

# Artspace Utica Lofts

Revitalizing a Historic Downtown through the Arts

artspace

1020 Park Avenue Utica, NY, 13502

[artspace.org/utica](https://artspace.org/utica)

**Artspace Utica Lofts will be a four-story building located at the intersection of the Commercial and Arts & Cultural Districts downtown, within the City of Utica's Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) target area.**

The catalytic, new construction project will be centrally located between the Stanley Center for the Arts and Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute. The project will address critical affordable housing and economic development opportunities for the creative workforce by creating 43 live/work units for local artists and their families, and 770 square feet of community space on the ground level. Units will be affordable for those earning 40-80% AMI and will serve artists, including those from immigrant and refugee communities. Artspace Utica will include a resident gallery/community space to encourage tenant engagement and community involvement, ultimately contributing to a healthy urban environment that supports a strong arts community and growing creative sector.

The City of Utica is located in the Mohawk Valley region of Upstate New York. Recovering from the decline of the textile industry and resultant population drop and vacancies, the city has committed to a creative placemaking approach towards revitalization. To invigorate the downtown corridor, the community is leveraging its gorgeous historic architecture, active arts scene, and welcoming nature as a designated United Nations resettlement community. A group of local leaders invited Artspace to conduct a series of studies to quantify demand for artist spaces, with data gathered from 2016-17 (including a survey of nearly 600 respondents) indicating substantial need for space for artists to both live and conduct creative work downtown.

## Project Details

- **Owner/Developer:** Artspace Projects
- **Architect:** Matthew W. Meier, HHL Architects (Buffalo, NY)
- **General Contractor:** Charles A. Gaetano Construction Corp.
- **Property Manager:** Housing Visions Consultants, Inc.
- **Project Type:** Mixed-use featuring affordable live/work artist units
- **Total Area:** 42,627 gross sq. ft.
- **Number of Residential Units:** 43
- **Type of Units:** 36 one- and 7 two-bedroom units
- **Affordability:** 40-80% of Area Median Income (AMI)
- **Community Space:** 770 sq. ft.
- **Total Project Cost:** \$18M
- **Expected Completion:** Spring 2025
- **Funders:** New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) (Artspace Utica is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature), The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, National Grid, National Endowment for the Arts



## A United Nations Resettlement Community

A designated United Nations resettlement community, Utica is renowned as home to a variety of culturally distinct populations. Of nearly 60,000 residents, approximately 20% are foreign born, and nearly 30% speak a language other than English. The Center (formerly the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees) welcomes more than 800 new people every year, and assists them with starting their new life in the U.S. The diverse population of immigrants and refugees, which dates back several generations, contributes to a rich, multicultural environment with an abundance of art forms. Downtown is one of Utica's most diverse neighborhoods, and Artspace Utica will be a transformational project that reflects the diversity of Utica while engaging the public in an increasingly active local arts scene.

## Deep Need for Affordability

There is a strong need for affordable, equitable housing in Utica, where 44% of the downtown population has an income below poverty. The majority of units at Artspace Utica will be affordable to those earning 60% AMI and below and will provide amenities, including a vibrant art gallery and pedestrian-focused streetscape design, that enhance downtown living and quality of life for low-income artists and their families.

## Green Sustainability

Artspace Utica will advance green initiatives with enhanced indoor air quality and four Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations. A children's playground at the back of the site will encourage active play, and will create connectivity to a City-owned lot that is being transformed into a multi-purpose event space with a stormwater management system. Together, Artspace and the City of Utica are planting the flag for green sustainability.

## Project Timing

Preliminary predevelopment work is underway in preparation for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit application. Construction is anticipated to begin in winter 2023, and complete in spring 2024.

## Project Timing

The building is designed to complement the context and scale of the surrounding historic district. Brick and flat paneled siding are strategically used to create a modulation pattern along the streets. Mansard roofing details help to modulate the vertical scale of the street facing façade and matches the style of roof in the surrounding neighborhood.

A new "arts" plaza wraps the eastern end of the building with glass walls, enabling indoor and outdoor activities from the lobby to the plaza for the residents. Along the western edge of the lot, a new public walkway/linear park will be created to coordinate with and connect with the City's planned new public event space behind the site.

## Community Leadership

### Political

The City of Utica, under Mayor Palmieri, have been highly supportive of the project through expedited drawing and plan reviews; selling City-owned lots for below-market rate; through the Industrial Development Agency, providing a 30-year PILOT of 7% of the effective gross income; including the project in the Downtown Revitalization Initiative for \$650K; and providing \$1.15M of ARPA funds towards the project.

### Cultural

The Artspace Utica Core Committee, made up of various arts organizations and individual arts, led by architect Bob Heins have given their full support over a lengthy predevelopment process. Their commitment has remained, and they are excited for construction to start.

### Philanthropic

The project received \$75k from the Community Foundation and \$25k from National Grid for predevelopment funding. Additionally, it has received \$250K from the Community Foundation and \$2,500 from the Bank of Utica for Capital Funding.

