

ORANGE



COUNTY
FLORIDA

State of the Arts, FY26 Cultural Facilities and Blockbuster & Special Events Recommendations

June 16, 2026

Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs

OUTLINE

- Background
- Highlights
- Orange County Arts Funding
- Research & Planning
- Make Music Day
- FusionFest
- Summary
- FY26 Cultural Facilities Grants
- FY26 Blockbuster & Special Events Grant
- Requested Actions



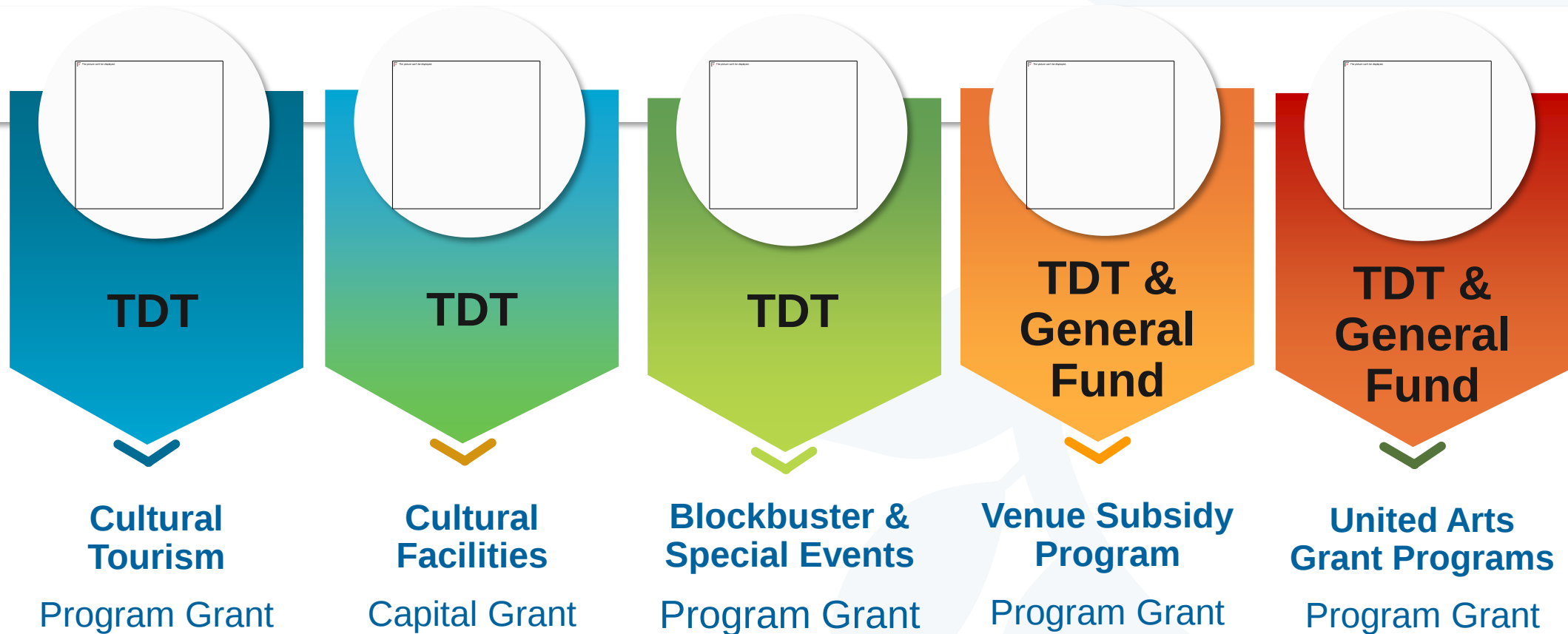
BACKGROUND

Mission: to elevate Central Florida's arts and culture to that befitting a world-class community.

Arts & Cultural Affairs Advisory Council Members:

- Jennifer Benton, Chair *(District 1)*
- Paul Lartonoix, Vice-Chair *(UCF)*
- Comm. Nicole Wilson
- Marjory Bonzil *(District 6)*
- Barbara Chandler *(Mayor)*
- John Hall *(At Large)*
- David Forrest *(District 5)*
- Quibulah Graham *(TDC)*
- Roberto Gonzalez *(District 3)*
- Betsy Gwinn *(United Arts)*
- Stephanie Lerret *(District 4)*
- Brendan Lynch *(District 2)*
- Dawn Ofodile *(City of Orlando)*

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HIGHLIGHTS – FY25 Cultural Tourism Program

- **Awarded \$4,614,618 to 40 organizations**
- **Welcomed 2,008,289 audience members**
- **Welcomed 797,536 tourists**
 - **\$45.7M in visitor spend**
- **Leveraged \$38,928,772 in match dollars**



HIGHLIGHTS – FY25 Cultural Tourism Grantee



- Performances attracted cultural tourists from more than 25 states
- Strong attendance representation from the Northeast and Midwest
- Liberty Weekend Concert at Orlando International Airport welcomed more than 4,500 travelers during peak tourism season
- OPO's \$20/ticket program served 2,500 students, educators, healthcare workers, and furloughed federal employees

HIGHLIGHTS – FY25 Cultural Tourism Grantee



- Multidisciplinary Latinx Arts Festival, EDALX, featured 186 artists from 16 companies from Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia, the United States, and Chile
- Main programs were presented in bilingual and multilingual formats, offering Spanish-English and English/Spanish interpretation as well as ASL interpretation
- The season featured 51 collaborations with community organizations
- First time grantee

HIGHLIGHTS – FY25 Cultural Facilities Grantee

Orlando Science Center



- The DOME project, completed May 2026, renovated the theatre built in 1997
- Conversion from film to 8k digital projection system, featuring 8 digital projectors and laser light sources
- New immersive, powerful audio system
- Dome screen replaced with NanoSeam projection surface
- All new theatre seating

HIGHLIGHTS – Blockbuster & Special Events Grantee



- **IMMERSE 2026 welcomed 84,960 audience members**
- **Festival spanned across 10 city blocks, featured 1,147 artists, and paid \$1.2M+ to artists, arts organizations, event vendors, and creative professionals**
- **Earned over 3.5M organic social media impressions, and 5.97M social media impressions from paid advertising campaigns**
- **Over \$10.1M in economic impact (Americans for the Arts, Arts & Economic Prosperity Calculator)**

HIGHLIGHTS – Blockbuster & Special Events Grantee

Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community



- Programming and Marketing Conference held May 2025 to plan for 2027's "Eatonville Rising"
- Development of a 3-year marketing campaign, including 3 phase rollout
 - Local Awareness & Foundation Building
 - Regional & National Engagement
 - National & International Expansion
- Full brand package designed and developed

