Regular Meeting of the
Cuyahoga Arts & Culture Board of Trustees

Cleveland Public Library - Main Branch, Louis Stokes Wing
2nd Floor Learning Commons
325 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44114
Wednesday, November 18, 2026 - 4:00 pm

1. **Opening of the Meeting**
    a. Call to order
    b. Roll call
    c. **Action:** September 16, 2026 regular meeting minutes

2. **Public Comment on Today's Agenda**

3. **Executive Director's Report**

4. **Action Items and Reports – Finance and General Business**
    a. Finance Report
    b. **Action:** Accept a grant from The Cleveland Foundation (The Educational Foundation of America)
    c. **Action:** Revised 2027 meeting schedule (February 9, 2027 date)

5. **Action Items and Reports – Grantmaking**
    a. 2027 Grantmaking
        i. **Action:** 2027 General Operating Support grants
        ii. **Action:** 2027 Project Support scores and grants
        iii. **Action:** 2027 Assembly for the Arts grant
        iv. **Action:** 2027 Neighborhood Connections grant

6. **Public Comment on CAC Business**

7. **Adjourn**

Next Regular Meeting: December 16, 2026 – 3:30 pm

CUYAHOGA
ARTS & CULTURE
Public funding. Strong nonprofits.

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Wednesday, September 16, 2026

A meeting of the Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:03 pm at the Cleveland Public Library, Louis Stokes Wing, 2nd Floor Learning Center, 325 Superior Ave., Cleveland, Ohio.

The roll call showed that Trustees Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, Johnson Thomas, and Vernaci were present. It was determined that there was a quorum.

Also in attendance were: Jill Paulsen, Executive Director and CAC staff.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Action: To approve the minutes of the April 15, 2026 Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees as amended to correct the spelling of Dr. Shenise Johnson Thomas's name.
Motion by – Trustee Blakemore
Second by – Trustee DiCosimo

Vote: To approve the minutes of the April 15, 2026 Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees as amended to correct the spelling of Shenise Johnson Thomas's name.

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, Johnson Thomas, Vernaci.

The motion carried.

Action: To approve the minutes of the August 26, 2026 Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees.
Motion by – Trustee DiCosimo
Second by – Trustee Blakemore

Vote: To approve the minutes of the August 26, 2026, Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, Johnson Thomas, Vernaci.

The motion carried.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment on today's agenda.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Paulsen thanked everyone for joining her and the Board. Ms. Paulsen's remarks can be found in the board materials on page 8.

4. CONNECT WITH CULTURE

Mr. Jake Sinatra welcomed Jackie Feldman, Executive Director of Zygote Press. Jackie joined Zygote in 2021 and has brought deep experience in nonprofit management, which has guided the organization through an exciting time of growth and transformation. Zygote has received more than $460,000 in CAC funding since 2009, first as a Project Support grant recipient, and then since 2011 as a grantee in the General Operating Support program. Ms. Feldman provided the Board with an overview of the organization and its move to a new location that will expand its programs and partnerships.

5. FINANCE AND ADMISTRATIVE MATTERS

Finance Report

Ms. Meg Harris stated that the financials can be found on page 14 of the Board packet. Tax revenue through August was $12.4M and is slightly below budget. The per unit rate of comparison, the sale of cigarettes at the wholesale level, was 7.75% lower than it was for the same period in 2025.

She stated interest revenue was $405k and that non-grant expenditures through August were $689k. Non-grant expenditures are under budget due to timing of payments.

Ms. Harris said that interest revenue has remained strong as anticipated interest rates cuts have not happened, in fact, there was a quarter point increase today.

Ms. Harris said the Audit and Finance Advisory Committee met on June 8. The committee reviewed the Committee Charter and Internal Financial Controls Policy and Procedures. There were minor recommended changes to the Employee Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy and a staff recommendation to eliminate the Panelist Travel Reimbursement and Compensation Policy since all panels are now held online. A summary of updates and both documents are included in the Board materials.

Administrative Matters: Policy Updates

Remote Work Policy

Ms. Harris stated that CAC's employment attorney, Elaine Brown of Squire Patton Boggs, had reviewed the Employee Manual. There is a recommended update to the Remote Work Policy to both simplify it and ensure it reflects CAC's current work practice. She asked for a motion to approve the update to the Remote Work Policy section of the Employee Manual, included in the Board packet.

Action: To approve the updated Remote Work Policy included within CAC's Employee Manual.
Motion by – Trustee Vernaci
Second by – Trustee Blakemore

Discussion: None

Vote: to approve the updated Remote Work Policy included within CAC's Employee Manual
Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, Johnson Thomas, Vernaci.
The motion carried.

Employee Expense & Travel Reimbursement Policy

Ms. Harris said that the policy was last updated in 2009. This policy is being updated to reflect the current reality of the types of receipts which may be accessible. There are times when employees are unable to request receipts for certain expense-related items, such as paid parking. Additionally, sometimes a receipt may be a screen shot from a phone or an e-receipt vs. "original." Receipts will still be required when available, but when they are not provided by the vendor, expenses under $25 may be submitted for reimbursement.

Action: To approve the updates to the Employee Expense & Travel Reimbursement Policy.
Motion by – Trustee Johnson Thomas
Second by – Trustee DiCosimo

Discussion:
Are detailed receipts needed for meals?
Yes, line-item receipts are always required for meal reimbursement.

Vote: to approve the updates to the Employee Expense & Travel Reimbursement Policy.

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, Johnson Thomas, Vernaci.

The motion carried.

Panelist Reimbursement and Compensation Policy

Ms. Harris said that CAC no longer has its panelists travel; grant application reviews occur online. The honorarium compensation is included in the Guidelines which the Board approves routinely.

Action: To revoke the Panelist Reimbursement and Compensation Policy.
Motion by – Trustee DiCosimo
Second by – Trustee Johnson Thomas

Discussion:
Can panelists submit receipts if they have expenses associated with panel?
No, they receive an honorarium of $200 for their participation, which is standard protocol for serving on similar panels elsewhere. There should not be expenses associated with being a panelist for CAC.

Vote: to revoke the Panelist Reimbursement and Compensation Policy.

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, Johnson Thomas, Vernaci.

The motion carried.

Ethics Policy Update

Ms. Harris stated the Ohio Ethics Commission (OEC) has expanded the definition of "family member." To include domestic partners, stepchildren and stepparents. In accordance with the change, it is recommended that we also update the definition in CAC's policy.

Action: To approve the updated definitions of "family member" in CAC's Ethics Policy
Motion by – Trustee Johnson Thomas
Second by – Trustee Vernaci

Discussion: None

Vote: to approve the updated definitions of "family member" in CAC's Ethics Policy

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, Johnson Thomas, Vernaci.

The motion carried.

2027 Board Meeting Schedule

Ms. Isenhart stated that the Board had received a proposed meeting schedule for 2027.

Action: To approve the 2027 Board Meeting Schedule pending an adjustment to the February date.
Motion by – Trustee DiCosimo
Second by – Trustee Blakemore

Discussion: None

Vote to approve the 2027 Board Meeting Schedule pending an adjustment to the February date.

Ayes: Blakemore, DiCosimo, Isenhart, Johnson Thomas, Vernaci.

The motion carried.

6. GRANTMAKING ITEMS

Preview of 2027 Grantmaking

Ms. Isenhart asked Mr. Jake Sinatra and Ms. Maya Curtis to provide the Board with a 2027 grantmaking update.

Mr. Sinatra stated that a summary was included on pages 9-10 of the Board materials. Overall, it is anticipated that 2027 grantmaking recommendations will be on par with this year's. General Operating Support is in the first year of a two-year grant commitment; we will recommend level grants to 150 organizations in that cohort for 2027. Project Support invites annual applications.

Ms. Curtis shared that the Project Support program had 173 eligible applications in this cycle. The eligible applications are now with CAC's 38 panelists who are conducting reviews online. Panelists are arts and cultural professionals that we recruit from across the country. The grant team provided a handbook and

hosted a training workshop to train and prepare panelists. Panelists are diverse in professional backgrounds, age, race, and geographical locations. Panel review will be completed by the end of September, and panel feedback will be made available on our website for applicants to review once scoring is finalized and grants are approved. CAC continues to merge and streamline its processes this year to improve user experience for applicants, panelists, and the team.

Discussion:

Have the changes to the guidelines impacted the number of applicants to the grant programs?
No, the number of new applicants is the roughly same and we expect a similar number of grantees in 2027 as 2026.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT ON CAC BUSINESS

No public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Blakemore, seconded by Trustee DiCosimo, to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: all Ayes. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:52 pm.

Attest:

_____
Leonard DiCosimo, Secretary, Board of Trustees

CAC Executive Director's Report

November 18, 2026

Welcome to CAC's November Board of Trustees meeting.

Today we celebrate our new and returning grant recipients. At this meeting, CAC will approve our 2027 grantmaking. I thank our applicants and CAC staff for the work it took to get to today. I appreciate the grantmaking team's focus on customer service and commitment to providing hundreds of supportive technical assistance touch points to applicants.

In preparation for our meeting, please focus your attention on the slate of Board actions, including review and approval of CAC's core work: 2027 General Operating Support and Project Support grants. In addition, we recommend two other grants: Neighborhood Connections (resident-led projects) and Assembly for the Arts (artist programming).

As you will read in the memos that follow, we recommend **312 grants totaling $12.9M for 2027**. This recommendation is in line with CAC's long-term strategy to make grant commitments that enable our agency to keep its annual grantmaking to the arts and culture nonprofit community as steady as possible for duration of the current levy (through January 2035).

