



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2021.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

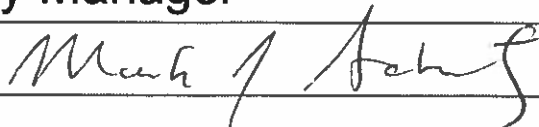
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Arlington  
Program Title: Quaranzine  
Program Category: Communications

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Lynne Porfiri  
Title: Chief of Staff  
Department: County Manager's Office  
Telephone: 703 228-0599 Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: lporfiri@arlingtonva.us

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Mark J. Schwartz  
Title: County Manager  
Signature: 



**Quaranzine**  
**Arlington Public Library**  
**Arlington, VA**

**Program Overview**

An Arlington Public Library project, a digital zine called Quaranzine, introduced an innovative model for archiving community life during social isolation. The serialized publication of Quaranzine acted as an exhibition of creative works made by the larger Arlington community during, and in reaction to, the global pandemic. The prompt was broad by design and drew a wide variety of content. As the publication continued, it captured a number of different moments in the changing landscape. Using existing Library resources including staff hours, web design and web hosting, the project demonstrates a sustainable project able to be replicated by Libraries across the world.

**Problem/ Challenge/ Situation Faced by Locality**

When Covid-19 brought operations to a halt for Arlington Public Library (APL), the staff pivoted quickly to find timely and apt solutions by reimagining its centerpiece services and programs to serve patrons and continue providing vital resources. Library staff poured energy into building and maintaining an impressive holds-only model, complete with children's book bundles to address the reading gap during Covid. The Library Truck lent its wheels to aiding food distribution to families in need. A cavalcade of staff turned their attention to virtual reference, assisting Arlingtonians in finding information from where they could register for a Covid vaccine to which mystery series might their anxious teenager find some sense of escapist

relief. Wherever you looked, Library staff began redefining services and programs to fit the changing landscape.

Still, a dramatic loss felt by staff and patrons alike was the sudden inability to connect with one another on a personal level. As more and more countries, states, and cities mandated “sheltering in place” protocols, people began experiencing isolation like we’ve never seen on a grand scale. While crucial to help curb the onslaught of Covid-19, the imposed isolation began almost immediately to have its own side effects. Studies reported by the National Institute of Health indicate that before 2020, 10-40% of global citizens habitually experienced loneliness and isolation to the point of a “behavioral epidemic,” a statistic that was only aggravated by the onset of the pandemic (Jeste et al., 2020). Over the course of a few weeks in March 2020, it became clearer than ever that a central function of the library is its ability to expose individuals to new ideas, to deepen inspiration, and to brew meaningful connection; it likewise became clear that the connection had been severed in large part by the pandemic.

It was the loss of this connection that sparked the idea for a unique program, unlike any that Arlington Public Library had attempted in its strong history of innovation: a virtual zine called Quaranzine, which offered a platform for the community to respond to life in the pandemic. Packaged as an online publication hosted by the Library’s website, Quaranzine offered the prompt of the pandemic to inspire creative responses from across the Arlington community. The publication became a powerful new version of a meeting place, capturing a moment in dramatic change while celebrating the resilience of the County; furthermore, Quaranzine served the dual purpose as a time capsule of Arlington during the age of Covid-19. By collecting this community’s responses to the crisis, Library staff made an archive of a unique

place and time.

### **How Program Fulfilled Award Criteria**

Quaranzine was created in response to the community's need for connection and expression during the isolation of a global pandemic. Using a digital zine format was useful as it nodded to a creative art movement built upon making do with what was available in trying circumstances, but updated it for a world wired for digital access. The digital format allowed the Library to call for and publish multiple creative media without the considerable cost of printing, binding, and distributing a paper version. This model is a sustainable option for libraries with limited budgets.

Quaranzine offered an innovative tool to Arlington Public Library patrons during a season of heightened agitation: an inspiration for creativity. The act of creating has been shown to bring dramatically therapeutic results. As the scholar Felicia Ceausu found in her work, "[making art] offers a multiplicity of benefits, including the ability to reduce feelings of isolation and alienation. It honors the inherent need of individuals to have autonomy in their expressions, creates an outlet of such expressions for individuals in times of high stress without damage to one's self, and provides deep introspection for the participant (Ceausu, 2018)." The process of making creative works can serve as a starting point for processing some of the physical, emotional, and spiritual upheaval that something like a pandemic introduces into a community. Furthermore, this quarantine has introduced a real shift in our normal means of connection and expression; creative outlets, including Quaranzine, can help fill the need for the

gallery, the salon, the public square.

