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Ruby Lopez Harper
CEO, CERF+
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Dr. Sharon Fechter
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Sarah Andrew Wilson
Entrepreneur & Arts Advocate
Chair, Grants Committee

Norman Rogers
CEO, Kno
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Daniel Guzman
Torpedo Factory
Grants Committee

Feby Emelio
National Assembly of State
Arts Agencies (NASAA)
Advocacy Committee

ex officio

Suzan E. Jenkins, MBA
Chief Executive Officer

Kenneth A. Lechter, Esq
Legal Counsel


Dana Pauley
Leadership Montgomery

April 8, 2025

TO: Montgomery County Councilmembers

CC: Robin Riley, Chief, Department of Recreation and Charlotte Keyes, Manager II Business Services

FROM: Suzan Jenkins, CEO, Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

SUBJECT: **FY26 Budget Request Oral Testimony** 

Good afternoon, Councilmembers,

My name is Suzan Jenkins, and I'm the CEO of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. I'm here today to thank you for your steadfast support of our sector. As Montgomery County has grown, so too has our creative community—and you have been solidly in our corner.

Today, we're asking for your continued investment to meet this moment of growing demand.

For FY26 we respectfully ask that you:

1. **Support the County Executive's proposed 3% increase for AHCMC**
2. **Support the County Executive's proposed \$408,000 for the Public Arts Trust, and**
3. **Support an additional \$500,000 to help us meet projected grantmaking demand**

Why is this important?

In FY25 alone, our sector supported over 3,900 jobs, generated \$21 million in tax revenue, and contributed more than \$141 million in household income. So you won't regret the return on your investment.

But the demand for funding is rising sharply. Just next year, we anticipate over **\$500,000 in additional need** across our grant programs—from general operating support for large institutions and small grassroots groups to project grants for individual artists and scholars and community organizations.

Arts and humanities aren't just "nice to have"—they're essential, and intersectional. They reduce crime, boost community health and wellbeing, build trust, and contribute to economic

development. In a time of social fragmentation and a mental health crisis, they create connection, pride, and a sense of place.

We also urge your continued support for the **Public Arts Trust**, which maintains Montgomery County's collection of more than 1,000 public artworks and fosters community engagement. Through projects and partnerships like the Department of Environmental Protection's artist residency. These programs align directly with the County's Thrive 2050 goals, our research for a new cultural plan and serve traditionally under-resourced communities.

Flat funding in FY26 simply won't meet the needs of our sector in these volatile, uncertain complex and ambiguous times. This request for a modest increase will ensure we can sustain and expand equitable support for the County's diverse, multicultural creative community.

Thank you again for your ongoing commitment to the arts and humanities in Montgomery County—and for considering our FY26 request.

Attachment:

FY26 Budget Request to Will Jawando, Chair, Councilmember Kristen Mink and Councilmember Gabe Albornoz, Education and Culture Committee

March 20, 2025

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TO: Will Jawando, Chair, Education and Culture Committee; Councilmember Mink, Councilmember Alborno

CC: Robin Riley, Chief, Department of Recreation and Charlotte Keyes, Manager II Business Services

FROM: Suzan Jenkins, CEO, Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County

SUBJECT: **AHCMC FY25 Overview and FY26 Budget Request Submission** 

Thank you for considering this FY26 budget request from the Arts & Humanities Council (AHCMC). We Appreciate your stewart support of our sector. As the county has grown so has our sector. Today we acknowledge that that demand has increased, and support is needed now more than ever at the local level.

I am writing to ask that for the FY26 budget you:

- **Support the County Executive's proposed 3% increase for AHCMC**
- **Support the County Executive's proposed \$408,000 for the Public Arts Trust**
- **Support an additional \$500,000 to meet projected grantmaking demand in FY2026**

Our funding proposal prioritizes support for arts and humanities organizations, followed by individual artists and scholars. As Montgomery County's designated local arts agency, AHCMC collaborates with the community to foster excellence in the arts and humanities, enhance cultural access, and contribute to the County's economic vitality. Our vision is to provide sustained leadership for arts and humanities entities, artists, and scholars, fostering active engagement with our cultural assets. In FY25, AHCMC received \$5,871,737 for grantmaking.