OUTLINE

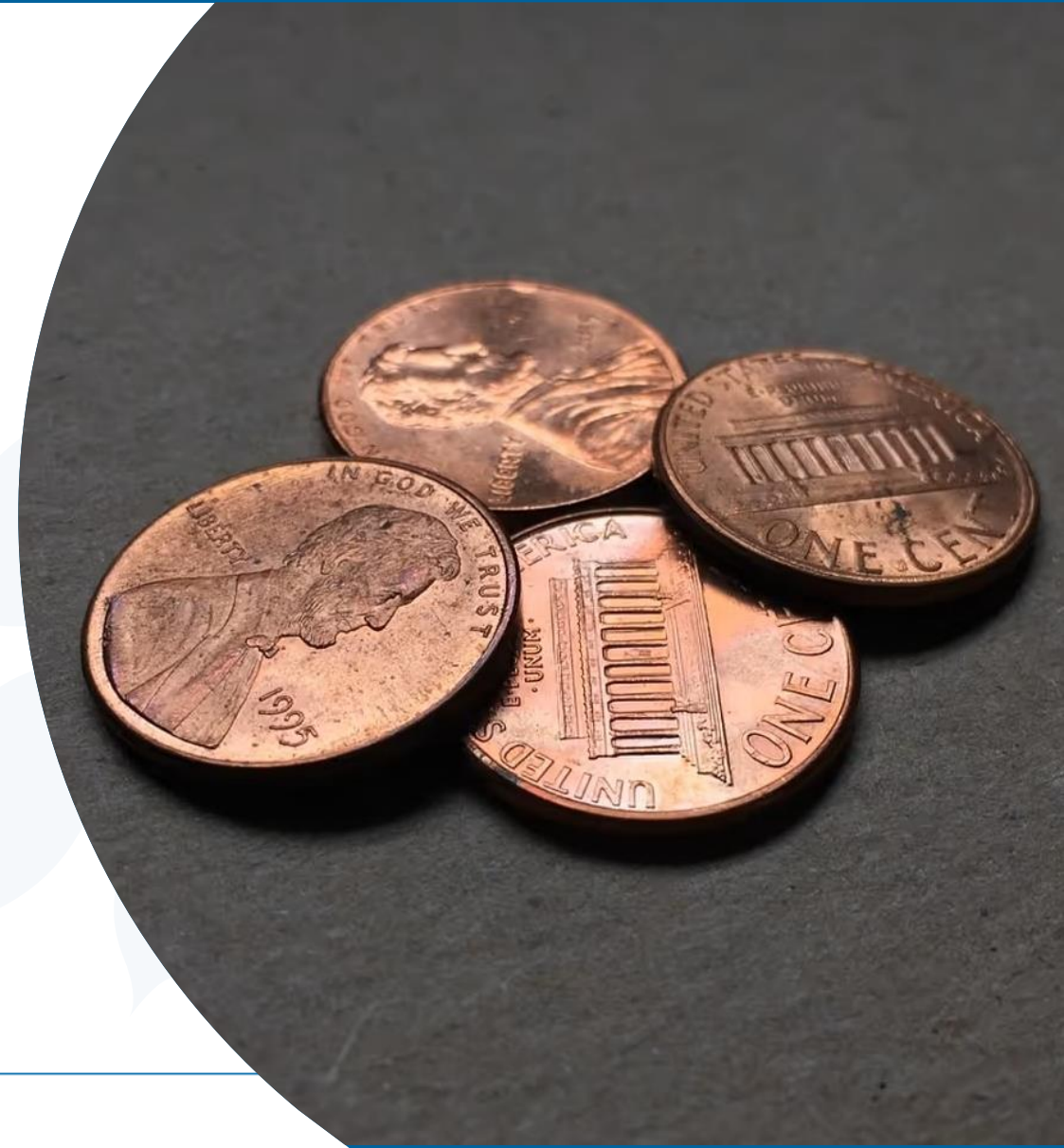
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ORANGE COUNTY FY27 ARTS & CULTURE FUNDING

- 5% of the first 4 cents
- \$2,500,000 fixed TDT per plan
- \$1 per capita from General Fund

	TDT Funds	General Fund
TDT Calculation (5% of the 1 st 4 cents)	\$12,800,000	
Fixed Funding per Plan	\$2,500,000	
\$1 per capita		\$1,536,045
Total	\$ 16,836,045	



ORANGE COUNTY FY27 ARTS & CULTURE FUNDING

Projected Uses

USES	TDT Funds	General Fund
Cultural Tourism	\$5,500,000	
Cultural Facilities	\$4,500,000	
Blockbuster & Special Events	\$1,157,142	
Venue Subsidy Program	\$500,000	\$500,000
UA Campaign Challenge Grant	\$500,000	
United Arts Marketing	\$800,000	
United Arts – Grant Support	\$1,700,000	\$996,045
United Arts – Fiscal Agent	\$642,858	\$40,000
Total	\$15,300,000	\$1,536,045