### **How Program Was Carried Out / Financing and Staffing**

In March of 2020, a Programs and Partnerships Librarian at Arlington Public Library pitched the concept of Quaranzine to Library leadership, who quickly lent their support to the idea. Ten staff across the Arlington Public Library system signed on to serve as the Editorial Board, and designated Quaranzine work hours were approved by leadership. The digital structure of the publication was created by the Library's web editor and was enabled for each edition to be uploaded, edited and published by staff; these steps allowed for Quaranzine to be a totally in-house product of the Library.

The Library maintained a standing call for "submissions to Quaranzine, a collection of creative works from our community that document how we responded to this strange time we find ourselves in." With this structure in place, the editorial board met at regular intervals to review and discuss each batch of submissions. There were multiple accepted media for Quaranzine, including painting, illustration, essays, poetry, comics, photography, recipes, visual tutorials, and reviews. Each submission was judged by these criteria:

- Does it fit into the theme of "community response to the time we live in"? (As an example of what wouldn't qualify, Library received several entries that were advertisements for businesses, services, and political campaigns)
- Is it high enough quality? (Some images were too dark to be seen, for example)

- Is it in a format that we can include? (Some people submitted video, which Library staff had decided was not a media the site had the bandwidth to sustain)
- Is it for a wide readership? (Submissions with offensive language or visuals were filtered out)

Once the entries were selected by the Editorial Board, Library staff then edited entries for grammar, added captions to each image file, and published the issue under a unifying title. The inaugural issue was comprised of works created by staff from across Arlington County departments, an effort to lead by example and commemorate a shared workmanship by County workers in a unique time. The rest of the following editions featured work from Arlingtonians diverse in age, creative expression, and perspective.

With Quaranzine, Arlington Public Library created a sustainable project without the need for additional funds. Quaranzine is a digital project and has been managed through existing staff time and talent; this means that the Library has provided no additional funding for the project, and the resource is free to anyone with access to our website. Quaranzine has indirectly secured deeper sustainability by showcasing the impact the Library has on the community. Quaranzine has gained and maintained the attention of the greater DMV community during a time when it could not provide its usual services due to closure. This initiative has helped to leverage the Library's worth and value to the community during the pandemic.

The broad prompt of the publication also allowed for more focused editions when the need called for it. The National conversation on race saw a steep uptick after the killing of

George Floyd; it introduced a new chapter in history, and it prompted the Library to broaden its focus for Quaranzine. While the project was originally created to examine life in Arlington amidst the COVID-19 crisis, staff extended the scope to the nationwide issues that were likewise dramatically impacting the Arlington community. Quaranzine began seeking art and media that promoted anti-racism, social justice, inclusion, racial equity, and accountability; work in direct response to racism in the United States, and documentation that explored the intersections of race and the Arlington community. Staff began folding this work into the regularly published editions. That marked an important moment in the life of the publication, and one that allowed staff to adapt meaningfully to community needs.

### **Program Results**

The response to Quaranzine has been overwhelmingly positive. The Library received over 300 submissions in the first two weeks, as well as dozens of comments and emails of support from staff and the larger community. The Quaranzine project inspired cultural institutions in multiple countries to follow by example, and was featured as a Program Model through the ALA Programming Librarian site. Additionally, multiple library systems and cultural organizations throughout the US and Canada contacted Arlington Public Library about the project and requested the use of the name and concept to develop similar models in their own communities. Arlington Public Library was credited on various sites as the inspiration for the respective projects.

Since its inception in mid-March of 2020, Arlington Public Library's Quaranzine has helped Arlington Public Library pivot in its approach to reaching and building its audience. Staff



have received over 700 unique submissions of work. Some of these submissions came from other cities, states and countries, , reflecting that the project reached an audience far beyond its immediate Library community. As an example of its reach, between March 17 and August 3, the Quaranzine web page earned a total of 17,177 unique page views with an average viewing time of 3.17 minutes. Between April 3 and July 20, the Quaranzine Facebook posts have reached over 51,000 people and resulted in 4,800 engagements. For a new program, and one that has launched during a global pandemic, the high numbers speak to a strong desire in the community for a space to reflect, to share creativity, and to connect safely with one another. This project highlights the Library's adaptability in the face of losing its usual forums for community outreach.

The project helped put Arlington Public Library on the map through media spotlights. With no assigned marketing budget, this community engagement program has garnered the attention of both local and national media outlets and caught the attention of hundreds of active readers. Beginning with regional (DCist and ArlNow), the narrative of Quaranzine was covered by national media outlets including NPR, the Atlantic, and Book Riot. Within the Library field, the project was also featured by the American Library Association and the field's top publication, Library Journal.

