

For Immediate Release

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State Arts Commission Invests \$2.65 Million in Arts & Culture Programs Across Arizona

State's total investment in nonprofit arts sector up \$500,000 over last year

Approved in May as part of the State of Arizona's \$10.4 billion fiscal year 2019 budget, an additional \$2 million investment in arts and culture is already making its way to communities across Arizona.

Derived from interest accrued on Arizona's Rainy-Day Fund, the State's \$2 million allocation represents a 33% increase over funding assigned to the Arizona Commission on the Arts in the previous fiscal year.

"With their action in the FY2019 state budget, Governor Ducey and state legislative leaders made a strong statement about the value of arts and culture in Arizona," said Jaime Dempsey, Executive Director of the Arizona Commission on the Arts. "Their message is clear: Arizona's arts sector has a significant role to play in unleashing our state's boundless potential, with its wealth of positive outcomes on community and economic resilience, lifelong learning, and individual ingenuity. Arizona creativity is a wise and productive investment."

At their quarterly meeting in June 2018, the Governor-appointed board of the Arizona Commission on the Arts, a state agency that also administers funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, approved \$2.65 million in grants to Arizona nonprofit arts organizations, festivals, schools, and community-based programs throughout the state. This action represents the allocation of 80% of the Arts Commission's annual grant budget, with several other grant programs running throughout the year.

Grants Awarded

Grants were awarded via three distinct programs:

Festival Grants support organizations in their efforts to provide quality arts and cultural programming through community festival activities. Forty-three Festival Grants were awarded, totaling \$114,000—an increase of 28% over Festival Grant funding awarded last year.

Strengthening Schools Through Arts Partnerships Grants support substantive school/community partnerships that strengthen teaching and learning in arts education and/or arts integration in Arizona Title I schools. Seven Strengthening Schools Through Arts Partnerships grants were awarded, totaling \$127,041—increasing the investment in this program by over 300% from last year.

Community Investment Grants provide operating support to nonprofit arts organizations, local arts agencies, and tribal cultural organizations whose mission is to produce, present, or teach the arts,

and/or to provide arts-based services. One-hundred eighty-three Community Investment Grants were awarded, totaling \$2.41 million—a 10% increase over last year's Community Investment Grant total.

Community Investment Grants (CIG) are separated into six levels delineated by annual budget size, with CIG I comprised of smaller organizations and CIG VI comprised of Arizona's largest arts institutions. Acknowledging the considerable roles small and mid-sized arts organizations play in their communities, and the comparatively limited private philanthropic resources available to those organizations, the Arts Commission elected to increased baseline award amounts for CIG Levels I-IV for FY2019, expanding the agency's overall funding in these areas by an average of 35%.

For a complete list of grantees, visit <https://azarts.gov/grant-news/fiscal-year-2019-grantees/>.

How Grants Are Reviewed

In accordance with its strategic plan and governing statutes, grant applications are evaluated through rigorous panel review processes.

Review panels are composed of diverse community leaders, experts, educators, and arts practitioners from rural, urban, and suburban areas throughout Arizona. Panels are assembled to reflect diversity of race, geography, gender, age, and expertise. This year, 30% of panelists engaged in the process hailed from rural Arizona communities.

Volunteer panelists review eligible grant applications, first independently, then as a group during open public meetings, based on such criteria as community impact, quality of programming, and fiscal responsibility. At the conclusion of their meetings, panels recommend applications for funding. These recommendations are then presented to the Arts Commission's Governor-appointed Board of Commissioners for review and approval during quarterly board meetings, open to the public.

Other Changes This Year

The recent slate of awarded grants reflects sector-wide growth, most evident in the Community Investment Grant applicant pool, which saw annual budgets increasing for major arts institutions, alongside a proliferation of small and mid-sized organizations entering the grant program.

Overall, the Arts Commission saw a 10% increase in applications across Festival, SSTAP, and CIG programs, from twelve of Arizona's fifteen counties.

"We are committed to ensuring that Arts Commission programs are representative of the people who live, work, and create here, and that resources reach all areas of the state. The fact that we have not yet received applications this year from three counties speaks to the fact that there is still work to do to improve geographic parity," said Jaime Dempsey.

"Still, this batch of grants reflects progress in expanding the geographic range of the state's arts investments: with increased funding to eleven counties, including an increase of 169% to Yuma County, and though still modest in number of grants, funding increases of over 200% to Gila and Mojave Counties." Dempsey reported.

"In this regard, the State of Arizona's amplified arts-based investment is already paying huge dividends to Arizona communities."

About the Arizona Commission on the Arts

One of 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies across the United States, the Arizona Commission on the Arts is a 52-year-old agency of the State of Arizona and a leading force in the creative and professional development of Arizona's arts sector. Through robust programs, research initiatives, and strategic grantmaking, the Arts Commission catalyzes arts-based partnerships that strengthen Arizona communities through the arts.

We imagine an Arizona where everyone can participate in and experience the arts.

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For more information on the Arizona Commission on the Arts, visit www.azarts.gov or contact Steve Wilcox, Communications Director, Arizona Commission on the Arts, at (602) 771-6536 or swilcox@azarts.gov.

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