



# **The Big Gay Market – Madison**

**The University of Wisconsin – Madison**

**Arts Business Competition**

**Oliver DiPietro (they/them)**

**Ashley Shaw Adams (she/her)**

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## Executive Summary and Key Personnel

The Big Gay Market (TBGM) is an organization that focuses on hosting accessible and inclusive LGBTQ+ friendly markets in the Madison area. TBGM was created when artists and community members expressed an interest in a market that was designed to benefit everyone in the community.

The Big Gay Market organizes quarterly markets that feature LGBTQ+ makers and allies in a safe, accessible, and comfortable space for everyone. TBGM focuses on giving local small businesses a space to connect with customers that share similar values or interests in LGBTQ+ culture and/or equality.

TBGM offers an exciting and fun experience to vendors and community members that will strengthen networks and relationships in the Madison area and beyond. Instead of focusing on physical barriers such as gendered bathrooms or stairs, participants and vendors can focus on having fun and making connections with others.



Oliver DiPietro (they/them), pictured on the left, is a co-founder of The Big Gay Market and owner of The Nifty Giftys Shop LLC. They are currently finishing their graduate program at the University of Wisconsin Madison, where they plan to graduate with an MA in Gender and Women's Studies and a certificate in Leadership. In the future they hope to expand their business and continue event planning for The Big Gay Market.

Ashley Shaw Adams (she/her), pictured on the right, is also a co-founder of The Big Gay Market and owner of Shaw Paw Prints. She is a freelance artist who enjoys painting, gardening, gaming, long distance running, and spending time with her husband and infant daughter. Community is a huge part of her life; she spends a lot of time with friends as well as supporting local artists, creators, projects, and other various endeavors. Ashley is passionate about self-expression, equal rights, and environmental preservation, and hopes to leave the world better than she found it.

## Project Plan

The Big Gay Market (TBGM) has already planned and executed one very successful market on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at The Wisconsin Rugby Club in Cottage Grove. TBGM would like to start plans and production for a bigger and more inclusive market with an approximate event date of Summer 2023.

The market received an overwhelming amount of interest from vendors and attendees. This was demonstrated by the waitlist of vendors and the attendee feedback we gathered, reporting that our venue was cramped and there were many people that had trouble navigating the space. With the amount of apparent interest, TBGM is ready to move to a bigger venue. This will involve negotiations with spaces such as The Sylvee or The Alliant Energy Center. We will be seeking venues with adequate parking, accessible spaces for people in wheelchairs, and easy access from bus stops.

To expand this project, TBGM will need to partner with additional LGBTQ+ nonprofits and businesses in the area. We plan to collaborate with OPEN (Out Professional Engagement Network) which is a nonprofit based in the Madison area that welcomes diverse communities to share experiences and knowledge about how to build an inclusive community. OPEN will provide us with a network of LGBTQ+ people that may be interested in vending or supporting TBGM.

We will be building a website to promote the event and recruit vendors more efficiently. Because of our dedication to accessibility, we will be hiring a LGBTQ+ website designer that can assist with ensuring the website is user friendly for everyone including those with disabilities.

TBGM's most important current resources include the support and love from the LGBTQ+ community. As shown by our first market, we have a large following of supporters and vendors that believe in our mission and are ready to be involved again.



A photo of vendors and organizers at The Big Gay Market on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2023

## Project Timeline

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023 The Big Gay Market executed its first event. The steps that preceded this market were gathering and selecting vendors, nonprofits, and a venue. This has laid a foundational base of vendors that trust the organization and would be interested in vending and supporting the event again in the future. The next step for TBGM is creating the next market. Below is an approximated timeline based off data from the recent March market. An exact timeline will depend on venue availability.





## Recent Work Sample:



### Our latest event saw:

- More than 500 attendees
- 30 vendors
- 1 food truck
- 12 raffle prizes
- 2 nonprofit collaborators

TBGM raised more than \$1,500 for the LGBTQ+ focused nonprofits, gsafe and Fair Wisconsin, through raffle sales from prizes donated by vendors and community members!

94.1 percent of vendors rated the event "Excellent"

58.8 percent of vendors said their sales were "much better than their average sales at similar markets"

## Audience Analysis

Based off feedback we have received from the community, there are many marginalized identities within the Madison area that do not feel like the standard art markets are accessible and/or welcoming of them. For example, it has been reiterated many times that there is a need for masks to be required at events indoors so it can be accessible to everyone. Additionally, gendered bathrooms can offer a barrier to trans and nonbinary artists and participants. No one wants to spend an event avoiding the bathroom just because there isn't one that suits them.

When asked why they came to The Big Gay Market, participants responded:

**“To see and purchase work from small queer artists/businesses”**

**“It was masks required which is how I vet all my markets as a disabled person & I was super excited to attend a specifically lgbt event too!”**

**“As a queer artist myself, I want to support local queer artists! Also, the Madison area doesn't have a lot of queer events of this nature, so when there is one, I want to go!”**



A photo of vendors and participants at The Big Gay Market on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2023

## Marketing

We have found from the first event is that Instagram is our best source of advertising. It is relatively inexpensive and widely used by our target demographics. We will continue to advertise through Instagram, Facebook, and by using paper fliers and posters around Madison, as those were all successful.