For FY26 AHCMC:

This request is based on projected demand for grants based on data derived from post pandemic trends as noted below, administrative oversight and supervision for grantmaking and supervision and the maintenance and conservation needs of the Public Arts Trust.

In Montgomery County, the arts and humanities play a vital role in enhancing public welfare, reducing crime and improving community health. As the U.S. contends with crime, community fragmentation and a pandemic-induced mental health crisis, the benefits of our creative sector are paramount. The arts and humanities foster community pride, build trust, and contribute to public safety goals by enhancing neighborhood livability and reducing violence. Arts and

humanities participation correlates with lower rates of juvenile delinquency and truancy, while access to arts and humanities programs is linked to improved health, education, and security. In FY25, the arts and humanities sector in Montgomery County supported over 3900 jobs, generated over \$21M in tax revenue and supported over \$141M in household income.¹

FY 26 GRANT FUNDING PROJECTIONS

by the numbers

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT (GOS) GRANTS build capacity by providing comprehensive, rather than fragmented support; ease administrative burdens for both the grantmaker and grantee; contribute to nonprofit sustainability and capacity building; signal trust between the funder and grantee without sacrificing accountability and shift attention from limited program outcomes to broader organizational and communal impact.

General Operating Support II Grants (GOS II) are available to non-profit arts and/or humanities organizations located in Montgomery County, MD that have had both cash operating expenses and revenue of at least \$150,000 for the last three completed fiscal years. *GOS II* is a two-year funding opportunity.

- In FY25, AHCMC funded 21 grantees in this category. AHCMC was able to increase the base awards for all GOS II grantees from 6% to 6.2%, funding 100% of the eligible applicants in this category. This category represents about 10% of eligible applicants for all AHCMC FY25 grants and funding for this category represents approximately 55% of AHCMC's overall FY25 budget for re-granting to all eligible arts and humanities organizations, groups, artists, and scholars.
- **Funding for GOS II in FY26 as recommended above will allow AHCMC to maintain GOS II organizations at their current funding level while ensuring that sufficient funding remains to support equitable grants for smaller and often more diverse organizations.**

General Operating Support I Grants (GOS I) are available to non-profit arts and/or humanities organizations that have had both allowable annual cash operating revenue and expenses of at least \$50,000 for the last three completed fiscal years.

- In FY25, the total request from eligible GOS I applicants was \$1,357,275. AHCMC allocated \$1,291,480 to fund all applicants recommended for funding, which represents 95% of the eligible grant request for this category.
- In FY25, AHCMC received 36 eligible FY25 *General Operating Support I Grant* (GOS I) applications and funded 97% of eligible organizations.
- **AHCMC anticipates in FY26 to award 38 applicants with the demand in this category at approximately**

¹***About the Data** –The data used for this report was provided by FY25 grantees of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. Economic impact projections were calculated using the custom Montgomery County Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 study (AEP 6) from Americans for the Arts. Visit <https://www.creativemoco.com/aep-6/> to view the full AEP 6 report for Montgomery County. Visit <https://www.creativemoco.com/find-opportunities/grants/> to learn more about our grantmaking. Dollar amounts may include, but are not limited to: direct funding, value of in-kind contributions, audience spending projections, and sponsorships

\$1,444,000 representing a 6% increase in demand compared to FY25.

PROJECT GRANTS support projects for organizations and groups that work in a wide array of arts and humanities disciplines including performing arts, media arts, visual arts, literary arts, folk and traditional arts, history, and philosophy.

Programming & Capacity Building Project Grants (PCBPG) are available to arts and/or humanities organizations and groups located in Montgomery County, MD that may or may not be incorporated as non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status.