Respectfully,

Jill Paulsen
Executive Director

Updates from CAC Staff

November 18, 2026

Each year, CAC staff develops a work plan that is grounded in our Mission, Vision & Values to provide equitable grant distributions to arts and culture organizations of all sizes. In 2026, we are using Board-approved grantmaking objectives to focus our efforts and guide our work in service of our grant recipients, and the public. What follows is a brief update on progress since the last regular Board meeting in September.

1. GRANTMAKING

General Operating Support and Project Support

As we approach the end of the year, CAC's grantees are preparing to complete their year-end reporting on current (2026) grants, and planning for the next grant cycle (2027).

For **2026 General Operating Support**, all 150 grantees are set to complete a comprehensive year-end report to share progress in alignment with CAC's funding criteria. The reports are due by January 31, 2027, and once approved by staff, the remaining 2026 grant funds will be released. As GOS grantees enter the second year (2027) of a two-year grant commitment, they will all set new goals for 2027, which they will report on throughout the forthcoming cycle. Looking ahead, CAC will continue its focus on data and impact; evaluating grant reports and goals to assess grantees and provide feedback throughout the year.

2026 Project Support grants are ongoing, with staff reviewing reports and issuing payments as projects take place. To date, more than 70 of 156 Project Support grantees have completed their 2026 projects and submitted final reports. CAC continues to hold virtual report-out sessions where grantees can share project results with CAC and share learnings with their fellow grantees. Two more report-out sessions will be held in December and January; all reporting requirements are due by January 31, 2027.

Other Grants

Neighborhood Connections closed its second application cycle for Action Grants on August 31. The first round of co-funded grants was announced in May, when Neighborhood Connections approved $343,788 in grants to support 102 projects in Cleveland and East Cleveland, 30 of which were co-funded by CAC.

Assembly for the Arts will award 22 artists with $10,000 each through its Creative Impact Fund in November. By the end of the year, Assembly will have selected 144 artists to receive $1,500 through its Boost Fund.

Grant Software Transition Complete

A year-long project to migrate all CAC grantees to a new online application and reporting system, GOapply, is now complete. This teamwide effort integrates CAC's long-term database and grant and contact management system with a public-facing application portal, creating new efficiencies and opportunities to better serve applicants and grantees. Staff have built all application forms and a panelist portal for online application review, and will soon launch report forms for all CAC grantees. We look forward to sharing additional opportunities to maximize this integrated platform in the coming year.

2027 Grantmaking Recommendations

In September, CAC conducted written panel reviews, in accordance with the grant guidelines for **2027 Project Support**. Panel scores have been submitted and recommended grant amounts have been calculated. Pending approval, grant recipients will attend orientation workshops to kick off the grant year in January.

For **2027 General Operating Support**, grantees who continue to meet eligibility criteria and reporting requirements are recommended for a level grant, the second year of the two-year grant cycle.

In addition, CAC recommends a grant to **Neighborhood Connections** for $50,000 to fund resident-led arts and culture projects in Cleveland and East Cleveland. CAC also recommends a grant to **Assembly for the Arts** for its 2027 Support for Artists programming in the amount of $500,000.

In total, the CAC Board will be asked to approve **312 grants totaling $12,932,300** for the 2027 grants cycle. Details on the grantmaking recommendations are included in memos in this packet.

2. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications Tools for Grantees

CAC continues to implement a two-year communications plan that will continue through 2027. Following the launch of the refreshed logo and tagline, CAC will have new promotional items available to grantees for use and distribution at their locations and public events. Following the approval of 2027 grants, CAC will also share a template news release with grantees as a tool for sharing the news of their grant and the impact of public funding on their organization.



CAC yard signs will thank residents for their support and feature the refreshed logo and tagline.

Spotlighting Grantees

Earlier this month, CAC shared the first of a new monthly newsletter specifically for media contacts. This newsletter highlights upcoming events and exciting work being done by grantees as potential story ideas for local media. Staff also continued the grantee spotlight campaign on CAC socials, highlighting the work of many of our over 300 grantee partners.

Media Placements

In addition to consistent crediting for Cuyahoga Arts & Culture in the media by our partners, below is a sampling of recent media clips that recognize CAC's grantmaking:

- Cleveland's Playhouse Square: An arts-led downtown revival model - Crain's Cleveland Business (October 8, 2026)

- Black Voltron Cleveland: band to headline Rock Solid Gala on Nov. 7 - cleveland.com – (October 22, 2026)

- What Should Taxpayers Expect From the Orchestras They Support? – Governing Magazine (October 26, 2026)

- Cleveland's Give-Back Bucket List: Ways to Make a Difference – Cleveland Magazine (October 29, 2026)

- Bringing history to light: Canalway seeks artists for 2027 Towpath Trail Lantern Parade – FreshWater Cleveland (November 4, 2026)

3. EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK AND OPERATIONS

Connecting with Community and Building Our Capacity

CAC staff recently presented at or participated in the following:

- 2026 State of the County with County Executive Ronayne: Jill Paulsen, Jake Sinatra
- Arts Vote: Engaging Candidates in Your Community, Asking the Right Questions – Americans for the Arts: Maya Curtis
- Anisfield Wolf Book Award Host Committee: Maya Curtis and Jill Paulsen
- Baldwin Wallace University Arts Innovation Summit: Jill Paulsen, Jake Sinatra, Maya Curtis, Laura Mormino
- Cleveland Leadership Center – Civic Leadership Institute: Dayvon Nichols
- Creative Ohio – Regional Arts Council Directors: Jill Paulsen and Quarterly Advocacy Update and Member Meeting: multiple staff
- Philanthropy Ohio – Racial Equity Cohort: Jill Paulsen
- Public Officials Recognition Breakfast: Jill Paulsen, Maya Curtis, Dayvon Nichols, Eric Hoffman
- Urban Arts Coalition – Grantmaking Connect: Dayvon Nichols, Eric Hoffman; CEO meetings, Jill Paulsen

FINANCIAL UPDATE

2026 YTD

Revenue. Tax revenue through October was $14,686,956 which is $783,434 (5.06%) below forecast year to date. Interest revenue through October was $493,244 which is $36,644 above forecast. The overall expected yield on investments has been better than anticipated when the budget was set last year.

Revenue Trends. Year-over-year wholesale cigarette unit sales are down 11.98% year to date compared with the same period in 2025. The three-year rolling average rate of decline is currently 9.12%.

Expenditures. The majority of CAC's budget is comprised of 2026 grants which were approved in November 2025. These grants are accrued at the beginning of the year and recognized on the balance sheet. Non-grant expenditures through October were $863,893, which is $81,186 below budget, primarily due to the timing of payments.

Investments. As of October 31, CAC's general fund is invested as follows:

- STAR Ohio: $2,626,119 (yield 4.10%)
- RedTree Investment Group: $17,716,457 (yield 4.17%)

Budget Projections at Year End

CAC is projected to end 2026 with tax receipts of approximately $17.7M, an estimated $780K below forecast.

Total expenditures are close to budget for most major categories. As is typical, several organizations were unable to complete their 2026 grant projects and therefore declined their grants. This is reflected in the financials for October.

2027 Budget Preview

At the November 18 meeting, the Board will be asked to approve grants for 2027, which form the foundation of CAC's 2027 budget, with grants making up approximately 92% of annual expenditures.

Total revenue for 2027 is estimated to be $16.9M ($16.1M excise tax, $775K interest). This estimate anticipates declining demand for cigarettes in Cuyahoga County and applies a 9.12% decrease in excise tax revenue, based on the three-year rolling average of the year-over-year decline in cigarette unit sales from 2023-2026 (estimated). Estimated revenue will be trued-up based on tax receipts for November and December once tax receipts for those months are reported.

Expenses are estimated to be $14.1M including all grantmaking and administrative costs. Because tax revenue is expected to keep declining each year, CAC is intentionally budgeting expenses below revenue to build a reserve for future years. This also grows the investment pool, which increases interest income.

2027 Budget (Draft) and 2026 Budget Comparison

		Cuyahoga Arts & Culture 2027 vs. 2026 Budget					
Revenue		**2027 Budget Draft**		**2026 Adopted Budget**		**Change in Budget**	
	Excise Tax	$	16,115,132	$	18,486,600	$	(2,371,468)
	Interest	$	775,000	$	600,000	$	175,000
	Other Revenue	$	25,000	$	25,000	$	-
Total Revenue		**$**	**16,915,132**	**$**	**19,111,600**	**$**	**(2,196,468)**
Expenditures							
	Salaries and Benefits	$	873,392	$	847,413	$	25,979
	Facilities, Supplies, Equipment	$	67,953	$	67,130	$	823
	Professional Fees	$	133,247	$	136,580	$	(3,333)
	Grant Program Management	$	61,000	$	67,600	$	(6,600)
	Grant Awards	$	12,932,300	$	12,907,977	$	24,323
	Depreciation	$	2,700	$	1,300	$	1,400
Total Expenditures		**$**	**14,070,591**	**$**	**14,028,000**	**$**	**42,591**
Net Revenue		**$**	**2,844,540**	**$**	**5,083,600**	**$**	**(2,239,060)**

In December, staff will finalize team objectives for 2027. This work will help us build the remainder of the 2027 budget, which will be presented to the Board for approval on December 16.