ORANGE COUNTY FY27 ARTS & CULTURE FUNDING

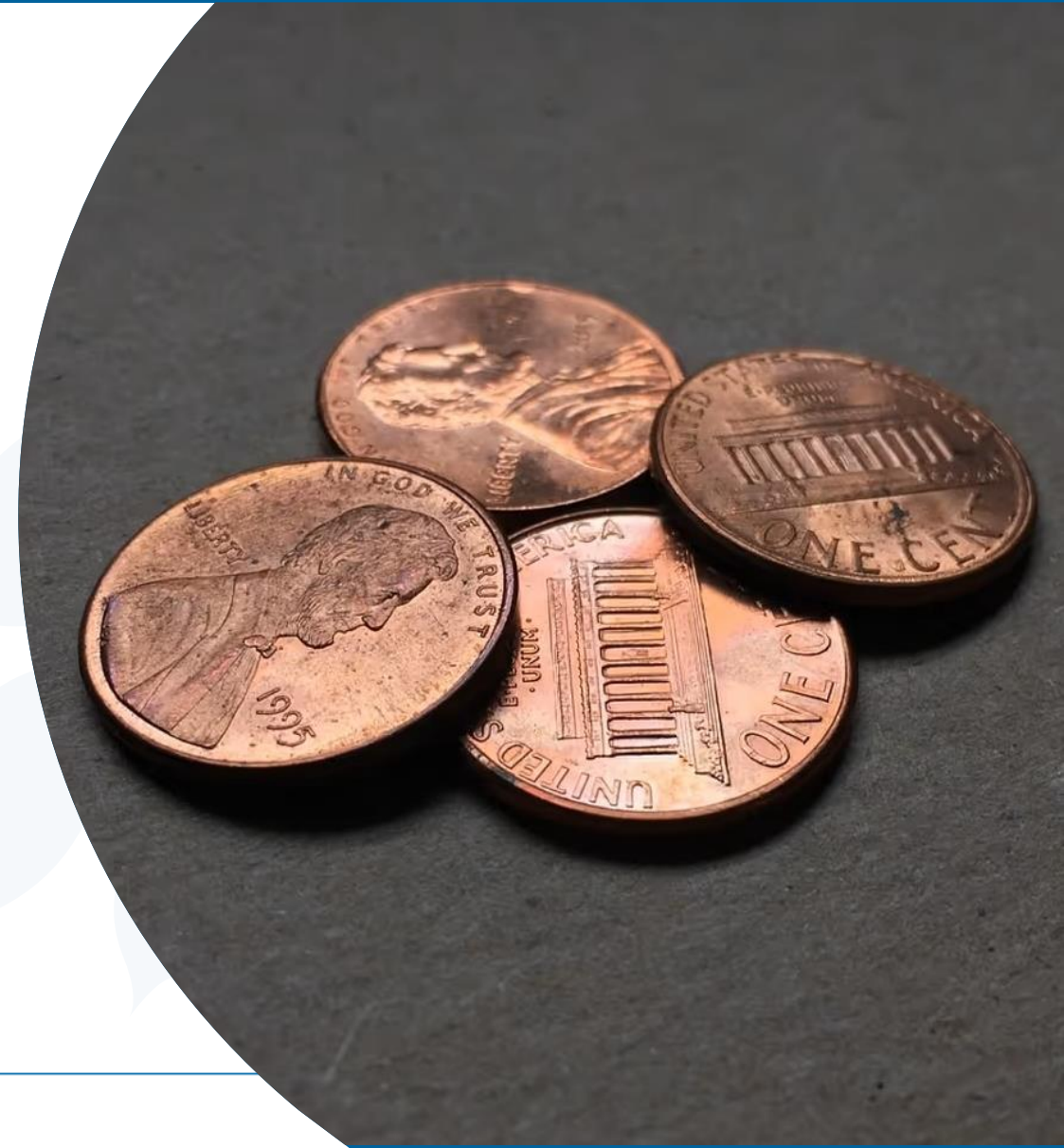
Projected Uses

USES	TDT Funds	General Fund
Cultural Tourism		
Cultural Facilities		
Blockbuster & Special		
Venue Subsidy Program		\$500,000
UA Campaign Challenge Grant	\$500,000	
United Arts Marketing	\$800,000	
United Arts – Grant Support	\$1,700,000	\$996,045
United Arts – Fiscal Agent	\$642,858	\$40,000
Total	\$15,300,000	\$1,536,045

\$15,353,187

ORANGE COUNTY FY27 ARTS & CULTURE FUNDING

	TDT Funds	General Fund
TDT ARC	\$15,000,000	
TDT Calculation (5% of 1 st 4 cents)	\$12,800,000	
Fixed Funding per Plan	\$2,500,000	
\$1 per capita		\$1,536,045
Total	\$ 31,836,045 (\$20.72 per capita)	



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RESEARCH & PLANNING

DIRECT ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

\$264,912,735 spent by
organizations and
audiences

NUMBER OF JOBS SUPPORTED

4,943 arts and culture
employment
opportunities

ARTS & ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 6 - ORANGE COUNTY -

IN-PERSON ATTENDANCE

- 2,795,352 total
- 41.5% of attendees
were nonlocal

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- \$50,331,102 art & culture
related revenue returned to
government
- \$186,239,400 total household
income

RESEARCH FACILITATED IN PARTNERSHIP BY



Source: Arts & Economic Prosperity 6; The Economic and
Social Impact Study of Nonprofit Arts and Culture
Organizations and Their Audiences in Orange County
(2023)

Want To Learn More? Contact
United Arts of Central Florida
info@UnitedArtsCFL.org

RESEARCH & PLANNING

- Plan Initiated: May 2024
- Engagement and Research: July 2024 – January 2025
 - Over 55 Stakeholder and Community Discussions
 - Cross-County Site Visits
 - Cross-Sector Workshop
 - Community Survey with 1,000+ responses
- Findings and Results: February – March 2025
- Plan Development: April – August 2025
- Plan Acceptance:
 - Orange County BCC: September 2025
 - Orlando City Council: October 2025
- Arts & Cultural Affairs Advisory Council creates CANVAS Cultural Plan Committee: September 2025
- CANVAS Cultural Plan Committee Begins Meeting: January 2026

CANVAS

Cultural Plan
for the City of Orlando
and Orange County

RESEARCH & PLANNING

- CANVAS Cultural Plan Committee:
 - Mission: “To steward implementation of the CANVAS Cultural Plan through action-centered community connections and partnerships.”
 - 16-member committee (10 former Steering Committee)
- Committee Meetings:
 - January 2026 – Orientation & Sunshine Law, Mission Development
 - March 2026 – Funding Priorities
 - May 2026 – Policy Priorities
 - July 2026 – Convening Priorities
- Accepted for Presentation at the Florida Planning 2026 Conference
 - Best practices on municipal partnerships and community engagement
 - Co-presented by Orange County, City of Orlando, and Cultural Planning Group
- Launched ocfl.net/CANVAS as central communications tool

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MAKE MUSIC DAY 2026

- Make Music Day returns on June 21, 2026
- The inaugural 2025 Make Music Day in Orange County had 40 performances across 16 locations, including museums, coffee shops, private residences, and municipal buildings
- Multiple returning participants in 2026, with arts and cultural nonprofit community engaging
- Musicians and host venues can sign up to participate through Friday



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FUSIONFEST

- Despite a year of organizational restructuring, FusionFest delivered extensive programming and completed a strategic planning effort
- Variety of year-round programming offerings
- Partnered on 15 community parades and festivals, including Nowruz, Taste of Africa, Puerto Rican Parade, and MLK Day of Service



FUSIONFEST

- 8th Annual FusionFest Festival – “The Art of Joy” welcomed over 9,000 attendees and celebrated more than 120 cultures
- Multiple new elements in 2025: Joyful Orlando wellness tent, Garden Goat Interactive Experience, Arts 4 All inclusive tent, Murals of FusionFest exhibition, live painting muralists
- New Strategic Plan developed by the DeVos Institute of Arts Management focused on sustainability, accountability, and long-term growth



