COMMUNITYACCELERATOR GRANT

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The 2026 Community Accelerator Grant Program awards $10M to Washington state arts and culture organizations, announces another $10M for 2027

$10M in unrestricted grants support 745 Washington arts and culture organizations with budgets under $1M, with another $10M committed for 2027

SEATTLE – November 10, 2026 – Today, ArtsFund and Allen Family Philanthropies (AFP) announced $10 million in funding awarded to 745 arts and culture organizations across Washington State through the 2026 Community Accelerator Grant. Administered for a fourth year by ArtsFund and funded by AFP, the latest round of grants range from $2,500 to $25,000, reaching organizations in 37 of Washington's 39 counties. Building on the program's success over the previous four years, the two partners also announced the renewal of the Community Accelerator Grant for 2027, unlocking another $10 million investment in Washington's arts and culture sector and bringing the program's total funding to $50 million over five years.

Since 2022, the Community Accelerator Grant has provided unrestricted funding that allows arts and culture organizations to invest where resources are needed most, strengthening their staff and operational capacity, programming, and the communities they serve. This support remains critical in Washington, where the creative sector contributes approximately $79 billion to the state's GDP, yet per capita arts spending still falls 57% behind the national average. By continuing to expand access to these flexible funds, the program helps organizations address pressing needs, maintain long-term sustainability, and contribute to healthy, thriving communities across Washington.

The program's 2027 renewal follows the recently published *Washington State Arts & Culture Sector Analysis* report, conducted by AFP and SMU DataArts, analyzing Community Accelerator Grant data from the first three years of the program. The study found that 84% of organizations that received funding over all three years increased their investment in staff, expanded programming, and diversified revenue, reinforcing that this support helps organizations build long-term resilience and stability. Almost half of the 2026 grantees received funding over all four years.

"ArtsFund is honored to continue our partnership with Allen Family Philanthropies to get philanthropic dollars out to our statewide cultural sector," said Michael Greer, president and CEO of ArtsFund. "This program continues to reflect the value of flexible funding in catalyzing organizational health, experimentation, and investment in communities."

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Data from the *Washington State Arts & Culture Sector Analysis* report also uncovered significant staffing challenges at smaller organizations: those with annual budgets under $1 million lost an average of one staff position between 2023 and 2024, while organizations with budgets over $1 million added an average of five. As a response, the 2026 program focused on funding organizations under $1 million, recognizing the disproportionate impact smaller arts organizations have in their communities. While this change narrowed the eligible applicant pool, the change increased the average award size year-over-year by approximately 25%, from $10,753 in 2025 to $13,423 in 2026, which can represent a meaningful share of total revenue for many smaller groups.

“The incredible reach of this program across our state, along with the significant findings from our report, show just how much this type of flexible support is needed to bolster Washington’s rich and diverse arts and culture sector,” said Lara Littlefield, executive director of Allen Family Philanthropies. “This model now supports nearly a thousand organizations and the impact of their creative work, helping to make our local communities more vibrant and healthy.”

The 745 awardees touch a range of art disciplines, and participation reached every corner of the state with 496 grantees in Northwest Washington, 132 in Southwest, 67 in Eastern, and 50 in Central, including 12 out of 29 (41%) of Washington’s federally recognized tribes. In addition, over 22% of grantees this year are organizations located in rural counties (as defined by Washington State), and the program continues to focus on communities that have historically lacked access to funding.

While funding is unrestricted, applicants prioritize its allocation. As in all previous years of the program’s operation, the leading uses 2026 grantees cite, in order of priority, are programming; salaries and labor; and rent, mortgage, and facility upgrades. To keep the program low-barrier, there are no reporting requirements from grantees, however, case studies are available that share more about past years’ recipients and how the awards impacted their organizations.

The Old Hotel Art Gallery, located in Othello in Adams County, provides a strong example of the program’s impact and the individual ways organizations are leveraging funds. Each year, from 2024 to 2026, the Old Hotel Art Gallery received a $25,000 grant which helped them support a living wage for staff, bridge a gap and sustain operations until their annual fundraiser, and enabled improvements and renovations to their historic building which opened the door for a new revenue stream from rental income. Samantha Copas, director of The Old Hotel Art Gallery said their 2025 award, “truly kept our doors open.”

The Community Accelerator Grant remains guided by a Community Advisory Panel, comprising 13 panelists representing experts from across Washington and the nation who provide recommendations on the program’s grant application, eligibility criteria, award distribution, and outreach strategies.

ArtsFund will host a virtual informational webinar in the spring for prospective 2027 applicants, with accessibility accommodations available. Additional details about next year’s Community Accelerator Grant will be made available at www.artsfund.org/accelerator.

See the complete list of 2026 grant recipients HERE.

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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. Since 1969, ArtsFund has granted more than $155MM to over 1,000 organizations reaching all 39 of Washington state's 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.

About Allen Family Philanthropies
Founded in 1988, 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 community grants across Washington state. Learn more at www.allenphilanthropies.org.