Cuyahoga Arts & Culture Through 10/31/2026	Actual YTD	Budget YTD	$ Over/Under Budget	% of Budget
Revenue				
Excise Tax	$ 14,686,956	$ 15,470,390	$ (783,434)	94.94%
Interest	$ 493,244	$ 458,600	$ 34,644	107.55%
Other revenue	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	$ -	100.00%
Total Revenue	$ 15,205,200	$ 15,953,990	$ (748,790)	95.31%
Expenditures				
Salaries and Benefits	$ 681,206	$ 706,407	$ (25,200)	96.4%
Grantmaking Expenses	$ 44,113	$ 63,100	$ (18,987)	69.9%
Grants**	$ 12,829,524	$ 12,907,977	$ (78,453)	99.4%
Facilities, Supplies	$ 48,802	$ 60,389	$ (11,587)	80.8%
Professional Fees	$ 89,771	$ 115,183	$ (25,412)	77.9%
Depreciation	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Total Expenditures	$ 13,693,417	$ 13,853,056	$ (159,639)	98.8%
Net Ordinary Revenue	**$ 1,511,783**	**$ 2,100,934**	**$ (589,151)**	

** Outstanding 2026 grant obligations are on the balance sheet.

Non-grant cash disbursements YTD	$ 863,893	$ 945,079	$ (81,186)

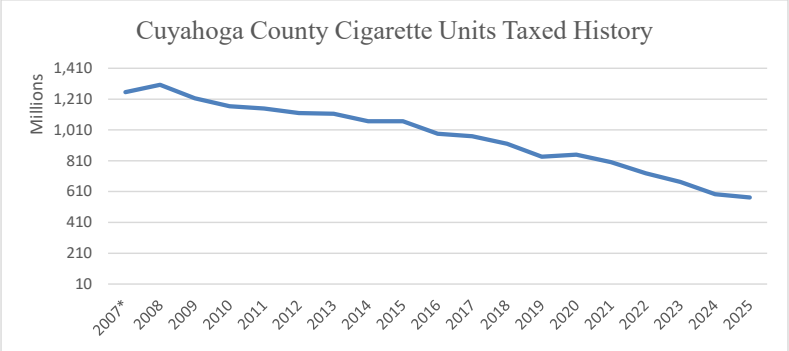
Balance Sheet
Cuyahoga Arts and Culture
As of October 31, 2026

		Total
Assets		
Current Assets		
Bank Accounts		
KeyBank	$	75,810
RedTree (U.S.Bank)	$	17,716,457
Star Ohio	$	2,626,119
Total for Bank Accounts	**$**	**20,418,386**
Accounts Receivable		
11000 Accounts Receivable	$	679,204
Total for Accounts Receivable	**$**	**679,204**
Other Current Assets	$	-
12100 Prepaid Expenses	$	5,660
Total for Current Assets	**$**	**21,103,250**
Fixed Assets	$	4,733
Total for Assets	**$**	**21,107,983**
Liabilities and Equity		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable		
20000 Accounts Payable	$	-
Total for Accounts Payable	**$**	**-**
Other Current Liabilities		
21000 Unearned Revenue	$	-
24000 Payroll Liabilities	$	3,228
24200 GOS Grants	$	1,487,527
24300 PS Grants	$	381,845
24400 SFA	$	25,000
24450 2026 Resident Led	$	26,250
Total for Other Current Liabilities	**$**	**1,923,850**
Total for Current Liabilities	**$**	**1,923,850**
Total for Liabilities	**$**	**1,923,850**
Equity		
32000 General Fund	$	17,672,349
Net Income	$	1,511,783
Total for Equity	**$**	**19,184,133**
Total for Liabilities and Equity	**$**	**21,107,983**

CIGARETTE TAX RECEIPTS FY 25 VS FY 26 YTD					Per Unit Comparison		
Month	2025	2026	2026 $VAR	25/26 % VAR $	Units 2025	Units 2026	25/26 % VAR
JANUARY	$ 779,850.00	$ 1,481,869.23	$ 702,019	90%	51,990,000	42,339,121	-18.6%
FEBRUARY	$ 944,785.71	$ 1,441,677.05	$ 496,891	53%	26,993,877	41,190,773	52.6%
MARCH	$ 1,501,604	$ 1,238,469	$ (263,135)	-18%	42,902,970	35,384,836	-17.5%
APRIL	$ 2,090,165	$ 1,654,714	$ (435,451)	-21%	59,718,999	47,277,529	-20.8%
MAY	$ 1,834,470	$ 1,482,022	$ (352,448)	-19%	52,413,441	42,343,494	-19.2%
JUNE	$ 3,005,148	$ 2,558,615	$ (446,532)	-15%	85,861,361	73,103,296	-14.9%
JULY	$ 580,403	$ 541,348	$ (39,055)	-7%	16,582,956	15,467,098	-6.7%
AUGUST	$ 1,635,885	$ 1,666,919	$ 31,033	2%	46,739,577	47,626,248	1.9%
SEPTEMBER	$ 1,643,755	$ 1,634,857	$ (8,898)	-1%	46,964,432	46,710,207	-0.5%
OCTOBER	$ 1,630,737	$ 986,465	$ (644,273)	-40%	46,592,499	28,184,703	-39.5%
NOVEMBER	$ 1,538,858					-	
DECEMBER	$ 1,783,146					-	
TOTALS	**$ 18,968,808**	**$ 14,686,956**	**$ (959,848)**	**93.9%**	**476,760,113**	**419,627,305**	-11.98%

* There was an adjustment of -$307,261.10 to August tax receipts due to over-reporting by the Dept of Taxation for the month. The tax receipts above are adjusted to reflect correct tax amount for each month.

Historical Unit Sales of Cigarettes for Cuyahoga County				
Year	Actual	Units	Annual Change	3 year average
2007	$ 18,815,996	1254399736.667		
2008	$ 19,540,480	1302698647.333	3.85%	
2009	$ 18,222,183	1214812200.000	-6.75%	
2010	$ 17,456,610	1163773972.000	-4.20%	
2011	$ 17,241,240	1149415970.000	-1.23%	-4.06%
2012	$ 16,791,300	1119420000.000	-2.61%	-2.68%
2013	$ 16,719,606	1114640400.000	-0.43%	-1.42%
2014	$ 15,984,716	1065647718.667	-4.40%	-2.48%
2015	$ 15,986,647	1065776470.667	0.01%	-1.60%
2016	$ 14,767,137	984475778.667	-7.63%	-4.00%
2017	$ 14,533,031	968868731.333	-1.59%	-3.07%
2018	$ 13,799,929	919995233.934	-5.04%	-4.75%
2019	$ 12,552,790	836852634.667	-9.04%	-5.22%
2020	$ 12,732,464	848830952.667	1.43%	-4.22%
2021	$ 12,009,236	800615733.333	-5.68%	-4.43%
2022	$ 10,931,382	728758800.000	-8.98%	-4.41%
2023	$ 10,083,086	672205751.897	-7.76%	-7.47%
2024	$ 8,889,512	592634131.203	-11.84%	-9.52%
2025	$ 18,968,808	571674515.375	-3.54%	-7.71%
2026YTD	$ 14,686,956	419627305.376	-11.98%	-9.12%



CUYAHOGA ARTS & CULTURE
Public funding. Strong nonprofits.

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 18, 2026
To: CAC Board of Trustees
From: CAC Staff
Re: 2027 Grants: General Operating Support & Project Support

SUMMARY
For 2027, Cuyahoga Arts & Culture recommends **310 grants totaling $12,382,300**, including:

- 150 General Operating Support grants totaling $11,426,500
- 160 Project Support grants totaling $955,800

BOARD ACTION
Approve 2027 grant amounts and applicable grant panel scores.

BACKGROUND

Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC) is Cuyahoga County's largest dedicated source of public funding for nonprofit arts and culture organizations. Through equitable grantmaking, CAC provides consistent support to organizations of all sizes through its two core programs, General Operating Support and Project Support, funded by the current tax levy through January 2035.

The 2027 grant cycle builds on updates implemented in 2026 and CAC's grantmaking commitments adopted by the Board in 2025. CAC will continue to prioritize: (1) reliable operating support funding; (2) efficient and effective grantmaking; (3) transparency around its purpose, authority, and decision-making; (4) public benefit; and (5) strong relationships with grant recipients through ongoing listening and evaluation.

The 2027 General Operating Support program provides unrestricted, two-year operating support to organizations whose primary mission is arts and culture and that have successfully completed two CAC grants. Project Support grants fund specific projects for organizations new to CAC and/or those that incorporate arts and culture programming into a broader mission. Program requirements, eligibility criteria, application processes, and grant determination methods are outlined in the grant guidelines approved by the Board in April 2026.

APPLICATION PROCESS & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

CAC welcomed new and returning applicants who met eligibility criteria to the 2027 Project Support grant program. General Operating Support did not accept new applicants in 2026; current recipients are entering the second year of a two-year grant commitment in 2027.

First-time applicants must apply through the Project Support grant program. This year, 196 nonprofits submitted applications, of which 173 were eligible to apply for funding. These include:

2026 Eligible Grant Applicant Summary	
Total Applicants	173
Returning Applicants	156 (90%)
New Applicants	17 (10%)

From April to June, staff held a **variety of technical assistance opportunities, workshops (virtual and in-person), and other materials** to help applicants succeed with their 2027 application. This summer, those offerings included an application workshop and virtual application "office hours" for applicants to meet one-on-one with CAC staff to address their organizations' application and specific questions. In all, nearly **250 grantees and prospective applicants participated** in these sessions. Staff also utilized emails and personal phone calls regarding technical assistance and reminders to help applicants and grantees navigate our process with ease.

APPLICATION REVIEW

The funding criteria for CAC grants are **public benefit**, **artistic and cultural vibrancy**, and **organizational capacity**. To reflect CAC's role as a public funder–committed to using public dollars to benefit the public–CAC weighs public benefit more heavily than the other funding criteria. Applicants are educated on the criteria through the grant guidelines and technical assistance, and Project Support panelists are trained to review applications using the criteria.