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SUMMARY

- We are at a pivotal moment where multiple strategic planning efforts are aligning; tactics from CANVAS, United Arts strategic plan, and others will help ensure a strong future for our community
- Orange County remains a leader in public arts funding and a lifeline for many of our arts and cultural nonprofits, given volatility of State and Federal funding programs
- In 2026/2027 we will see growth in all grant programs – and in the Arts & Cultural Affairs Advisory Council itself
- Eager to continue advancing CANVAS strategies and tactics alongside community partners

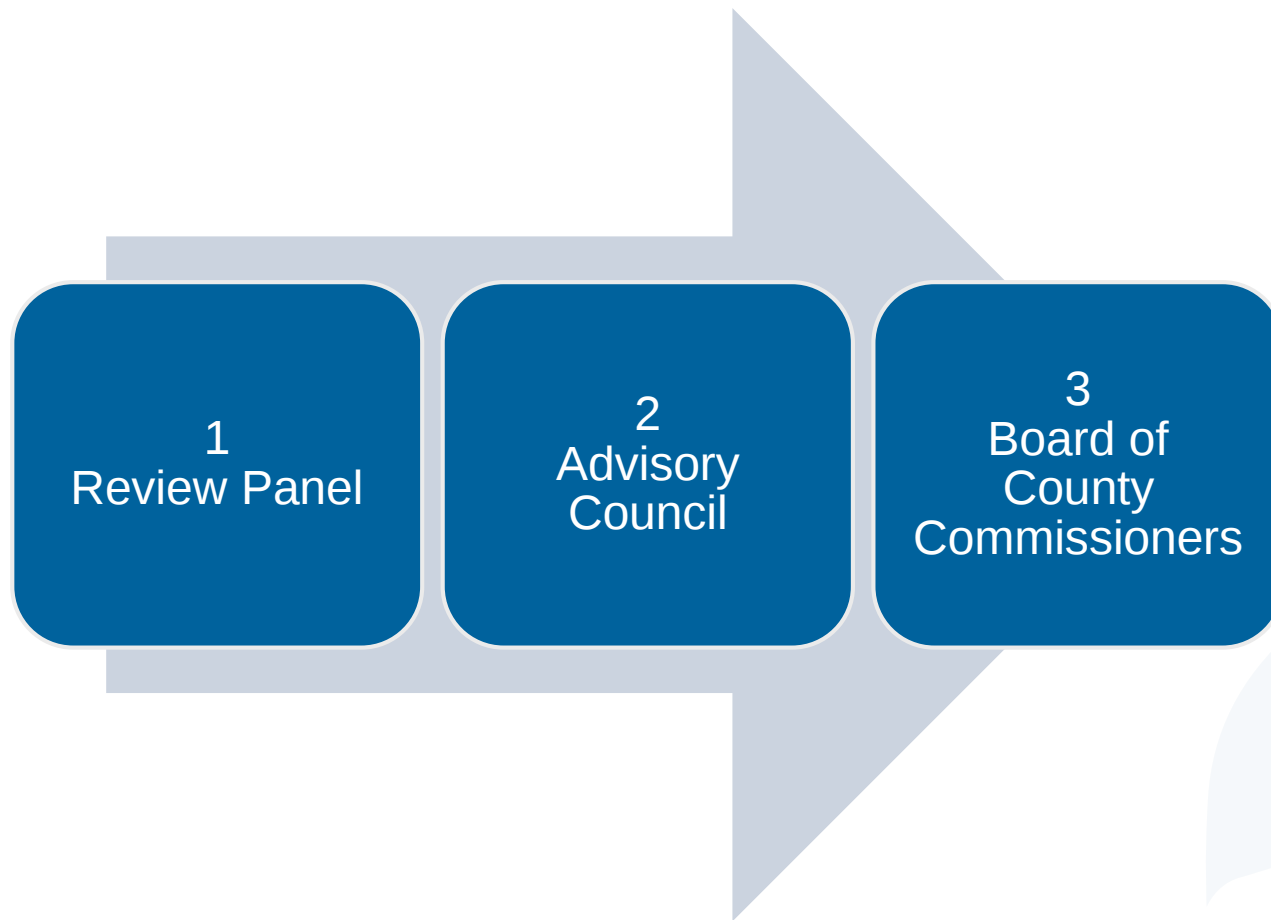


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FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS



- Open to nonprofit museum or government-owned auditorium venue
- For equipping, renovating, maintaining, constructing, and acquiring
- Funded through Tourist Development Tax

FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS

Grant Process

- Application open December 18, 2025 – March 1, 2026
 - 50¢ : \$1 match
 - Maximum request: \$2,000,000
- “How to Apply” Workshop: January 13, 2026
- Site Visits: March 25, 2026
- Panel Review: April 30, 2026
 - Concept (Need, Vision, Inspiring Excellence)
 - Facility (Process, Design, Planning, Quality)
 - Management & Budget (Readiness, Stewardship)
 - Independent financial assessment by United Arts
- Minimum eligible score: 80/100

FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS

Cultural Facilities Review Panel

Advisory Council Members

Jennifer Benton, Chair

David Forrest

Quibulah Graham

Betsy Gwinn

Brendan Lynch

Industry Experts

Jorge Cedeno (Architect, Planning
Environmental Development Services,
Orange County)

Brian Morris (President, Boru + Associates)

Ramona Samali (Architect, BakerBarrios)

Prior Grantee

Barbara Hartley (Executive Director,
Downtown Arts District)

FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS

ORGANIZATION	PROJECT	GRANT AWARD
Friends of Casa Feliz	Safeguarding Casa Feliz for the Next Century	\$354,813
Orlando Science Center	Weather Science Exhibit Hall	\$2,000,000
Orlando Shakes	Capital Safety Improvements	\$44,596
Orlando Philharmonic Plaza Foundation	Internet and Tech Upgrades for Plaza Live	\$524,032
Orlando Ballet	Harriett's Ballet Centre Enhancements	\$37,315
Town of Eatonville CRA	The "Circuit" Performing Arts & Cultural Entertainment Event Center (Club Eaton Restoration)	\$300,000
	TOTAL:	\$3,260,756

FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS

Friends of Casa Feliz: Safeguarding Casa Feliz for the Next Century

Restoration of original 1933 Spanish barrel tile roof to include new sub-roofing, new (historically accurate) barrel tiles, repair and replacement of the copper gutter system, and ceiling reinforcement in the dining room using steel rod tension ties.

- Total Project Cost: \$558,831
- Request Amount: \$354,813



FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS

Orlando Science Center: Weather Science Exhibit Hall

Renovation of the “Our Planet” space into a new permanent exhibit hall exploring the science, technology, and impact of severe weather events, with a focus on Florida’s unique climate challenges. Scope includes updated architecture, lighting system, sound system, along with exhibit design, fabrication, and installation.

