00 | \$115,469.00 | |
| Subtotal | \$138,915.50 | \$138,915.50 | \$0.00 |
| Property Upgrades | | | |
| • 2 Artist-Commissioned Bike Racks for Front Plaza | \$5,000.00 | \$5,000.00 | |
| • Plaza Concrete Repairs | \$10,728.00 | \$10,728.00 | |
| • Landscaping Upgrades | \$72,350.00 | \$72,350.00 | |
| Subtotal | \$88,078.00 | \$88,078.00 | \$0.00 |
| Auditorium/Performance Upgrades | | | |
| • Theater Seating Upholstery Repairs | \$15,770.00 | \$14,770.00 | \$1,000.00 (Patron Donations) |
| • Auditorium Loudspeaker Upgrade | \$3,952.81 | \$3,952.81 | |
| • 3 New Spotlights | \$101,251.56 | \$101,251.56 | |
| • New RGB Chameleon Drape ("Star Drop") | \$31,350.00 | \$31,350.00 | |
| • New Projection Screen Scrim | \$20,396.06 | \$20,396.06 | |
| • Moving Light Refurbishment | \$2,028.35 | \$2,028.35 | |
| • New ADA Listening Devices | \$2,241.00 | \$2,241.00 | |
| • Extensions for Stage Risers | \$2,596.00 | \$2,596.00 | |
| • New Stage Curtains | \$35,127.00 | \$35,127.00 | |
| • Dimmable LED House Lighting | \$138,410.32 | \$138,410.32 | |
| • Sound Upgrades: Speakers, ClearComm, and Acoustic Panels | \$184,480.01 | \$166,142.65 | \$18,337.36 (Cash Reserves) |
| • Stage Lighting Upgrades: Side Lights | \$9,973.60 | \$9,973.60 | |
| Subtotal | \$547,576.71 | \$528,239.35 | \$19,337.36 |
| Patron and Artist Experience Upgrades | | | |
| • Backstage Dressing Room Upgrades | \$16,492.90 | \$16,492.90 | |
| • Concession Renovations | \$34,904.59 | \$34,904.59 | |
| Subtotal | \$51,397.49 | \$51,397.49 | \$0.00 |
| Equipment Repairs | | | |
| • HVAC Repairs | \$50,798.27 | \$50,798.27 | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|
| • Sump Pump Repairs | \$7,936.15 | \$7,936.15 | |
| • Plumbing Repairs | \$4,537.47 | \$4,537.47 | |
| • Dome Ventilation Fan Repairs | \$1,483.86 | \$1,483.86 | |
| Subtotal | \$64,755.75 | \$64,755.75 | \$0.00 |

Building Repairs

| | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|--------|
| • Backstage Hallway Drywall Repairs | \$3,585.00 | \$3,585.00 | |
| • Lower Lobby Wallpaper Repairs | \$3,267.00 | \$3,267.00 | |
| • Painting: Backstage hallways, auditorium wings, and upper lobby | \$23,135.00 | \$23,135.00 | |
| • Passenger Elevator Door Lock Monitoring System | \$23,100.00 | \$23,100.00 | |
| Subtotal | \$53,087.00 | \$53,087.00 | \$0.00 |

| | | | |
|-------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| TOTAL | \$1,021,236.36 | \$1,000,000.00 | \$21,236.36 |
|-------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------|

Award Amount: \$1,000,000.00