Thirty-six (36) **qualified arts and culture professionals served as panelists for the 2027 Project Support grant panel process.** See the Panelist Memo in this packet for details. Panelists reviewed and scored each application in accordance with the funding criteria in the 2027 grant guidelines. All Project Support applicants will receive their scores and written comments from panelists, and they will be published on our website. The written feedback ensures a transparent and consistent review process and serves as an educational tool for current and future applicants.

GRANT RECOMMENDATIONS

For 2026-27 General Operating Support grants, all current grantees are recommended for a second year of level grant funding. Grant recipients demonstrate their continued eligibility and will set goals based on CAC's funding criteria to report on progress during the grant period. For 2027 Project Support grants, panelists reviewed each application against the funding criteria and provided a score using the scoring framework, as outlined in the guidelines. Project Support grants are calculated using the following criteria:

- Grant amounts are calculated based on the applicant's request amount, panel score, and CAC's available funds.

- **Maximum grant request amounts are determined by an organization's CAC grant history and budget size (as determined by an applicant's IRS 990 filing).**
    - First-time grantees, organizations completing IRS Form 990-N, and organizations that have budgets of $50,000 or less in the most recently completed fiscal year are eligible for up to $5,000.

    - The maximum grant for other organizations is $7,500.

- Panel scores (on a 1-10 scale) are used to determine grant amounts. Applicants must receive an average score above 6.0 out of 10 to be recommended for funding. Applicants with higher scores receive a higher percentage of their grant request amount.

BOARD ACTION

At the November 18 meeting, CAC's Board of Trustees will vote on recommended 2027 grants and panel scores. **Combined, this slate is 310 grants totaling $12,382,300 for the 2027 grant cycle.**

See Appendix 1 for a list of all applicants' scores and recommended grant amounts. See Appendix 2 for a list of the organizations that will not be recommended for funding.

APPENDIX 1: Applicants Recommended for Funding (Grant Amounts and Scores, if applicable)

2027 General Operating Support

Organization	Grant Amount
Abrepaso Flamenco	$ 6,000
Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra	$ 128,500
Aradhana Committee	$ 20,000
Art House	$ 38,308
Art of Me Productions	$ 18,500
Art Therapy Studio	$ 45,192
Artful	$ 15,000
Artists Archives of the Western Reserve	$ 25,863
Arts Impact	$ 51,896
Arts Without Borders	$ 5,000
Assembly for the Arts	$ 52,769
Baseball Heritage Museum	$ 20,000
Bay Village Community Band	$ 5,000
BAYarts	$ 54,077
Beck Center for the Arts	$ 149,846
Berea Arts Fest	$ 6,000
BlueWater Chamber Orchestra	$ 18,500
BorderLight	$ 36,953
Brite Cleveland	$ 20,000
Broadway School of Music and the Arts	$ 32,867
Carolyn L. Farrell Foundation	$ 16,500
Cassidy Theatre Inc.	$ 20,000
Center for Arts-Inspired Learning	$ 91,979
Chagrin Documentary Film Festival	$ 37,916
Chagrin Valley Little Theatre	$ 30,896
ChamberFest Cleveland	$ 33,337
Children's Museum of Cleveland	$ 110,088
Choral Arts Cleveland	$ 5,000
City Ballet of Cleveland	$ 10,000
CityMusic Cleveland	$ 29,809
Cleveland Arts Prize	$ 18,500
Cleveland Association of Black Storytellers	$ 5,000
Cleveland Ballet	$ 20,000
Cleveland Botanical Garden	$ 196,311
Cleveland Chamber Choir	$ 10,000

Cleveland Chamber Collective	$	5,000
Cleveland Chamber Music Society	$	16,500
Cleveland Chamber Symphony	$	5,000
Cleveland Classical Guitar Society	$	41,111
Cleveland Cultural Gardens	$	20,000
Cleveland Dance Project Company	$	5,000
Cleveland Institute of Art	$	481,419
Cleveland Institute of Music	$	513,690
Cleveland International Film Festival	$	112,830
Cleveland Jazz Orchestra	$	26,246
Cleveland Museum of Natural History	$	463,937
Cleveland Play House	$	340,598
Cleveland Pops Orchestra	$	67,555
Cleveland Pride Band	$	5,000
Cleveland Print Room	$	44,158
Cleveland Public Theatre	$	107,347
Cleveland Restoration Society	$	107,952
Cleveland Rocks: Past Present and Future	$	18,500
Cleveland Silent Film Festival and Colloquium	$	5,000
Collective Arts Network	$	22,922
CollectivExpress	$	7,500
Comité Mexicano	$	5,000
Contemporary Youth Orchestra	$	25,620
convergence-continuum	$	15,000
Dance Evert	$	5,000
DANCECleveland	$	42,683
Developing Connections Northeast Ohio	$	18,500
Djapo Cultural Arts Institute	$	18,500
Doan Brook Watershed Partnership	$	40,346
Dobama Theatre	$	52,538
DuffyLit	$	12,500
Dunham Tavern Museum & Gardens	$	16,500
Encore Chamber Music Institute	$	20,000
Ensemble Theatre	$	15,000
Foluke Cultural Arts	$	20,000
Friends of the McGaffin Carillon	$	6,000
Good Company A Vocal Ensemble	$	5,000
Graffiti HeArt Corporation	$	5,000
Great Lakes Science Center	$	254,194
Great Lakes Theater	$	179,454
Greater Cleveland Urban Film Festival	$	29,962

Heights Arts	$	27,546
Heights Youth Theatre	$	12,500
ICA - Art Conservation	$	58,201
Ideastream Public Media	$	615,630
In Harmony Therapeutic Services	$	12,500
Ingenuity	$	50,706
Inlet Dance Theatre	$	34,973
International Women's Air & Space Museum	$	18,500
Italian Cultural Garden	$	5,000
Julia De Burgos Cultural Arts Center	$	30,140
Kaboom Collective	$	16,500
Karamu House	$	126,780
Kulture Kids	$	15,000
Lake Erie Ink	$	34,134
Lake Erie Nature & Science Center	$	81,160
Lakewood Young Filmmakers Academy	$	5,000
LAND studio	$	174,659
LatinUs Theater Company	$	18,500
Les Délices	$	20,000
Literary Cleveland	$	37,860
Little Lumpy's Center for Educational Initiatives	$	7,500
Local 4 Music Fund	$	18,500
Maelstrom Collaborative Arts	$	7,500
Maltz Museum	$	130,705
Men of Independence	$	5,000
Mojuba! Dance Collective	$	10,000
Morgan Arts of Papermaking and Educational Foundation	$	39,628
Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland	$	115,130
Music and Art at Trinity Cathedral	$	6,000
Musical Theater Project	$	35,349
Musical Upcoming Stars in the Classics	$	18,500
Naach Di Cleveland	$	5,000
Nature Center at Shaker Lakes	$	87,767
Near West Theatre	$	52,802
North Coast Men's Chorus	$	28,221
Oh Sew Powerful	$	5,000
Ohio Contemporary Ballet	$	42,915
Parma Area Fine Arts Council	$	5,000
Piano Cleveland	$	79,255
Playhouse Square	$	1,000,000
Praxis Fiber Workshop	$	20,000

Radio on the Lake Theatre	$	6,000
Rainey Institute	$	90,574
Refresh Collective	$	35,696
Renovare Music	$	16,500
Roberto Ocasio Foundation	$	5,000
Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum	$	773,736
Roots of American Music	$	25,560
Sankofa	$	5,000
Sculpture Center	$	20,730
Shaker Historical Society	$	16,500
Singing Angels	$	15,000
Slovenian Museum and Archives	$	6,000
SPACES	$	52,880
STV Bavaria	$	7,500
Suburban Symphony Orchestra	$	6,000
Talespinner Children's Theatre	$	20,000
The Cleveland Museum of Art	$	957,801
The Cleveland Opera	$	10,000
The Cleveland Orchestra	$	1,000,000
The Dancing Wheels Company & School	$	44,189
The Movement Project	$	10,000
The Music Settlement	$	192,929
The MVMT Dance Co.	$	15,000
Trobár Medieval	$	5,000
Ukrainian Cultural Arts Association of Greater Cleveland	$	6,000
Ukrainian Museum Archives	$	27,841
Upcycle Parts Shop	$	18,500
Valley Art Center	$	41,984
Waterloo Arts	$	18,500
Western Reserve Chorale	$	7,500
Western Reserve Historical Society	$	224,188
Writers in Residence	$	12,500
Zygote Press, Inc.	$	27,162

2027 Project Support

** Indicates a first-time grant recipient*

Note: Scores range from 1-10. A score greater than 6.0 out of 10 is required to be eligible for funding. Applicants with higher scores receive a higher percentage of their grant request amount.

