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## **Community Accelerator Grant Returns in 2026 with \$10M in Unrestricted Funding for Washington Arts and Cultural Nonprofits**

***Administered by ArtsFund and funded by Allen Family Philanthropies, the program's renewal will deliver flexible funding to arts and cultural organizations statewide.***

SEATTLE, April 21, 2026 – Returning for a fourth year, the Community Accelerator Grant will distribute \$10 million in unrestricted funding to arts and cultural nonprofits across Washington state through continued partnership between ArtsFund and Allen Family Philanthropies. Applications will open later this summer, with continued priority for communities with less access to mainstream funding.

Since 2023, the Community Accelerator Grant program has distributed \$30 million to over 1,000 organizations across all 39 Washington counties. With this additional \$10 million investment, total funding through the program will reach \$40 million, making it among the largest unrestricted funding programs for arts and cultural organizations in the state. More than 90% of grantees return year-over-year, providing vital support for an essential sector. The program's signature low-barrier application and rapid funding turnaround set it apart from traditional grantmaking models.

"We are honored to continue our partnership with Allen Family Philanthropies to provide unrestricted funds to arts and cultural organizations across Washington," said Michael Greer, president & CEO of ArtsFund. "Since 2023, we have invested \$30 million through more than 2,400 grants across all 39 counties in Washington. These funds have had dramatic impacts to the communities they serve, from increased programming to bringing on staff, program awardees are adding immense value to their communities."

The Community Accelerator Grant program will continue to provide unrestricted funding to organizations whose primary mission is to produce or support arts and cultural activities. New this year, the program's eligibility will shift to focus on organizations with annual operating budgets of \$1 million or less, recognizing the impact that small- and medium-sized nonprofits have in the sector and that these grants will have an outsized impact on organizations with budgets under \$1 million. At a time when many arts and cultural organizations are facing rising costs, these flexible dollars allow recipients to determine how to use the funds to best advance their missions. While there are no reporting

requirements, 2025 grantees anticipated using funds for programming, staffing, and facility-related expenses.

“In the last three years of this program, organizations have demonstrated how flexible funding can accelerate their stability and growth,” said Lara Littlefield, executive director for partnerships and programs, Allen Family Philanthropies. “The Community Accelerator Grant reinforces critical infrastructure in the arts and culture sector across the state. Communities across the region benefit directly, through the programs, performances, and dialogues these experiences generate.”

Demand for the program continues to grow year-over-year, showcasing how vast and vibrant the Washington cultural community is as well as demonstrating the need for unrestricted funds. Additionally, the need for funding among small-budget groups has grown over time. Since the first year of the Community Accelerator Grant, the proportion of grantees with budgets under \$1 million has grown from 81% to 85% of the total grantee pool, with the most growth in the segment of grantees with budgets under \$100,000. The creative economy in Washington accounts for nearly \$120 billion annually to the state’s GDP; however, state investment is among the bottom two-thirds in the nation at \$0.98 per capita.

Luc Jasmin, co-founder of Spokane Word, commented that **“This year especially, we felt like we really needed somebody to be on us, to meet us where we’re at, to encourage us. And that’s what [the Community Accelerator Grant] has been able to do.”** Previous recipients have used funding to launch free community programming, to explore new partnerships, to retain staff, and stabilize operations.

The Community Accelerator Grant will continue its Community Advisory Panel model. The panel comprises stakeholders from across the state and will inform the application process, eligibility criteria, outreach, grant ranges, and awardee slate.

ArtsFund will host a virtual informational webinar this summer for prospective applicants, with accessibility accommodations available. Frequently asked questions and application materials along with multiple translations will also be provided. Additional details, including the webinar date will be announced separately. For updates, please visit <https://www.artsfund.org/accelerator/>.

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### **About ArtsFund**

ArtsFund supports the arts through leadership, advocacy, and grantmaking in order to build a healthy, equitable, and creative Washington. ArtsFund was originally founded to bring corporate and civic leaders together to help establish and sustain our region's arts and cultural institutions. Over its grantmaking history, ArtsFund has granted more than \$140MM to over 1,000 organizations in all 39 Washington counties. Through ArtsFund's advocacy work, including its longstanding arts impact research reports, which provide essential research on the value of the arts; and its leadership programs, like Board Leadership Training, which grow skills and build capacity among arts and cultural organizations, ArtsFund supports the health and wellbeing of our communities. Learn more at [www.artsfund.org](http://www.artsfund.org).

### **About Allen Family Philanthropies**

Founded in 1988 by Jody Allen and the late Paul G. Allen, co-founder of Microsoft, Allen Family Philanthropies (formerly known as the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation) invests in communities across the Pacific Northwest and beyond to strengthen arts and culture, empower the next generation of changemakers, and support a global network of partners working to advance biodiversity and human well-being. In addition to its core program areas of arts & culture, youth, and environment, the foundation contributes to a wide range of sponsorships and community grants across Washington state. Learn more [www.allenphilanthropies.org](http://www.allenphilanthropies.org).