- Total Project Cost: \$3,150,000
- Request Amount: \$2,000,000

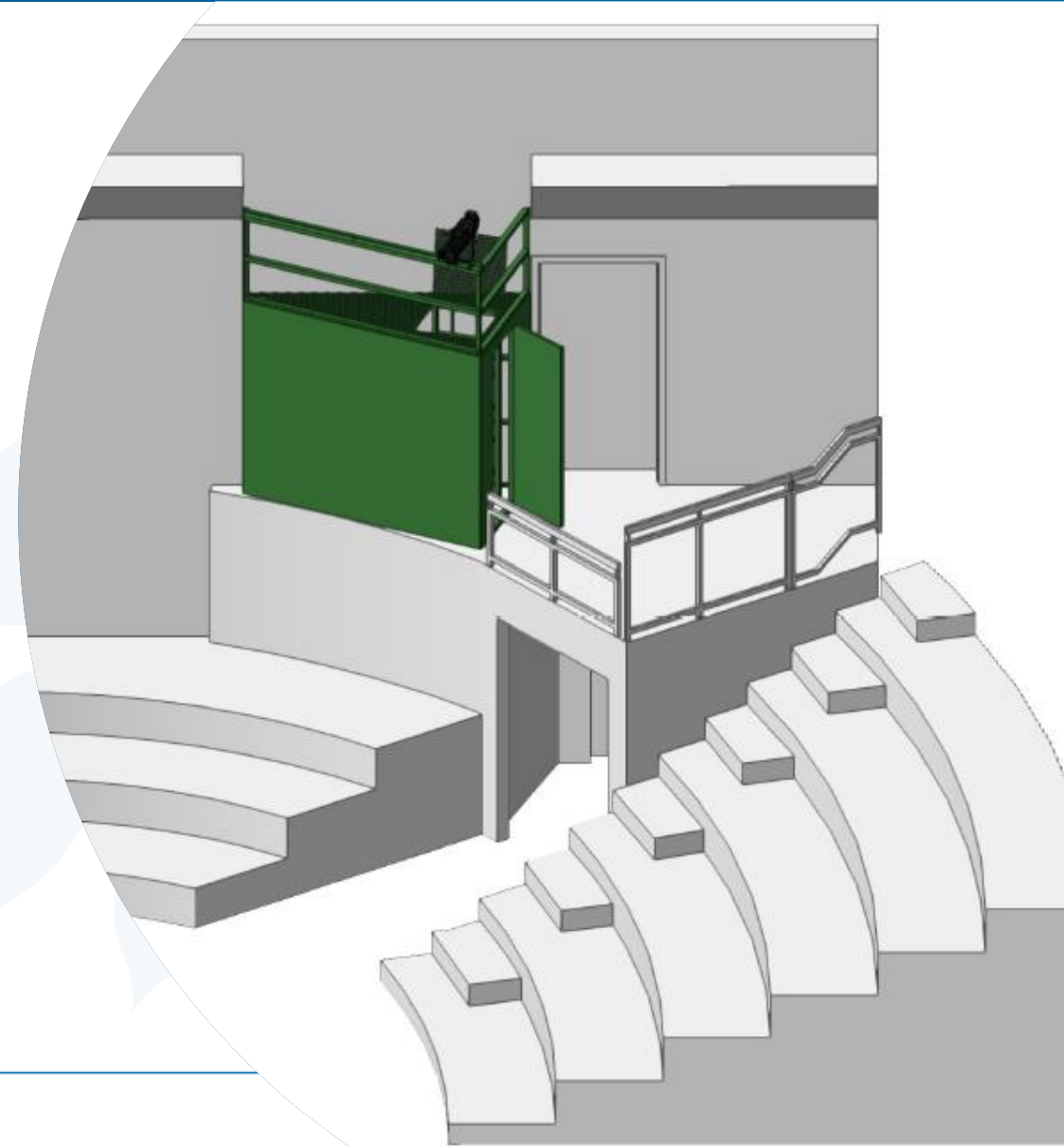


FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS

Orlando Shakes: Capital Safety Improvements

Camera and Monitoring system integrated with Automation and Lift Systems onstage, audio system infrastructure for productions and emergency announcements, rebuilt spotlight towers, exterior door upgrades to include keypad-based entry and doorbell alert system, and directional signage on the building exterior.