Applicant	Panel Score	Grant Amount
10K Movement	9.00	$ 7,500
Academy For Dramatic Arts*	9.00	$ 5,000
Achievement Centers for Children	8.20	$ 6,400
America Asian Pacific Islander Organization	6.60	$ 4,500
America SCORES Cleveland	8.20	$ 7,500
American Hungarian Friends of Scouting	8.60	$ 7,500
American Lebanese Community Council*	6.50	$ 3,600
American Slovenian Polka Foundation	7.20	$ 6,750
Arts Renaissance Tremont	8.80	$ 5,000
Association of African American Cultural Garden	7.80	$ 4,500
Babel Box Theater	7.40	$ 4,500
Balance Point Studios*	7.75	$ 4,500
Baldwin Wallace University	8.50	$ 7,500
Bellaire Puritas Development Corporation	8.00	$ 7,500
BigHearted Blooms	7.75	$ 6,750
Brecksville Theatre	7.60	$ 6,750
Broadview Brecksville Heights Community Chorus	9.20	$ 5,000
Brooklyn Heights Service Clubs	7.75	$ 4,500
Building Bridges Murals	8.75	$ 5,000
Building Heights	8.50	$ 7,500
Canalway Partners	8.50	$ 7,500
Catholic Charities Diocese of Cleveland	8.00	$ 7,500
Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District	7.20	$ 6,750
Center for Employment Opportunities	8.40	$ 4,950
Cesear's Forum	6.60	$ 4,500
City Club of Cleveland	8.40	$ 7,500
Cleveland Arts Education Consortium	8.25	$ 7,500
Cleveland Asian Festival Inc*	7.75	$ 4,500
Cleveland Clinic Foundation	8.60	$ 7,500
Cleveland Comedy Festival	7.50	$ 3,150
Cleveland Composers Guild	7.00	$ 4,500
Cleveland Contemporary Chinese Culture Association	7.25	$ 6,750
Cleveland Grays Armory Museum	6.25	$ 4,215
Cleveland Inner City Ballet	7.75	$ 4,500

Cleveland Leadership Center	8.75	$ 7,500
Cleveland Neighborhood Progress	9.00	$ 7,500
Cleveland Rape Crisis Center	9.00	$ 7,500
Cleveland Repertory Orchestra	7.50	$ 4,500
Cleveland Shakespeare Festival	7.00	$ 4,500
Cleveland TOPS Swingband	7.25	$ 4,500
Cleveland Treatment Center	6.75	$ 6,750
Cleveland Uncommon Sound Project	7.50	$ 4,500
Cleveland Winds	8.75	$ 5,000
Cleveland Women's Orchestra	8.50	$ 7,500
Cleveland Youth Wind Symphony*	6.67	$ 4,500
Club Dominicano De Cleveland	8.50	$ 5,000
Colors+ Youth Center	9.00	$ 7,500
Community Cup Classic Foundation	7.75	$ 4,500
Community Life Collaborative	8.25	$ 7,500
Connecting for Kids	8.25	$ 7,500
Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad	7.25	$ 6,750
Deutscher Musik Verein	6.50	$ 2,070
DOC Studios*	7.50	$ 4,500
Downtown Cleveland Alliance	8.00	$ 3,000
Edward E. Parker Museum of Art	6.25	$ 3,150
Empowering Epilepsy	8.25	$ 7,500
Environmental Health Watch	8.75	$ 7,500
Esperanza	8.75	$ 7,500
Euclid Symphony Orchestra	7.50	$ 4,500
Far West Center	8.75	$ 7,500
Fashion Talks Foundation	8.25	$ 7,500
Federation of India Community Association	6.25	$ 4,500
Food Strong	8.00	$ 7,500
Fostering Hope	9.25	$ 7,500
From Me 2 U, Inc	6.20	$ 4,500
Fryderyk Chopin Institute Of Ohio*	8.20	$ 5,000
FutureHeights	8.50	$ 7,500
Gardening in the District	8.75	$ 4,900
German Central Foundation	8.25	$ 7,500
Getting To We*	7.75	$ 4,500
Golden Ciphers Youth Development & Cultural Arts Center	7.20	$ 6,750
Greater Cleveland Film Commission	7.40	$ 6,750
Greater Cleveland Neighborhood Centers Association	8.20	$ 7,500
Harvard Community Services Center	9.50	$ 7,500
Haus of Transcendent	6.25	$ 6,750

Heights Chamber Orchestra	7.50	$ 4,500
Henry Johnson Center	8.50	$ 7,500
Historic Gateway Neighborhood Corporation	7.75	$ 6,750
Ifilm Inc*	9.00	$ 5,000
India Fest USA	6.60	$ 4,500
InMotion	8.50	$ 7,500
International Community Council-Worldwide Intercultural Network (ICC-WIN)	7.00	$ 4,500
Jennings Center for Older Adults	7.25	$ 6,750
Jewish Family Service Association of Cleveland Ohio	8.75	$ 7,500
Jewish Federation of Cleveland	6.20	$ 6,750
Jones Road Family Development Corporation	7.75	$ 6,750
Lake View Cemetery Foundation	8.75	$ 7,500
LakewoodAlive	8.75	$ 5,000
Larchmere PorchFest	8.00	$ 5,000
LGBT Community Center Greater Cleveland	9.00	$ 7,500
Linking Employment, Abilities & Potential	8.50	$ 5,000
LYLESART	7.75	$ 4,500
M C Chatman Center For Humanitarian Services*	7.80	$ 4,500
Mandel Jewish Community Center of Cleveland	7.60	$ 6,750
Mayfield Township Historical Society*	6.50	$ 1,350
Metro West Community Development Organization	7.25	$ 6,750
MidTown Cleveland	7.00	$ 4,500
Museum of Creative Human Art	7.25	$ 4,500
NAMI Greater Cleveland	7.80	$ 6,750
New Avenues to Independence	9.00	$ 7,500
New City Cleveland*	6.80	$ 4,500
No Exit	7.80	$ 4,500
No Surf House	7.75	$ 6,750
North East Ohio Bengali Association*	9.00	$ 5,000
North Pointe Ballet	8.40	$ 7,500
North Union Farmers Market	8.75	$ 7,500
Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless	9.25	$ 5,000
Northeast Ohio Hispanic Center for Economic Development	8.00	$ 7,500
Northeast Ohio Musical Heritage Association	7.60	$ 4,500
NuPoint Community Development Corporation	8.20	$ 7,500
OCA Greater Cleveland	6.40	$ 4,500
Ohio City Inc	7.00	$ 6,750
Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation	8.20	$ 7,290
One South Euclid	8.40	$ 7,500
Open Doors Academy	7.80	$ 6,750

Open Threads*	8.75	$ 5,000
Open Tone Music	9.00	$ 7,500
Pakistani Cultural Garden	7.00	$ 4,500
PALS for Healing	9.00	$ 7,500
Parma Symphony Orchestra	6.25	$ 4,500
Polish Village Parma	7.00	$ 4,500
Reaching Heights	7.80	$ 6,750
Resonance Project*	6.40	$ 4,500
RhythmiCLE Sound Tap Company	7.40	$ 4,500
Rising Well	8.60	$ 7,500
RollinBuckeyez Foundation	6.75	$ 4,500
Rose Centers for Aging Well	8.40	$ 7,500
Schmooze Ohio	6.50	$ 4,500
Seat of the Pants	8.75	$ 7,500
Sew4Service	7.80	$ 6,750
Shaker Arts Council	7.80	$ 4,500
SHED Projects	7.40	$ 4,500
Shore Cultural Centre	8.25	$ 5,000
Smart Development	8.80	$ 7,500
SOS: Strengthening Our Students	7.20	$ 6,750
Sparrows Fortune*	8.75	$ 5,000
Stella Maris	9.00	$ 4,470
Tastemakers United*	7.00	$ 4,500
Tender Hearts Crusades	8.00	$ 7,500
The Foundry	6.40	$ 6,750
The Gathering Place	7.40	$ 6,750
The Land	8.60	$ 7,500
The Meeting Place Learning Center	6.80	$ 6,750
The Singers' Club of Cleveland	6.80	$ 4,500
Thea Bowman Center	8.40	$ 7,500
Tremont West Development Corporation	10.00	$ 7,500
University Circle Inc.	9.60	$ 7,500
UpStage Players	8.40	$ 5,000
Ursuline College	7.80	$ 6,750
VIVA Bavaria	8.40	$ 7,500
West Park Kamm's Neighborhood Development	9.20	$ 6,505
West Shore Chorale	9.00	$ 5,000
West Side Catholic Center	9.20	$ 5,000
West Side Community House	8.80	$ 7,500
Western Reserve Land Conservancy	8.00	$ 7,500
Windsong, Cleveland's Feminist Chorus	9.60	$ 5,000

Women in Film and TV Ohio	8.50	$ 5,000
Women in History	7.80	$ 4,500
YMCA of Greater Cleveland	9.00	$ 7,500
Youth Challenge	8.00	$ 7,500

APPENDIX 2: Applicants Not Recommended for Funding

Note: Scores range from 1-10. A score greater than 6.0 out of 10 is required to be eligible for funding.

2027 Project Support

Organization	**Score**
Association of Asian Indian Women in Ohio	5.00
Beachwood Arts Council	6.00
Bedford Historical Society	4.75
Cleveland Philharmonic Orchestra	5.50
Darl Center for the Arts	5.00
East Cleveland Farmers' Market Preservation Society	2.75
Little Italy Redevelopment Corporation	5.40
Solon Community Band Inc	6.00
Stellar Acrobatic Dance Academy	6.00
Tavern Coffee House Inc	6.00
The Harvard Square Center	4.20
Westlake Chinese School	5.00
Woodland Cemetery Foundation of Cleveland	4.60

CUYAHOGA ARTS & CULTURE
Public funding. Strong nonprofits.

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 18, 2026
To: CAC Board of Trustees
From: CAC Staff
Re: 2027 Panelist Recruitment and Roster

SUMMARY
In September 2026, a group of 36 arts and cultural experts from across the nation served as panelists who reviewed and scored applications for CAC's 2027 Project Support (PS) grant program. No action is required.

Background
Panelists play a pivotal role in CAC's grantmaking process, serving as the independent group of outside experts that review and evaluate applications. Staff work year-round to recruit and train a diverse and reputable roster of panelists from across the nation. Their brief biographies are on the following pages.

Panelist Selection
Staff identified, recruited, and vetted candidates through personalized emails, references, and interviews to ensure alignment with CAC's funding criteria and process. CAC also accepts panelist nominations through an open call on our website. This year, connections made through CAC's participation in the Urban Arts Coalition were particularly helpful in recruiting new panelists.