- AHCMC received 50 eligible FY25 *Programming & Capacity Building Project Grant* (PCBPG) applications and funded 92% of eligible projects in this category.
- In FY25, the total request from eligible applicants for PCBPG funding was \$433,110. AHCMC allocated \$387,141 in grant awards. AHCMC was able to fund 89% of the eligible grant request.
- **In FY26 we anticipate awarding 54 applicants with a demand of approximately \$520,200 representing a 20% increase in demand as compared to FY25, based on steady growth in this category.**

Advancement Grants (AG) are available to non-profit arts and/or humanities organizations located in Montgomery County, MD that have had both allowable annual cash operating revenue and expenses of at least \$50,000 for the last three completed fiscal years. Grant awards support capacity-building projects for organizations that work in a wide array of arts and humanities disciplines including performing arts, media arts, visual arts, literary arts, and folk and traditional arts, history, and philosophy.

- AHCMC received 8 eligible FY25 *Advancement Grant* (AG) applications. One hundred percent (100%) of eligible projects in this category were funded.
- **In FY26 we anticipate awarding 15 applicants with a demand that could reach \$750,000 representing a 103% increase over FY25, due to the removal of a match requirement and increased capacity needs.**

Artists & Scholars Project Grants (ASPG) are available to individual artists and scholars who reside in Montgomery County, MD. Grant awards support projects for artists and scholars who work in a wide array of arts and humanities disciplines including performing arts, media arts, visual arts, literary arts, folk and traditional arts, history, and philosophy. This FY25 application deadline is September 27, 2024.

- The total request from eligible artists and scholars in FY24 was \$282,636.
- AHCMC was able to fund 96% of the eligible grant request and anticipate a 9% increase in demand in FY25 over FY24 based on increases in the number of eligible applicants.
- In FY25 we anticipate awarding 63 applicants with a demand of approximately \$306,747.
- **In FY26 we project awarding 68 applicants with a demand of approximately \$331,092.**

Wheaton Cultural Project Grants (WCPG) are available to arts and/or humanities organizations and groups located in Montgomery County, MD that may or may not be incorporated as non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status and individual artists and scholars who reside in Montgomery County, MD. Grant awards support impactful projects within the Wheaton, MD community and provide professional opportunities for artists and scholars to work in Wheaton. This FY25 application deadline is October 11, 2024.

- AHCMC received 17 eligible FY24 *Wheaton Cultural Project Grant* (WCPG) applications and funded 88%

of eligible projects in this category.

- In FY24, the total funding request from awarded applicants was \$162,883. AHCMC was able to fund 100% of the applicants recommended for funding at 100% of the total amount requested.
- We anticipate 11% greater demand in FY25 over FY24 based on increases in the number of eligible applicants. In FY25 we anticipate awarding 19 applicants with a demand of approximately \$180,985.
- **In FY26 we project awarding 21 applicants with a demand of approximately \$200,036.**

Arts Residencies in Schools Grants (ARSG) are available to teaching artists that reside in Montgomery County, MD. Grant awards support individual teaching artists based in Montgomery County, MD, trained in curriculum-based art techniques to serve students from communities that have traditionally received insufficient resources and have had limited access to arts education experiences throughout the school year. Teaching artists are required to collaborate with a classroom teacher to develop an arts program for students during the school day. The program must benefit students in a public or non-public elementary, middle, or high school located in Montgomery County, MD. The FY25 application deadline is October 25, 2024.

- AHCMC received 11 eligible FY24 *Arts Residencies in School Grant* (ARSG) applications and the total funding request from ARSG applicants was \$65,993. AHCMC funded 100% of eligible applicants at 100% of their total request.
- The number of applicants will increase due to the persistent ramifications of COVID-19 placing undue strain on schools, and the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) will accept more teaching artists to their roster.
- In FY25, we anticipate a 27% increase in demand over FY24. In FY25 we anticipate awarding 14 applicants with a demand of approximately \$84,000.
- In FY26 we project awarding 16 applicants with a demand of approximately \$96,000.

