

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA TOPIC

2025-2026 Arts and Cultural Facilities Grant Allocations - Allocation of funds to nonprofits for maintaining, remodeling, and building art and cultural facilities in Bellevue.

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Arts Commission

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**ACTION**

Staff requests action from Council on the Arts Commission's recommended funding allocations for 2025-2026 Capital Projects and Facility Maintenance grants in the Art and Cultural Facility Grants Program.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to approve the Arts Commission recommendations for 2025-2026 Capital Projects and Facility Maintenance grants in the Art and Cultural Facility Grants Program.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

In July 2024, the City Council approved the Arts and Cultural Facility Grant Program through Ordinance No. 6790, establishing Chapter 4.45 in BCC. This program was created to formalize and expand the City's support for arts and cultural facilities through a structured and equitable competitive grantmaking process. The program aims to support both existing and emerging arts and culture organizations with capital and maintenance needs.

Grant Application and Allocation Process

The total available budget for the 2025-2026 grant cycle was \$1,800,000. The grant opportunity opened for applications on July 10. Staff hosted two information sessions and provided professional grant writing support through an independent contractor which was available free of charge to any qualifying applicants. Facility grants were offered for various projects that fell into two main categories: capital and maintenance.

- **Capital Projects:** These include property acquisition, new facility construction, acquisition of specialized equipment, and major building renovations. Applicants can apply again in future years with the same or different projects.
- **Facility Maintenance:** This one-time grant covers preventative maintenance and repairs to preserve existing arts and cultural facilities.

Award recommendations were developed through an in-depth application process administered by Arts Program staff and evaluated by an Allocations Committee appointed by the Arts Commission. The Allocations Committee, consisting of two Arts Commissioners and two arts & cultural facility professionals, met on September 3 and reviewed all applications and cumulative scores to develop their final funding recommendations.

2025-2026 Funding Recommendations

The City of Bellevue received a total of \$22,703,498 in requests from five applicants across seven total applications. The Allocations Committee has recommended allocating a total of \$1,800,000 to four applicants across five applications as follows in ranked order. These grants have the ability to impact 90,453 square feet of art and cultural spaces across Bellevue, from Downtown to BelRed, Lake Hills and Eastgate. A summary is provided in Table 1, and detailed descriptions of each project are provided in Attachment A.

Applicant	Project Type	Neighborhood	Request Amount	Recommended Award Amount	% of Request
KidsQuest Children’s Museum	Capital Project	Downtown	\$428,000	\$400,000	93%
Theatre33	Capital Project	BelRed	\$499,999	\$462,500	93%
Theatre33	Maintenance	BelRed	\$87,500	\$87,500	100%
American Asian Performing Arts Theatre	Capital Project	Lake Hills	\$688,000	\$600,000	87%
Bellevue College Foundation/Carson Theatre	Maintenance	Eastgate	\$499,999	\$250,000	50%
KidsQuest Children’s Museum	Capital Project	West Bellevue	\$20,000,000	- Not Awarded - Please see notes in Attachment A	0%
Tasveer	Capital Project	Undefined	\$500,000	- Not Awarded - Please see notes in Attachment A	0%
Totals			\$22,703,498	\$1,800,000	7.9%

Table 1: Summary of Applications

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

These recommendations implement elements of the Comprehensive Plan's Urban Design & Arts and Economic Development chapters support this program. Specifically, UD-14 through 16 and ED-14, 22, and 24 support developing, displaying, and performing various artistic expressions and cultural facilities. The policies also recognize the economic development benefits of art and cultural facilities and how they support community activity and gathering. The Economic Development Plan and Diversity Advantage Plan also support the development of this grant program.

Fiscal Impact

Funding for this program in 2024 comes from the Arts and Cultural Facilities program (CIP Project No. G-112) in the 2023-2029 General CIP Budget. Funding for 2025 and beyond is in the City's Operating Budget and included in the 2025-2026 Preliminary Budget.

OPTIONS

1. Approve the Arts Commission's recommendations for 2025-2026 Capital Projects and Facility Maintenance grants in the Art and Cultural Facility Grants Program.
2. Do not approve the Arts Commission recommendation and provide alternate direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Arts and Cultural Facility Grant Allocations and Project Descriptions
- B. CIP Project Description (G-112)

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N/A