- Total Project Cost: \$66,894
- Request Amount: \$44,596

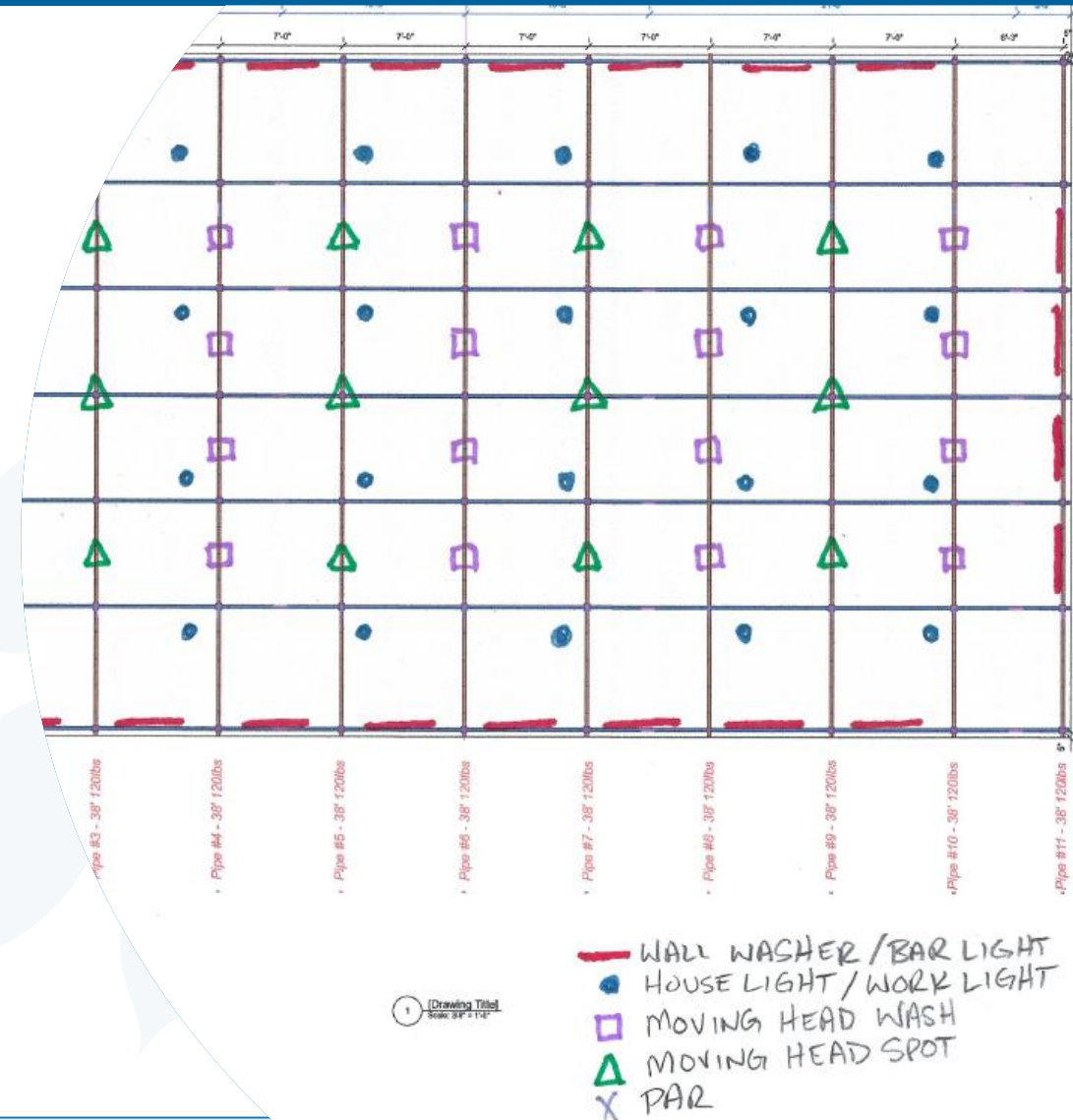


FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS

Orlando Philharmonic Plaza Foundation: Internet and Tech Upgrades for Plaza Live – Home of the Plaza Foundation and Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra

Technical infrastructure upgrade to the Palmer Room to support core lighting, audio video, staging, and network systems. Scope includes work lighting, house lighting, color-mixing wall wash lighting, 70-volt ceiling speaker system, video system, modular stage platform, professional lighting control, modular loudspeaker system, upgraded digital audio console, pipe-grid system, and building-wide network integration of A/V systems.

- Total Project Cost: \$786,084
- Request Amount: \$524,032

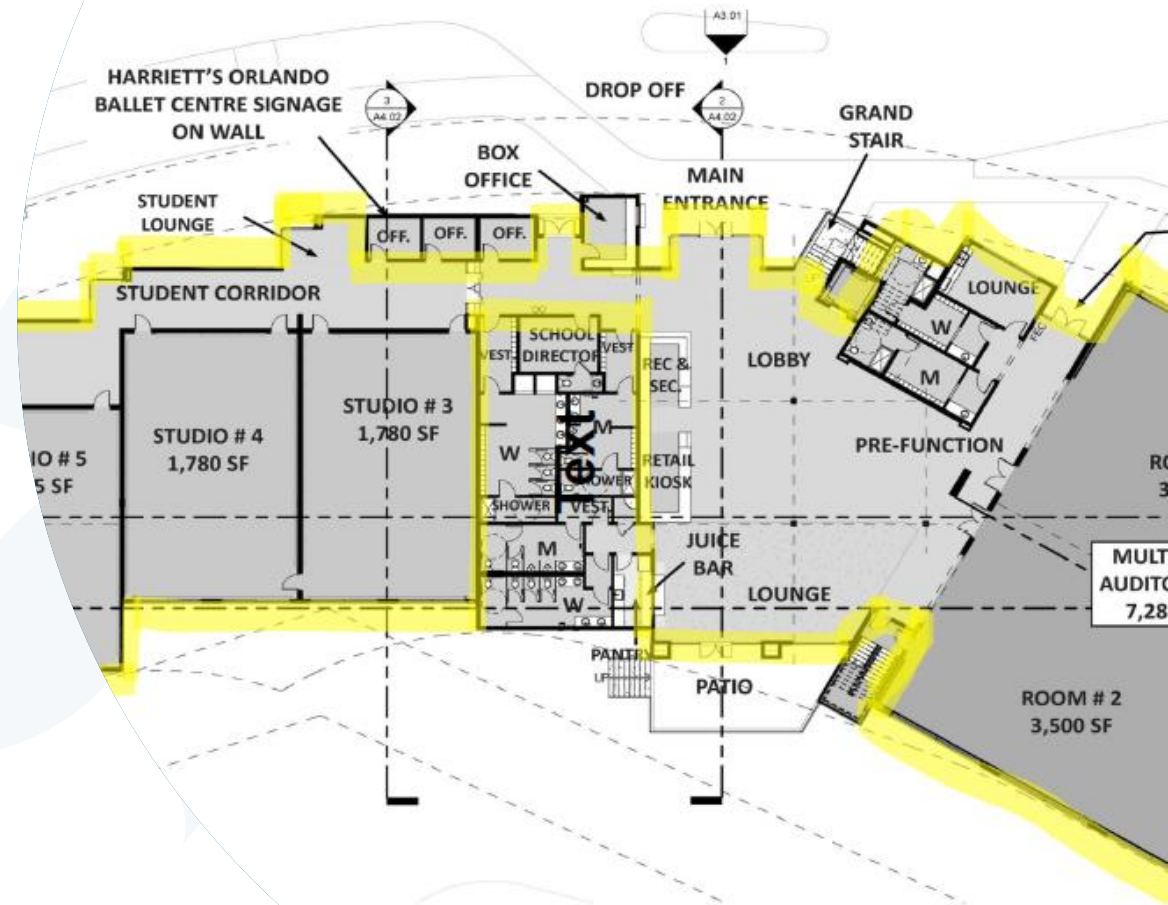


FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS

Orlando Ballet: Harriett's Orlando Ballet Centre Enhancements

Upgraded audio equipment in Ledden Great Hall and all studio spaces, dedicated audio equipment and microphones, video infrastructure upgrades including cord enclosure, blackout curtains for Ledden Great Hall, table and chair storage carts, ballet barres, exterior building caulking.