FY26 Anticipated Increase in Demand over FY25 By Individual Grant Category

Category:	FY26 Anticipated Increase in Demand over FY25
GOS II	Flat over FY26
GOS I	\$86,725
AG	\$380,890
PCBPG	\$87,090
ASPG	\$24,3455*
ARSG	\$12,000*
WCPG	\$19,051*
Total:	\$610,101

*FY26 Anticipated Increase in Demand Amounts for ASPG, ARSG, and WCPG are deducted from FY25 Projected

Demand Estimates.

PUBLIC ARTS TRUST

The Public Arts Trust is Montgomery County's central program for managing the county's public art collection of over 1000 works of art, including over 600 works on paper and over 400 sculptures/murals. It is also responsible for commissioning all public art on county-owned property. Since 1997, the Trust has been overseen by The Arts and Humanities Council (AHC MC) on behalf of the Department of Recreation. **AHC MC is requesting \$408,000 in FY26 for administrative oversight and supervision, maintenance and conservation of the Public Arts Trust.**

The County's approach to public art is codified in Article VI – Works of Art in Public Architecture in Montgomery County Code. Section 8-45 in the Montgomery County Code reads as follows:

*Appropriation for public art. - Each year the County Council **should consider appropriating** funds for the next fiscal year to the Public Arts Trust in an amount equal to .05% of the combined total approved programmed capital expenditures for the then current fiscal year for County Government, Public Schools, Montgomery College, and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.*

In FY20 AHC MC requested an Amendment to Section 8-45 Appropriation for art as follows:

Sec. 8-45 Recommended Amendment to the Appropriation for art: *Each year the County Council **should appropriate** funds for the next fiscal year to the Public Arts Trust in an amount equal to **a minimum of** .05% of the combined total approved programmed capital expenditures for the then current fiscal year for County Government, Public Schools, Montgomery College, and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.*

Additionally, beginning in FY21, the Public Art Trust requested annual increases to the budget over the previous year's budget to align the overall budget with recommended funding levels and recognize expenses related to inflation.

Although the recommended amendment to Section 8-45 was not adopted, AHC MC has been grateful that based on our FY20 request, appropriation for the Trust has increased significantly. We are grateful that, in FY23, the County Executive recommended a six-year appropriation of \$408,000 for the Public Arts Trust. This has allowed for the conservation and maintenance of projects across the County; research regarding Montgomery County's cultural assets and the needs of the community; the 2023 released publications, *Setting the Stage: Planning for a Cultural Plan in Montgomery County* and the *Request for Qualifications for a Cultural Plan for Montgomery County, MD*; updated Public Art Guidelines, and artist residency projects with the Department of Environmental Protection and the Regional Service Centers. All initiatives have been designed to increase opportunities for community building, creative placekeeping and economic development throughout the County and especially in traditionally under resourced areas with the goals of the County's recent Master Plan, Thrive 2050, keenly in focus.

Councilmembers, Thank You for your commitment to the arts and humanities in Montgomery County. Your

stalwart support has sustained our sector as we strive to adjust to inflation, market volatility and the lasting impact of the pandemic on our sector. Flat funding in FY26 will inadequately meet the growing needs of our cultural sector amid the ongoing repercussions of pandemic and inflation.

AHCMC is requesting \$6,481,838 for grantmaking, a 3% cost of living increase for administrative oversight for our grantmaking and \$408,000 for administrative oversight, maintenance and conservation of the Public Arts Trust for FY26. This request is based on documented and projected demand from new resident applicants, on data derived from post pandemic trends as noted above and ensures that AHCMC can meet the growing financial needs of many emerging, under-served, under-represented, culturally specific multicultural organizations, traditions and residents that are proud to call Montgomery County home. It is in that light that we Thank You in advance for your careful consideration of our request.