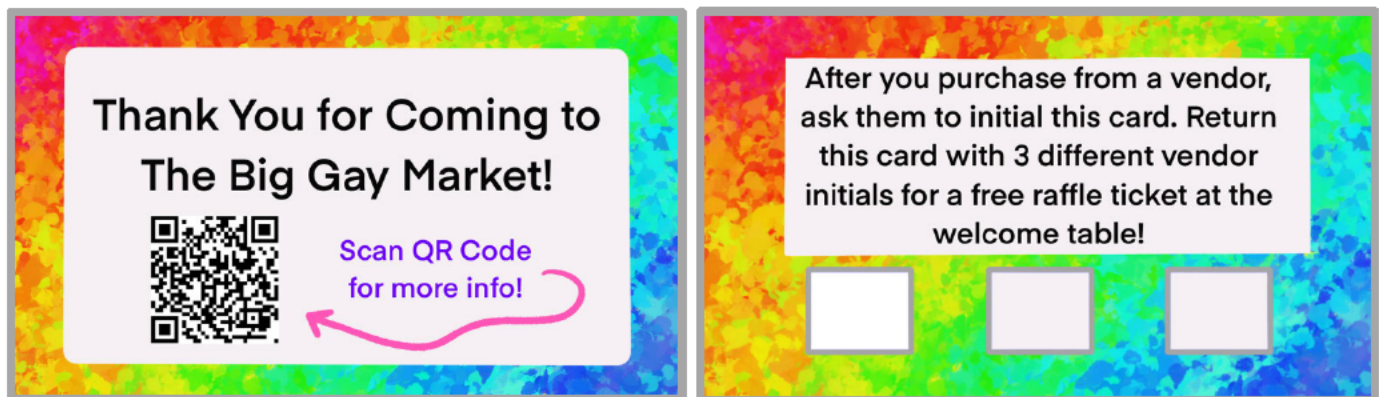
### Marketing Cost Breakdown:

Description	Cost
Facebook Event Ads	\$27.03
Instagram Event Ads	\$52.72
Vistaprint signs, fliers, and business card order	\$98.35
WORT FM Advertisement	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$178.10</b>

For our next market, we would like to double online and physical advertising to accommodate for our larger event.

Our most successful form of marketing at the event was our vendor punch cards that were given to each participant. With three purchases from separate vendors, an attendee could get a free raffle ticket from our collaborating nonprofits. We plan to expand on this idea and print more business cards to use for promoting the event instead of only utilizing fliers.

Below is the design we used for our vendor punch cards:





## Past Financial Budget

### Event Costs:

Description	Amount	Notes
The Wisconsin Rugby Club Venue Fee	\$460	
Bartender Fee	\$120	
Marketing Costs*	\$178.10	
Space heaters for vendors	\$129.98	5 heaters – rented
Snacks and drinks for vendors	\$30.20	
Menstrual products for bathrooms	\$23.36	
Misc office supplies	\$34.38	Tape, pens, posterboard
Disposable masks	\$28.20	300 masks
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,004.22</b>	

\* See “Marketing Cost Breakdown” on page 8 for more details

### Event Revenue:

Description	Amount
Vendor Fees	\$1060.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1060.00</b>

We anticipate that event costs will grow as we accommodate more guests and vendors. A large future expense will be paying our staff including Oliver and Ashley for their time event planning. Given the time and effort spent event planning, we hope to allocate \$1,000 (\$500 each, per event) to Oliver and Ashley. With additional funding, we would also like to register The Big Gay Market as an LLC and open a dedicated bank account for the organization.

Depending on the location and fee of our future venue, we may charge a recommended admission fee of no more than \$5 per person. Individuals that are not able to pay may still enter the market. Children under 12 may enter for free.

## Overcoming Challenges

Current challenges involve the financial pains of our organization being a startup. With very little savings, we are not able to afford large down payments on venue spaces or provide flexibility with vendor fees. We are also not able to pay our co-organizers for their time and effort as we wanted to keep vendor fees as low as possible for the first event.

We anticipate future challenges with the changing political climate. Unfortunately, safety is a factor we must consider for future events, as violence against the LGBTQ+ community is common. Funding for hiring a team of individuals dedicated towards the security of the event would be ideal. It is important that the security team is not affiliated with a police department because of the violence and terror police have subjected our community.

## Plans Towards Further Inclusivity

With success, we would like to open a \$1,000 scholarship fund for vendors that aren't able to afford the fee. Our past market had vendor fees ranging from \$20 to \$50 depending on the booth size and location. We aim to keep vendor fees affordably priced at \$50 or less.

Additionally, we would like to use income to purchase supplies that will make our markets even more welcoming and accessible. This would include ear plugs, additional disposable masks, fidget toys, name tags, a braille labeler and an ASL interpreter as needed.

To make the space more accepting of neurodivergent people, we would like to use funds to rent a room in addition to our market space that will be designated as a "quiet zone" where participants can go to relax and take a break from a loud and overstimulating environment.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]