### **Brief Summary**

Libraries across Virginia provide access to a multitude of resources as diverse as the titles of books on the shelf. Projects like Quaranzine show that among the most vital resources provided by the Library is that of connection to one's community. The galvanizing force of the pandemic helped Library staff gain new understanding of innovative ways to

carry out its vision, captured in the tagline of Arlington Public Library's logo which reads "Everybody has a story." Quaranzine demonstrates how Libraries can provide a platform for communities to hear those stories and capture history as it is lived on the ground.

### Quaranzine -Supplemental Materials

A sampling of organizations that have made their own Quaranzines and thanked us for the inspiration:

- 1) MLCPL (Ohio): <https://www.mlcook.lib.oh.us/content/mlcpl-quaranzine>
- 2) CBRL (Nova Scotia): <https://cbrl.ca/ourzine/>
- 3) MC Arts Council (North Carolina): <https://www.mooreart.org/mooreartshare/>
- 4) WBRL (Alberta, Canada) <https://bit.ly/QuaranZine1>

A sampling of media stories about Quaranzine:

Date	Media Outlet	Story
4/6/2020	DCist	<a href="https://dcist.com/story/20/04/06/the-arlington-public-library-is-collecting-local-artists-work-into-its-quaranzine/">https://dcist.com/story/20/04/06/the-arlington-public-library-is-collecting-local-artists-work-into-its-quaranzine/</a>

4/6/2020	WAMU	<a href="https://wamu.org/story/20/04/06/arlington-public-library-is-publishing-a-quaranzine-with-work-from-local-artists/">https://wamu.org/story/20/04/06/arlington-public-library-is-publishing-a-quaranzine-with-work-from-local-artists/</a>
5/12/2020	The Atlantic	<a href="https://www.theatlantic.com/notes/2020/05/post-pandemic-future-libraries/611458/">https://www.theatlantic.com/notes/2020/05/post-pandemic-future-libraries/611458/</a>
5/18/2020	The Pilot	<a href="https://www.thepilot.com/news/features/quaranzine-offers-chance-to-express-thoughts-through-art-and-words/article_d578080a-991a-11ea-b4d9-2355cac84d36.html">https://www.thepilot.com/news/features/quaranzine-offers-chance-to-express-thoughts-through-art-and-words/article_d578080a-991a-11ea-b4d9-2355cac84d36.html</a>
7/8/2020	Northern VA Magazine	<a href="https://northernvirginiamag.com/culture/culture-features/2020/07/08/an-inside-look-at-arlington-county-librarys-quaranzine/">https://northernvirginiamag.com/culture/culture-features/2020/07/08/an-inside-look-at-arlington-county-librarys-quaranzine/</a>
7/20/2020	Book Riot	<a href="https://bookriot.com/quaranzines-and-libraries/">https://bookriot.com/quaranzines-and-libraries/</a>

**Examples of published Quaranzine entries**



Art by Miguel Martinez



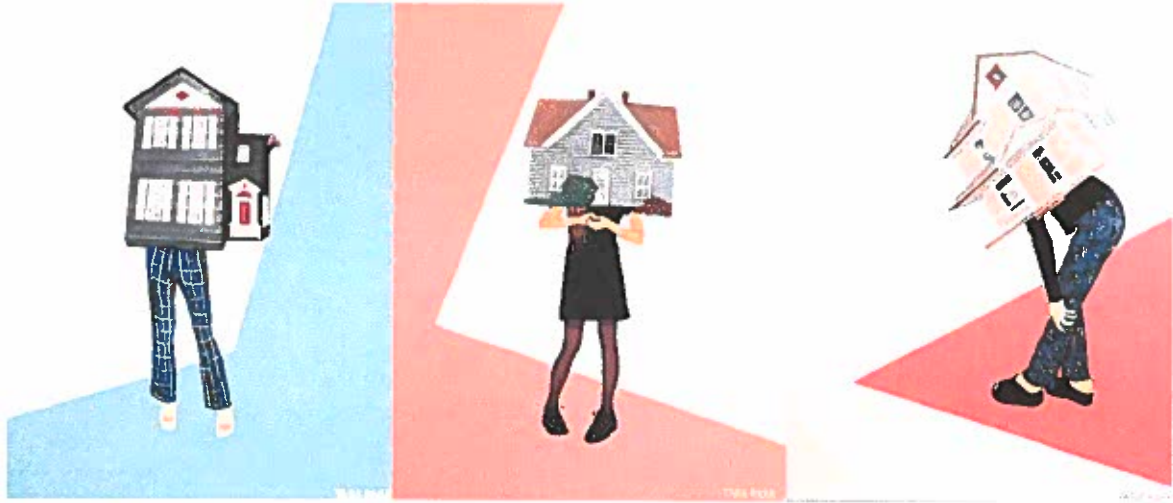
Art by Diane Kresh



Art by Meehea Davis



Art by Eliana Villwock



*Art by Tara Barr*

