

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Steve Wilcox
602.771.6536
swilcox@azarts.gov

State Arts Commission Delivers Over \$2.63 Million to Arizona Communities
260 nonprofit arts organizations, festivals, and education programs awarded grants

Today, the Arizona Commission on the Arts, an agency of the State of Arizona, announced that over \$2.63 million has been awarded to nonprofit arts organizations, festivals, and education programs throughout the state.

At their quarterly meeting on June 27, 2019, the Governor-appointed board of the Arizona Commission on the Arts approved the funding of 260 grants to Arizona nonprofit arts organizations, festivals, schools, and community-based programs. This action represents the allocation of 75% of the Arts Commission's annual grants budget, with several other grant programs running throughout the year.

Grant Awards

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. 40 Festival Grants were awarded, totaling \$107,000.

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. This year's awards, totaling \$62,840, provide a second year of support to four previously-funded partnerships.

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. 216 Community Investment Grants were awarded, totaling \$2,463,000.

Community Investment Grants (CIG) are separated into six levels delineated by annual budget size, with Level VI comprising Arizona's largest arts institutions.

For a complete list of grantees, visit <https://azarts.gov/grant-news/fiscal-year-2020-grantees/>.

Grant Application and Review Process

In accordance with the Arts Commission's strategic plan and governing statutes, grant applications are evaluated through comprehensive 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.

Growth Outward and Upward

The number of organizations applying for Community Investment Grants increased 22% over Fiscal Year 2019, with 46 more organizations applying for Fiscal Year 2020 funding. 72% of these new applicants applied in Community Investment Grant Levels I and II. These levels represent organizations with annual incomes of less than \$100,000.

According to Kristen Pierce Kent, Organizational Grants and Services Manager at the Arizona Commission on the Arts, this growth reflects a thriving, expanding statewide arts sector, as well as Arts Commission efforts to simplify the grant process for smaller, volunteer-run organizations and make the process more accessible to organizations operating in rural and remote communities.

"We are very excited to see substantial growth in grant funding going to Graham, Mohave, Navajo, and Pinal Counties," Pierce Kent said. "Though the number of grants is still relatively modest and we'd like to see even more investment in more rural and remote areas of our state, this batch of grants represents a 40% increase in state arts funds delivered to Graham County, a 50% increase to Mohave County, an 80% increase to Navajo County, and a 125% increase to Pinal County."

"For a state agency whose mission is squarely focused on statewide service and access, we are proud of these increases."

Even as many smaller arts organizations join the applicant pool, a number of Arizona's largest arts organizations are growing in budget size, evidenced by the movement of returning grantees from one funding level to another. Pierce Kent acknowledged an unfortunate reality of this growth, however:

"As more organizations enter the program and large organizations move up to higher levels of funding, the demand for grant support has never been greater," said Pierce Kent. "And though we are grateful for the opportunity to invest in arts-based programs across our great state, available funding has not kept pace with demand. For this reason, 36% of returning Community Investment Grant recipients are seeing a slight decrease in their support from last year."

The Arts Commission receives funding from the State of Arizona and the National Endowment for the Arts. The State of Arizona's Fiscal Year 2020 budget included a one-time \$2 million General Fund appropriation to the Arts Commission, repeating a similar one-time allocation in Fiscal Year 2019. Additionally, the State of Arizona's Fiscal Year 2020 budget included a \$200,000 General Fund appropriation for a nonprofit professional theatre in Maricopa County that has been in existence for at least 99 years, with funding designated to capital costs.

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 53-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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Images available upon request.

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