This process resulted in a slate of respected regional and national leaders thoughtfully selected and qualified to evaluate grant applications, including a mix of returning (15) and new (21) panelists. The panelist pool reflected a range of backgrounds and lived experiences:

- **Race and/or Ethnicity:** Panelists identified as White or European American (41%), Black or African American (28%), Hispanic or Latino/a/x (17%), Multiracial (8%), and Asian or Asian American (3%); (3%) did not disclose.

- **Age:** Panelists ranged in age, including 31-40 (33%), 25-30 (25%), 41-50 (17%), 51-60 (11%), 61-70 (8%), and under 25 (6%).

- **Gender:** Panelists identified as female (61%), male (31%), or another gender identity (8%).

- **Disability Status:** Panelists reported living with a disability (19%), not living with a disability (78%), or not disclosing (3%).

Panel Review Process
Panelists received all application materials and access to our online system in September. Every panelist participated in a training webinar and was provided with a handbook to ensure all were prepared to serve. Panelists scored each application in accordance with the funding criteria in the 2027 grant guidelines. All Project Support applications were reviewed with written scores and comments, which will be posted on CAC's website.

The panelist roster was made available to the public following the conclusion of panel reviews: Project Support Panel Guide.

Panelist Feedback
All panelists completed a survey following the close of panel. Below is some of the feedback offered about CAC's process that we will use to inform and improve our process.

In all, every panelist (100% of respondents) felt that CAC set clear expectations about their role and responsibilities as panelists, and that CAC was clear in explaining and defining CAC's funding criteria. Comments include:

> *"I appreciate the breadth of organizations that are funded through CAC and use that as an example with my own board."*
>
> *"We are looking into the way we craft application questions, using CAC as a model."*
>
> *"The whole process as a panelist was very smooth, clear, and detailed. So much so that we may borrow some ideas for our panel process!"*
>
> *"I really appreciate your reviewer training and that you interview each new reviewer candidate. During the training, you discussed each criterion separately and in a clear way."*

**denotes previous service as a Cuyahoga Arts & Culture panelist*



Nur Abdalla, she/her
Memphis, TN

Nur Abdalla has worked at the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis and several museums across Memphis including the National Civil Rights Museum. Ms. Abdalla's work has been recognized by many entities, including the American Association of State and Local History, the Memphis Flyer, and Tennessee Association of Museums. She holds two B.A's in Anthropology and Japanese, and a M.A. in Applied Anthropology and Museum Studies Certificate from the University of Memphis. In her free time, Ms. Abdalla enjoys volunteering to support local impact grants and membership base with the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, reading fantasy, watching travel food vlogs and going on mini-adventures with her two children.



***Brittany Alston, she/her**
Charleston, SC

Brittany is a self-taught photographer/visual artist, and also has background experiences with financial analyst, case management, and paralegal/legal work. She has served as an art grants panelist before and has worked with multiple galleries and museums and has assisted with multiple film festivals. Furthermore, she has experience comprehending contracts and analyzing the legalities that are associated with being an artist such as copyright laws, licensing procedures, and intellectual properties agreements.



***Melissa Astin, she/her**
Chattanooga, TN

Melissa Astin, Director of Grants and Community Engagement, joined ArtsBuild in April 2022 and has called Chattanooga home for more than a decade. Prior to her role at ArtsBuild, she served for six years as the Director of Community Outreach & Engagement at Crabtree Farms and previously worked with the City of Chattanooga's Public Art division. Melissa is passionate about strengthening communities through creative expression and is proud to support ArtsBuild's mission of building stronger communities through the arts. As Director of Grants and Community Engagement, she oversees all ArtsBuild grantmaking programs and serves Chattanooga-Hamilton County's arts community with a focus on collaborative partnerships, needs-based initiatives, and expanding access to arts programming in underserved areas.



Charlie Bosco, he/him
St. Louis, MO

Charlie Bosco joined the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis in August 2023. He supports grantmaking under the ARPA for the Arts Program and coordinates programming for grantees at the City Foundry. Charlie graduated in 2021 with a BFA in Studio Art and a minor in American Cultural Studies from Washington University in St. Louis. He is a proud recipient of the Jeffrey Frank Wacks Scholarship in 2021 and a RAC Artist Support Grant in 2023. His current work focuses on land use and claims of ownership; you can find his work in exhibits locally and regionally. Charlie has previously worked at Washington University in St. Louis, Third Degree Glass Gallery, and Laumeier Sculpture Park.



***Rem Cabrera, he/him**
Kalamazoo, MI

Rem Cabrera resides in Kalamazoo, MI and is the Grants and Inclusion Manager for The Gilmore & Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. Rem has held previous roles at The City Theatre Miami, Chicago Humanities, the Miami-Dade Department of Cultural Affairs. Rem earned an MA in creative writing from Florida International university and a BA from Barry University.



Brian Carter, he/him
Mercer Island, WA

Brian J. Carter is the Executive Director of 4Culture, King County's arts and culture organization. Brian creates and maintains a clear vision for the organization, overseeing the creation and implementation of the programs that advance 4Culture's work in King County. Brian was born and raised in Yakima, WA, and went on to attend Stanford University, where he graduated with high honors. Brian went on to earn a Master's Degree in Museology from the University of Washington. Prior to 4Culture, Brian served as the Director of Interpretation for the Burke Museum of Natural History & Culture; as Museum Director at the Oregon Historical Society; and as a founding staff member of the Northwest African American Museum, where he was the Deputy Director/Head Curator. He is the Past President of the Board of the Association of African American Museums, a member of the American Alliance of Museum's Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Task Force.



***Karla Centeno, she/her**
San Diego, CA

Karla Centeno was born and raised in San Diego, CA. Throughout her career, she has sought experiences that allow people to see the world as it is while imagining what it could be. Karla has worked in the arts in different capacities. Recently, she was the Education Director for Working Assumptions, a nonprofit that explores the give-and-take of family and caregiving through learning programs, grants, publications, and projects. She was also the Director of Education & Engagement at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD). In this role, she provided strategic leadership, both internal and external, to develop the Museum's educational initiatives, public programs, and community engagement. She is also Co-founder of allofus, an artist-run collective and online gallery.



Ben Cook, he/him
Toledo, OH

Ben Cook is the Public Art Manager at The Arts Commission, managing the City of Toledo's collection of public art and serving as a project manager for new public art projects. He holds degrees in architecture from Bowling Green State University and the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and blends dual experience in the architecture and art worlds to approach projects with a high degree of technical knowledge and conceptual sensibility. He has previously taught in the graduate architecture program at Cranbrook, and has completed many site-specific installations and curatorial projects.



Lisa Cunningham, she/her
Pittsburgh, PA

Lisa Cunningham is the Director of Marketing and Communications at the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council, where she leads the organization's communications, marketing, and audience engagement strategies. Before joining the Arts Council in 2023, she spent many years at Pittsburgh City Paper, serving as both Editor in Chief and Art Director. Across her career, she has focused on supporting artists, amplifying community voices, and creating accessible, engaging storytelling. She earned a degree in journalism and communications from Point Park University.



Micah Deer, he/him
Charlotte, NC

Micah Deer has been an arts administrator for the last 12 years across at Children's Theatre of Charlotte, Blumenthal Arts (Charlotte's PAC), and now at the Arts & Science Council. Before that, he received his BA in Language Arts Education at Ohio Northern University and MAED from Michigan State University.



***Claudia Gage, she/her**
Edgewater, CO

Claudia holds a BA in Theater Studies from Youngstown State and a MA in Arts Administration-MPA in Nonprofit Management from Indiana University. She currently works with Nave Strategies, a consulting firm specializing in driving revenue and strategic support for small- to mid-sized arts organizations. She is also a Founder of Mission: #LoveMusic, a nonprofit organization dedicated to continuing the legacy of the late Dr. Stephen L. Gage through the support of live music in the Mahoning Valley and beyond. In addition, she is a freelance photographer and live events coordinator. Previously, she served as a board member and development committee chair for Windfall Dancers in Bloomington, IN.



Wesley Gentile, he/him
Fort Worth, TX

Wesley Gentle, CFRE, serves as Executive Director and President for Arts Fort Worth, where he leads the teams responsible for the nonprofit organization's arts grants, public art services, research and advocacy efforts. He previously led advancement for Arts Fort Worth and has held fundraising positions at the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra and the Fort Worth Opera. He occasionally performs as a classically trained singer, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music from Texas Christian University (TCU) and a Master of Music degree in opera performance from the Boston Conservatory. Gentle is a past-president of the Association of Fundraising Professionals Fort Worth Metro Chapter, a board member with Texans for the Arts and Visit Fort Worth, a member of the board of visitors for Brite Divinity School and TCU College of Fine Arts (advisory), and an active member of the Rotary Club of Fort Worth.



Yadira Gonzalez, she/her/ella
Dallas, TX

Yadira Gonzalez is a passionate advocate for arts education, social equity, and accessibility. With a background in theatre, arts non-profits and over 15 years of experience in education, Yadira has dedicated her career to empowering students and communities through the transformative power of the arts. As a consultant, she brings expertise in theatre education, curriculum development, and grant management, helping organizations create inclusive and impactful programs that foster creativity, empower voices, and promote intergenerational equality. Yadira's unwavering commitment to making the arts accessible to all fuels her drive to create positive change in the educational landscape. As a first-generation Mexican American, Yadira has focused on amplifying diverse voices and empowering students by working diligently as an educator, director, curriculum writer, and teacher mentor. Currently, Yadira is the Programs Associate at TACA, specializing in grants and programming for arts non-profits in Dallas.