- Total Project Cost: \$64,126
- Request Amount: \$37,315

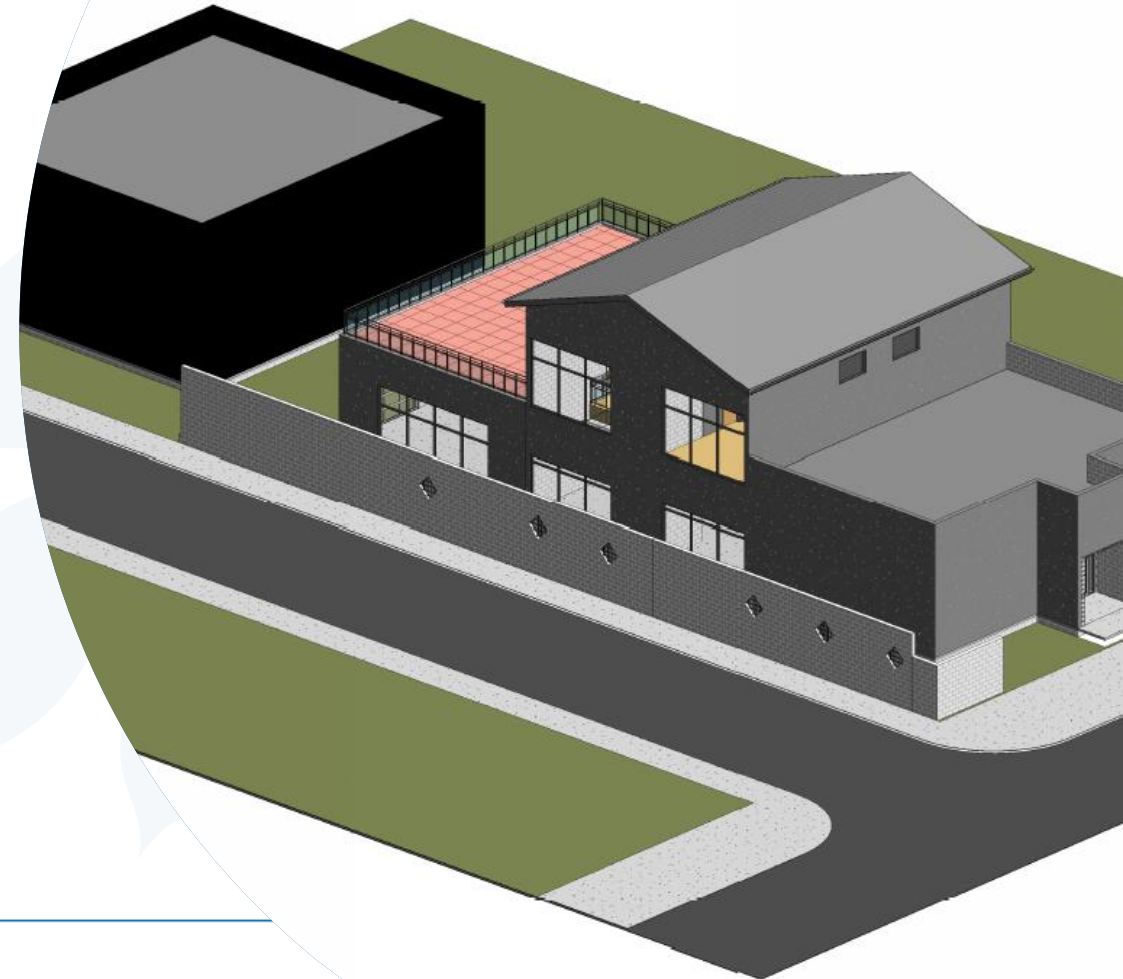


FY26 CULTURAL FACILITIES GRANTS

Town of Eatonville CRA: The “Circuit” Performing Arts and Cultural Entertainment Event Center (Club Eaton Restoration)

Acquisition of the historic Club Eaton building to support adaptive reuse into The “Circuit” Performing Arts and Cultural Entertainment Event Center. Club Eaton is a site of documented national African American cultural significance. Positions the project as grant-ready: State of Florida \$1M facilities grant.

- Total Project Cost: \$450,000
- Request Amount: \$300,000

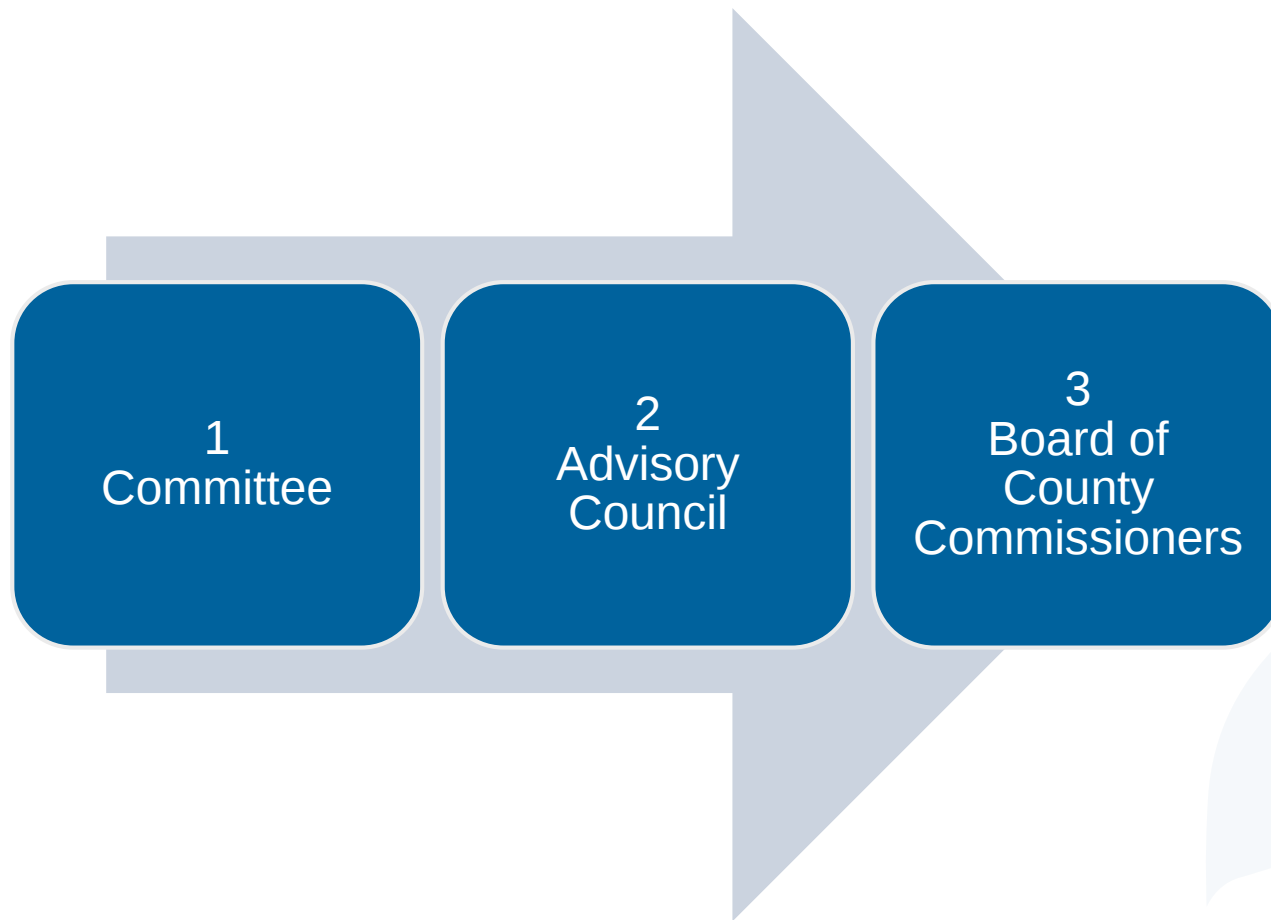


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FY26 BLOCKBUSTER & SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT



- Screening and informational discussions with County staff
- Eligibility screening with Committee Chair and County staff
- Presentation(s) to Blockbuster & Special Events Committee
- Presentation to Arts & Cultural Affairs Advisory Council

FY26 BLOCKBUSTER & SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT

- “Blockbuster Special Event” – *an arts and cultural event that sustains exceptional and widespread popularity and achieves enormous public participation*
- Result in regional, statewide, and national or international attendance of at least 50,000
- Include significant participation with local arts organizations, collaboration with and among the local arts and culture providers
- Be financially feasible, providing details of process, finances, and impact
- Proposers must have a demonstrated background of successfully handling significant events

FY26 BLOCKBUSTER & SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT

Committee Members

Stephanie Lerret

Avalon Park Group

Marjory Bonzil

*Haitian American Christian
Chamber of Commerce*

Gwen Covington

So You Want Your Name In Lights

David Forrest

Kinetic Forrest

Hal Kantor

Lowndes

Keith Smith

Disney (retired)

Rich Taylor

Disney (retired)

FY26 BLOCKBUSTER & SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT

- Multi-Year support of the Frontyard Holiday Festival
- The 2025 Festival:
 - 312 total media mentions
 - Earned media generated 1.76 billion in total audience reach
 - Featured 28+ musical genres and paid 87 unique artists/groups
 - Downtown Orlando Partnership Golden Brick Award Winner
- 2026 Projected Attendance: 300,000 (2025: 150,000)



FY26 BLOCKBUSTER & SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT

- 32 nights of live entertainment:
 - 300 live concerts and performances
 - 75 partnerships with regional and professional arts groups
 - 64 carillon showcases
 - 64 chalet performances
 - 32 Santa appearances
 - 32 “All is Bright” celebrations
 - 16 high school student groups
 - 10 headliner concerts
 - 7 holiday-themed movie nights



FY26 BLOCKBUSTER & SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT

earned	\$403,000
food & beverage sales, private events	\$325,000
marketplace vendor fees	\$75,000
merchandise sales	\$3,000
contributed	\$3,893,000
corporate sponsorships	\$2,208,000
media sponsorships	\$485,000
grants	\$1,200,000
total revenue	\$4,296,000

capital	\$750,000
tents & cooking huts	\$330,000
tree of light	\$170,000
staging	\$175,000
production equipment	\$70,000
ADA requirements	\$5,000
operations	\$3,546,000
operational staff (police, medical, guest services)	\$230,000
licenses & permits, public safety equipment	\$57,000
moving, storage & utilities	\$255,000
groundskeeping & landscaping	\$200,000
production staff	\$173,000
artists fees	\$350,000
production rentals	\$1,540,000
marketing (regional and tourism)	\$741,000
total expenses	\$4,296,000

FY26 BLOCKBUSTER & SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT

expense type	year 1	year 2	year 3	year 4
operations expenses & capital	\$500,000 (50%)	\$450,000 (45%)	\$400,000 (40%)	\$350,000 (35%)
artist fees & production	\$350,000 (35%)	\$350,000 (35%)	\$350,000 (35%)	\$350,000 (35%)
tourism marketing	\$150,000 (15%)	\$200,000 (20%)	\$250,000 (25%)	\$300,000 (30%)
total	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

FY26 BLOCKBUSTER & SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT



Arts & Cultural Affairs Advisory Council Recommendation:

to award the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts their full request of \$4,000,000 over four years, with Year 1 (\$1,000,000) awarded now, and Years 2, 3, and 4 contingent on event performance, reporting, compliance, and sufficient fund balances in the Blockbuster & Special Events fund.

FY26 BLOCKBUSTER & SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT

Blockbuster & Special Events Projection											
	Annual Allocation		Holdover		Creative City Award		PEC Award		DPC Proposal		Balance
FY23-24	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$ 2,360,453
FY24-25	\$	1,150,714	\$	1,202,333	\$	(1,000,000)	\$	(689,261)	\$	-	\$ 3,024,239
FY25-26	\$	1,127,000	\$	3,251,277	\$	(1,000,000)	\$	(450,935)	\$	-	\$ 5,951,581
FY26-27	\$	1,157,142	\$	-	\$	(1,250,000)	\$	(159,804)	\$	(1,000,000)	\$ 4,698,919
FY27-28	\$	1,127,000	\$	-	\$	(1,500,000)	\$	-	\$	(1,000,000)	\$ 3,325,919
FY28-29	\$	1,127,000	\$	-	\$	(2,000,000)	\$	-	\$	(1,000,000)	\$ 1,452,919
FY29-30	\$	1,127,000	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	(1,000,000)	\$ 1,579,919
					\$	(6,750,000)	\$	(1,300,000)	\$	(4,000,000)	

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REQUESTED ACTIONS

Approval of FY26 Cultural Facilities Funding Recommendations, as unanimously recommended by the Arts & Cultural Affairs Advisory Council:

ORGANIZATION	PROJECT	GRANT AWARD
Friends of Casa Feliz	Safeguarding Casa Feliz for the Next Century	\$354,813
Orlando Science Center	Weather Science Exhibit Hall	\$2,000,000
Orlando Shakes	Capital Safety Improvements	\$44,596
Orlando Philharmonic Plaza Foundation	Internet and Tech Upgrades for Plaza Live	\$524,032
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Town of Eatonville CRA	The "Circuit" Performing Arts & Cultural Entertainment Event Center (Club Eaton Restoration)	\$300,000
	TOTAL:	\$3,260,756

REQUESTED ACTIONS

Approval of the Arts & Cultural Affairs Advisory Council's unanimous funding recommendation for Blockbuster & Special Events – The Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts Frontyard Holiday Festival:

FY27: \$1,000,000

FY28: \$1,000,000*

FY29: \$1,000,000*

FY30: \$1,000,000*

****contingent on event performance, reporting, compliance, and sufficient fund balances in the Blockbuster & Special Events fund.***

THANK YOU!