FY25 Grantees

General Operating Support II Grantees (GOS II)

Adventure Theatre MTC Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Bender JCC of Greater Washington BlackRock Center for the Arts CityDance	Friends of the Library, Montgomery County Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture Imagination Stage Levine Music	Maryland Youth Ballet Metropolitan Ballet Theatre National Philharmonic Olney Theatre Corporation Round House Theatre Sandy Spring Museum	Story Tapestries Strathmore Hall Foundation VisArts The Writer's Center Washington Conservatory of Music Washington Revels
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General Operating Support I Grantees (GOS I)

Action Youth Media After School Dance Fund Akhmedova Ballet Academy Arts for the Aging Arts on the Block ArtStream Bel Cantanti Opera Boulanger Initiative Cantate Carpe Diem Arts	Chevy Chase Historical Society ClancyWorks Dance Company CREATE Arts Center Dance Exchange Docs In Progress Flying V Glen Echo Pottery Glorystar Music Education and Cultural Foundation Inscape Chamber Orchestra	InterAct Story Theatre Education Association Kalanidhi Dance Lumina Studio Theatre Marlow Guitar International Montgomery History National Capital Trolley Museum New Orchestra of Washington Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation	Photoworks the Puppet Co. Silver Spring Town Center So What Else Sutradhar Institute of Dance & Related Arts The Victorian Lyric Opera Company Theatre Consortium of Silver Spring Young Artists of America
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Programming & Capacity Building Project Grants Grantees (PCBPG)

Amazing Theatre Company Anna H. Wang Concert Series Best Medicine Rep Bethesda Blues and Jazz Foundation Bethesda Historical Society Bethesda Little Theatre Capital Accord Chorus Community Building Art Works DC South Asian Arts Council Ebong TheatrIX F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Conference FocusMusic	Four Seasons Dancers Hope Garden Children's Ballet Theatre Institute of Musical Traditions interPLAY Orchestra Kassia Music Kentlands Community Foundation Kolot HaLev Live Garra Theatre Mayur Dance Montgomery Philharmonic Montgomery Symphony Orchestra NIH Community Orchestra	NIH Philharmonia Orfeia Vocal Ensemble Rockville Brass Band Rockville Musical Theatre Sherwood Community Chamber Choirs Symphony of the Potomac Tagore Music Group of Greater Washington DC Takoma Park Folk Festival The American Friends of Lafayette The Civic Circle The Free Theatre	The Menare Foundation The National String Symphonia The Printmaking Legacy Project The Village Youth & Family Center Trinity Chamber Orchestra Urban Artistry Vessel Vika Visual Arts Association Wheaton Arts Parade Wildwood Summer Theatre Word Dance Theater
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Wheaton Cultural Project Grants Grantees (WCPG)

APOY Online Association For Heritage Preservation of The Americas Carpe Diem Arts ClancyWorks Dance Company DC Beauty of Beijing Opera	DC South Asian Arts Council Docs In Progress Ebong TheatrIX InterAct Story Theatre Education Association	Mayur Dance Company New Orchestra of Washington Sutradhar Institute of Dance & Related Arts The Civic Circle	The Menare Foundation Urban Artistry Wheaton Arts Parade
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The Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) was established in 1976. As Montgomery County's designated local arts agency, we provide leadership and support services that sustain cultural organizations, artist and scholars and inspire participation in our County's rich cultural assets.

*About the Data – The data used for this report was provided by FY25 grantees of the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. Economic impact projections were calculated using the custom Montgomery County Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 study (AEP 6) from Americans for the Arts. Visit <https://www.creativemoco.com/aep-6/> to view the full AEP 6 report for Montgomery County. Visit <https://www.creativemoco.com/find-opportunities/grants/> to learn more about our grantmaking. Dollar amounts may include, but are not limited to: direct funding, value of in-kind contributions, audience spending projections, and sponsorships.

arts&humanities
council of montgomery county


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2025

The Strength of
the Creative Economy

Economic Impact of the Arts & Humanities
in Montgomery County, Maryland



arts&humanities
council of montgomery county

Impact

The Arts & Humanities Sector in Montgomery County:



Investment



The Arts & Humanities Boost the Local Economy

Average Montgomery County Cultural Event Attendee Spends

	\$23.06
Meals Before or After	\$11.09
Transportation	\$2.65
Shopping	\$6.58
Other	\$2.74

× **2.9 Million** Attendees



=

\$66.5 Million
ANNUAL LOCAL SPENDING
by Arts & Humanities Audiences