***Michael Greer, he/him**
Seattle, WA

Michael Greer is a seasoned cross-sector leader with decades of experience in for-profit and nonprofit organizations across the United States, India, and China. As President and CEO of ArtsFund—Washington State's largest independent, unrestricted arts and culture funder—Michael leverages his diverse experience to create practical and inspiring community solutions through the arts. His professional background spans financial services, manufacturing, performing arts, arts administration, and philanthropy. He serves on several boards, including United Way of King County and the Puget Sound Regional Council, among others.



Korie Griggs, she/her
Ingalls, IN

Korie Griggs, artist and Indy Arts Council Program Manager, works as an artist, author, cultural strategist and community builder. Korie is a published author, Creative Renewal Arts Fellow and Power Plant Grant recipient. Rooted in both artistry and arts administration, her work bridges vision and execution; supporting programs that empower artists, strengthen community and celebrate the transformative power of the arts.



Tess Healy, she/her
Toledo, OH

Tess Healy is the Events Manager at The Arts Commission of Greater Toledo. Tess first got involved with The Arts Commission in 2021 helping with the Art Loop and Momentum Festival. She graduated from Bowling Green State University in 2017 with a BFA in Digital Arts. She has been a freelance digital artist for four years and worked in glass studios in Toledo for six years before joining The Arts Commission. She is passionate about her crafts and if she's not making her own work she's assisting others in making theirs.



Jeannie Howe, she/her
Baltimore, MD

Jeannie L. Howe is the Executive Director of the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance (GBCA), a regional, membership organization that was organized by artists and cultural organizations to unify, nurture and promote the cultural sector in Baltimore and its five surrounding counties. Under her leadership, GBCA has transformed and expanded its services to the cultural community. Howe was founder and president of BayCliff Associates and provided management and fundraising consultation for nonprofit clients. Her career has included leadership positions with a range of nonprofit organizations including in theatre, adult literacy, and medicine. Howe has held many volunteer positions including her current service on the Leadership and Baltimore National Heritage Areas Boards of Directors. She has a M.A. in Theatre from Miami University of Ohio and a B.A. in Theatre from St. Mary's College of Maryland. In 2014 and 2018, the Daily Record recognized her as one of Maryland's Top 100 Women.

Shantras Lakes is a senior public fund executive and Certified Public Manager with more than three decades of expertise in strategic operations, grant governance, and public sector resource allocation. She manages a multi-



Shantras Lakes, she/her
Atlanta, GA

million dollar public funding portfolio, focusing on compliance, performance metrics, and equitable community impact. As an experienced grant reviewer, Shantras has adjudicated funding applications across all levels of governance and philanthropy, serving on panels for the U.S. Department of Labor, the MAP Fund, the Georgia Council for the Arts, and the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs. She leverages an MBA and deep regulatory insight to ensure fiscal integrity and impact in the distribution of public and private funds.



***Jo-ann Lawrence, she/her**
Stone Mountain, GA

Jo-ann Lawrence is a non-profit professional with experience in the theatre, ballet, and museums as well as healthcare, child-welfare, early education, and disability services. Her expertise lies in operating non-profits. Specifically, program creation/management, strategic planning, board management, grant writing, grants training, grant making, and annual funds. A few examples of Jo-ann's past hands on work are managing two historic theatres, running a city-wide arts education program in Chicago, managing a health system grant making program and creating programming for youth in foster care. Lawrence graduated from Butler University with a B.S. in Arts Administration and Columbia College Chicago with a M.A. in Performing Arts Management. Jo-ann recently formed Ascension Nonprofit Development, LLC to bring all of her interests and efforts under one umbrella.



***Dana Manyothane, she/her**
Denver, CO

A Denver native, Dana Manyothane served as Executive Director of the Colorado Black Arts Festival before joining the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) as a Program Officer in 2017. She is a passionate advocate for the visual and performing arts, as well as equity and inclusion initiatives. Dana has served on the boards and advisory committees of several Denver metro-area nonprofit organizations, including the African Leadership Group and the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts (CBCA). She currently chairs CBCA's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Committee. A graduate of the University of Colorado Boulder, Dana is married and the proud mother of four adult children. An avid supporter and consumer of the arts and cultural experiences, she enjoys painting terra cotta pots, reading, and roller skating. Dana is also a proud member of the Denver Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., where she serves on several committees and leads the International Awareness and Involvement Committee.



Aviance Obie, she/her
Arlington, VA

Aviance Obie is a social impact professional with experience in philanthropy spanning across multiple sectors: arts, education, civic engagement, and campaigns. She has worked across organizations of all sizes, from grassroots nonprofits to major foundations and specializes in nonprofit operations, database integrity, administration, and fundraising. Aviance's focus is helping nonprofits and funders use data and strong operations to drive meaningful impact.



***Alicia Olivo, they/them**
Pasadena, TX

Alicia Olivo is a theatremaker, arts manager, archives enthusiast, and weather enjoyer from Texas with roots in Tamaulipas. As an arts manager, Alicia currently serves as the Consultant for Special Projects at Benvenuti Arts. Outside of BA, she is an Artist INC Express Facilitator with Mid-America Arts Alliance after being part of their Spring 2025 Artist Leadership Fellowship cohort, and volunteers as a Grant Writer for 1319 Press. On the creative side of things, Alicia creates and helps others create theatre – as a playwright, director, and producer – about Houstonians of Latin American descent, usually those of a working-class background. Her plays have been produced and/or developed by San Jacinto College South Theatre, Stages Houston, Teatro Chelsea, Company One Theater, and Rec Room Arts. She most recently was producer for magnolia city at the 2026 Mix-MATCH Festival as well as co-producer & script supervisor for the short film cloud maker.



Elise Pakiela, she/her
Chicago, IL

Elise Pakiela is an arts administrator based in Illinois. She works at TOC Arts Partners, supporting executive search processes at arts and culture organizations. Previously, Elise was a producer of Theatre Communications Group's 2024 National Conference, one of the largest convenings of nonprofit theatre professionals in the country. She spent a year as the Development Assistant at Barrington Stage Company where she was a lead coordinator on the theatre's annual gala. Elise's experience as an arts administrator also includes time at Illinois Humanities, the League of Chicago Theatres and Brookside Artist Management. She studied theatre management, entrepreneurship, and integrated marketing communications at Northwestern University where she was also Executive Assistant to the Director of Music Theatre. Elise was awarded Northwestern School of Communication's Ralph B. Dennis Scholarship and is a four-time recipient of the Northwestern Theatre Departmental Excellence Award. She is originally from Cleveland, OH.



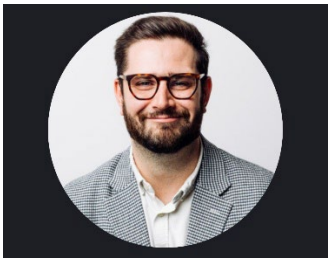
Danielle Pierre, she/her
Columbus, OH

Danielle Pierre is a leader, strategic program and community engagement professional with experience in event coordination, organizational leadership, stakeholder partnerships, and operational planning across nonprofit, economic development, education and business ecosystems. She is passionate about creating impactful experiences, fostering community collaboration, and supporting initiatives that drive engagement, equity, and organizational growth. She is currently the Program Manager at the Columbus Minority Business Assistance Center and has led programs, workshops, and outreach efforts through organizations including MBAC and the National Council of Negro Women.



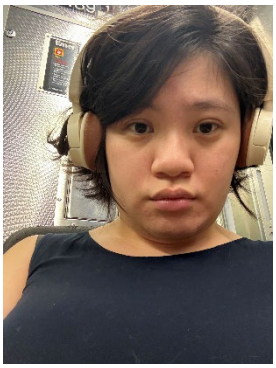
Deanna Poelsma, she/her
Indianapolis, IN

Deanna is a ceramic artist and arts administrator in Indianapolis, Indiana. A practicing artist, creative business owner, and former grants manager with over 13 years' experience in the public arts sector, her passion for the arts and helping others brings valuable perspectives and skills to support the work of CERF+. Active in her local community, Deanna serves on the board of Talbot Street Art Fair, the 4th Street Festival Committee, is an Indiana Artisan, and member of Northern Indiana Clay Alliance, and Local Clay Potters' Guild. When not in the office or traveling for shows, Deanna enjoys spending time with her family enjoying nature, trying new restaurants, and traveling.



Joe Prickett, he/him
Omaha, NE

Joe Prickett is a seasoned development professional and nonprofit administrator with robust fundraising experience serving organizations large and small in community music education, higher education, and the performing arts. As Director of Development at Opera Omaha, he leads the fundraising team, directs contributed revenue strategy, and serves as the primary solicitor for one of the 20 largest professional opera companies in the United States. He completed a Master of Public Affairs and a Master of Arts in Arts Administration from Indiana University and holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and Sociology from Hastings College (NE). In 2025, he completed his Certified Fund Raising Executive certification. He is currently a member of Class 19 of the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands' Nonprofit Executive Institute.



***Penny Pun, she/her**
New York, NY

Penny Pun is a New York-based playwright, dramaturg, and producer. She was born and raised in Hong Kong. She is an advocate for the AAPI, Disabled, and immigrant communities. She is the Associate Director of Civic Alliances at the Perelman Performing Arts Center. She has been an Adjunct Faculty Member of Marymount Manhattan College since 2021. She has spoken at performing arts industry conferences for leading organizations, such as Dramatists Guild and Theatre Communications Group. She has also been interviewed by numerous publications like The New York Times, The Dramatist, and American Theatre magazine. Her plays have been developed by Leviathan Lab, Pan Asian Rep, Rising Circle Theater Collective, and the Tony-nominated JW Theatrical.



Lola Reed, she/her
Indianapolis, IN

Lola is an Arts Coordinator dedicated to enriching the lives of older adults through meaningful, accessible creative experiences. In her role within a senior living community, she designs and leads dynamic art classes and programs that serve independent living, assisted living, and memory care residents. Her work centers on the belief that art is not just an activity, but a pathway to dignity, connection, and quality of life. As an artist, she captures the essence of her communities by photographing mundane textures, blending them together to create abstract representations of my surroundings. This process helps her refocus on the overlooked fragments of her environment, especially on details that often disappear when she becomes too comfortable in a familiar space. Through this work, she explores how one may subconsciously absorb visual information from our communities, and she aims to present environments that shift from representational to nonrepresentational, challenging viewers to see the familiar in unfamiliar ways.



***Philip Rice, he/him**
Mackinac Island, MI

Dr. Philip Rice is a composer, poet, designer, community organizer, and administrative professional with a proven record of over ten years transforming communities, regions, organizations, and projects in the nonprofit sector to drive prosperity in rural and urban settings. As a lifelong artist, his work has touched nearly every sector of the art world and the creative economy. Currently residing full time on Mackinac Island, he is strongly committed to quality of life in Michigan and the Midwest.



***Ami Scherson, they/them**
Rego Park, NY

Ami Scherson resides in New York and is the Member Retention Manager at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Previously, Ami has held roles with Irish Arts Center, National Sawdust, Arts Business Collaborative, and Americans for the Arts. Ami is a graduate of Ohio University.



***Christopher Schram, he/him**
Kalamazoo, MI

Christopher Schram is retired after spending 30 years in nonprofit arts management and fundraising with organizations based in Miami, FL; Chicago, IL; and Kalamazoo, MI. He has served multidisciplinary organizations, professional theatre companies, symphony orchestras, and art museums. He has been a grant panelist for the Southern Arts Federation, the states of Florida, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan; Cuyahoga County, OH; and the cities of Chicago, San Diego, and Miami Beach.



André Solomon, he/him
Pittsburgh, PA

André Solomon is originally from Methuen, Massachusetts and currently based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by way of Syracuse, New York. His academic ventures earned him a Bachelor of Arts in Flute from Syracuse University and a Masters of Arts Management from Carnegie Mellon University concentrating on Community Engagement. Currently based in Pittsburgh, André specializes in relationship-building, community engagement, and field-wide connectivity, positioning himself as a resource and collaborator within the creative ecosystem. Throughout his career, he has worked across arts organizations, educational initiatives, and community-centered programs to strengthen connections between artists, institutions, and the public. In Pittsburgh, André has served as Co-Director of Make Music PGH and held multiple leadership roles at the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council, including Membership Director and Manager of Programs. Alongside his administrative work, André remains an active musician.



***Tasha Tavaras, she/her**
East Point, GA

Tasha Tavaras holds both undergraduate and graduate degrees from the Savannah College of Art and Design and was an intern with Fulton County Arts & Cultures Contracts for Services Department before becoming the Contracts For Services Program Specialist for Fulton County Arts & Culture. When she isn't working in grantmaking you can find her in the garden and hanging out with her husband and 4 kitties.



Valentin Urrutia, he/they
Houston, TX

Valentin Urrutia is a Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduate student at UH and a Student Therapist at Room For Change. Valentin is passionate about creating a supportive space where individuals can explore their experiences, reconnect with their strengths, and move toward growth. Valentin's background in nonprofit arts administration and community engagement continues to shape how he views care and the systems that impact individual/community wellness.



Leigh Winter, she/her
St. Louis, MO

Leigh Winter joined the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis in September 2022. Born and raised in St. Louis, Leigh spent 20 years in New York City after graduating from college. During that time, she worked in the arts with artists, critics, designers, architects, and arts organizations. Since returning to St. Louis in 2012, Leigh has been working in the non-profit sector in addition to being a writer, consultant, and volunteer. For more than a decade, she has coordinated the Schools and Art Activities area of the Historic Shaw Art Fair, which gives St. Louis City K-12 students a chance to display their artwork and envision themselves as working artists while highlighting our city's exceptional art teachers. Leigh earned an MFA in Sculpture with a minor in Art Criticism from Pratt Institute and a BFA in Design with an emphasis in Metalsmithing from the University of Kansas.

***Courtney Young, she/her**
Lafayette, LA

C.C. Young is a writer, investor, and creative entrepreneur. She is the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of Right To Be, the largest anti-harassment and anti-hate organization in the country. She was born and raised in Southwest Louisiana.

CUYAHOGA ARTS & CULTURE
Public funding. Strong nonprofits.

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 18, 2026
To: CAC Board of Trustees
From: CAC Staff
Re: 2027 Grants to Assembly for the Arts and Neighborhood Connections

---

BOARD ACTION
CAC recommends two one-year grants totaling **up to $550,000** for 2027:

1) **Up to $500,000** to **Assembly for the Arts** to design and manage a program that provides support for Cuyahoga County artists;

2) **Up to $50,000** to **Neighborhood Connections** to support resident-led arts and culture projects throughout Cleveland and East Cleveland.

1) Grant to Assembly for the Arts – 2027 Support for Artists (SFA)

With a grant to Assembly for the Arts, CAC invests in a local nonprofit to provide funding and support for artists whose work engages and benefits Cuyahoga County residents. In 2026, Assembly designed and managed a program that provided $451,000 in grants and support services to 172 artists and creatives.

For 2027, Assembly proposes continuing two existing funding opportunities: the **Creative Impact Fund**, which provides $10,000 unrestricted awards to 22 artists through a panel review process, and the **Boost Fund**, which provides $1,500 awards to 144 artists through a randomized lottery. Both programs will be informed by Assembly's artist advisory committee, which will provide 12 local artists with $1,250 stipends to help guide program implementation. In total, **178 artists will receive $451,000 in funding and stipends** in 2027.

In addition to CAC's $500,000 investment, Assembly secured a $50,000 grant from the Saint Luke's Foundation and will contribute $20,000 in staff support and $8,000 in board volunteer time.

2027 Grant Recommendation

For 2027, CAC recommends a grant of **up to $500,000** for Assembly to design and manage Support for Artists programs. Assembly's proposal outlines an SFA27 program that will provide $451,000 in funding and support to 178 artists. See a detailed expense budget, as provided by Assembly, below in Appendix A.

Note: This recommendation is separate from Assembly for the Arts' recommended 2027 General Operating Support grant of $52,769.

2) Grant to Neighborhood Connections – 2027 Resident-Led Arts & Culture

Through its resident-led grant to Neighborhood Connections, CAC supports emerging community-based and neighborhood projects across Cleveland and East Cleveland. Since 2013, CAC has co-funded over **510 resident-led arts and culture projects** through Neighborhood Connections.

In 2027, Neighbor Up Action Grants will support arts and culture initiatives led by dozens of grassroots groups and organizations. Applicants are eligible for grants between $500 and $5,000, with CAC matching up to 50% of the award. Neighborhood Connections selects grant recipients using a committee of residents, providing responsive grants throughout the year. See a detailed expense budget, as provided by Neighborhood Connections, below in Appendix B.

2027 Grant Recommendation

For 2027, CAC recommends a grant in the amount of **up to $50,000** to co-fund resident-led projects in Cleveland and East Cleveland.

Next Steps
Pending approval, CAC will issue grant agreements for 2027 and monitor each organization's progress throughout the year as they implement their programs.

APPENDIX A: Assembly for the Arts – 2027 Expense Budget Detail

Expense Category – CAC Funds Only	Amount	Notes
Creative Impact Fund (CIF)	$220,000	22 artists × $10,000 unrestricted grants
Boost Fund	$216,000	144 artists × $1,500 project-based grants across 3 cycles
Artist Advisory Committee Stipends	$15,000	$1,250 stipends paid to 12 artist members
Stipends to Jurors	$7,150	CIF juror compensation (13 panelists x $550 stipend each)
Personnel	$24,200	This line reflects direct staff time dedicated to managing and implementing the Support for Artists program.
Dues & Subscriptions	$11,000	Submittable software subscription
Marketing and Communications	$500	Social media, digital ads, and other public relations outreach
Printing and Production	$650	Flyers and other printed materials
Professional Development	$5,500	Artist workshops, coaching, and business development
Total SFA27 Expenses	**$500,000**	

APPENDIX B: Neighborhood Connections – 2027 Expense Budget Detail

Item	Amount	Description
Neighbor Up Action Grants	$45,000	These funds from CAC will be used to support arts & culture initiatives in the city of Cleveland and the city of East Cleveland. There will be a total of $45,000 available in 2027.
Administrative Support	$5,000	Funding provides support for the administration of these grants, including staff time, costs for the grants management system, and for communications.
Total	**$50,000**	

CUYAHOGA ARTS & CULTURE
Public funding. Strong nonprofits.

Board of Trustees
2027 Meeting Schedule

Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees will start at 4:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted.
All meetings held at Cleveland Public Library – Downtown Branch, Louis Stokes Wing 2nd floor.

Date

Tuesday, February 9

Tuesday, April 20
Annual Meeting

Wednesday, September 22

Wednesday, November 17
Approval of 2028 grants

Wednesday, December 15*
**meeting starts at 3:30pm to include an executive session*

Contractor	Amount	Purpose	Term	Requires Board Approval
The Cleveland Foundation	$25,000	Accept an operating support grant provided to CAC, via The Cleveland Foundation, by the Education Foundation of America (EFA).	1/1/2027 - 12/31/2027	Y

** contracts valued more than $5,000 will be reported.