

Seattle Office of Arts & Culture

Housing, Arts, & Civil Rights Committee
Jan. 28, 2026

Presented by
Interim Director Kelly Davidson



Agenda

- Community Oversight and Structure
- Overview of Programs
 - Public Art
 - Partnerships, Education, and Grants
 - Creative Placemaking
 - Cultural Space
 - Facilities
- Financials
- 2026 Priorities

Community Oversight & Structure

Teaching artists at a professional development day



Mission & Vision

We activate and sustain Seattle through arts and culture.

We envision a city driven by creativity that provides the opportunity for everyone to engage in diverse arts and cultural experiences.

Greatness Starts Here
by Ulises Mariscal



Our Commitment to Racial Equity

We commit to an anti-racist work practice that centers the creativity and leadership of people of color—those most impacted by structural racism—to move toward systems that benefit us all.

Detail from *Together We Rise*
by Matika Wilbur



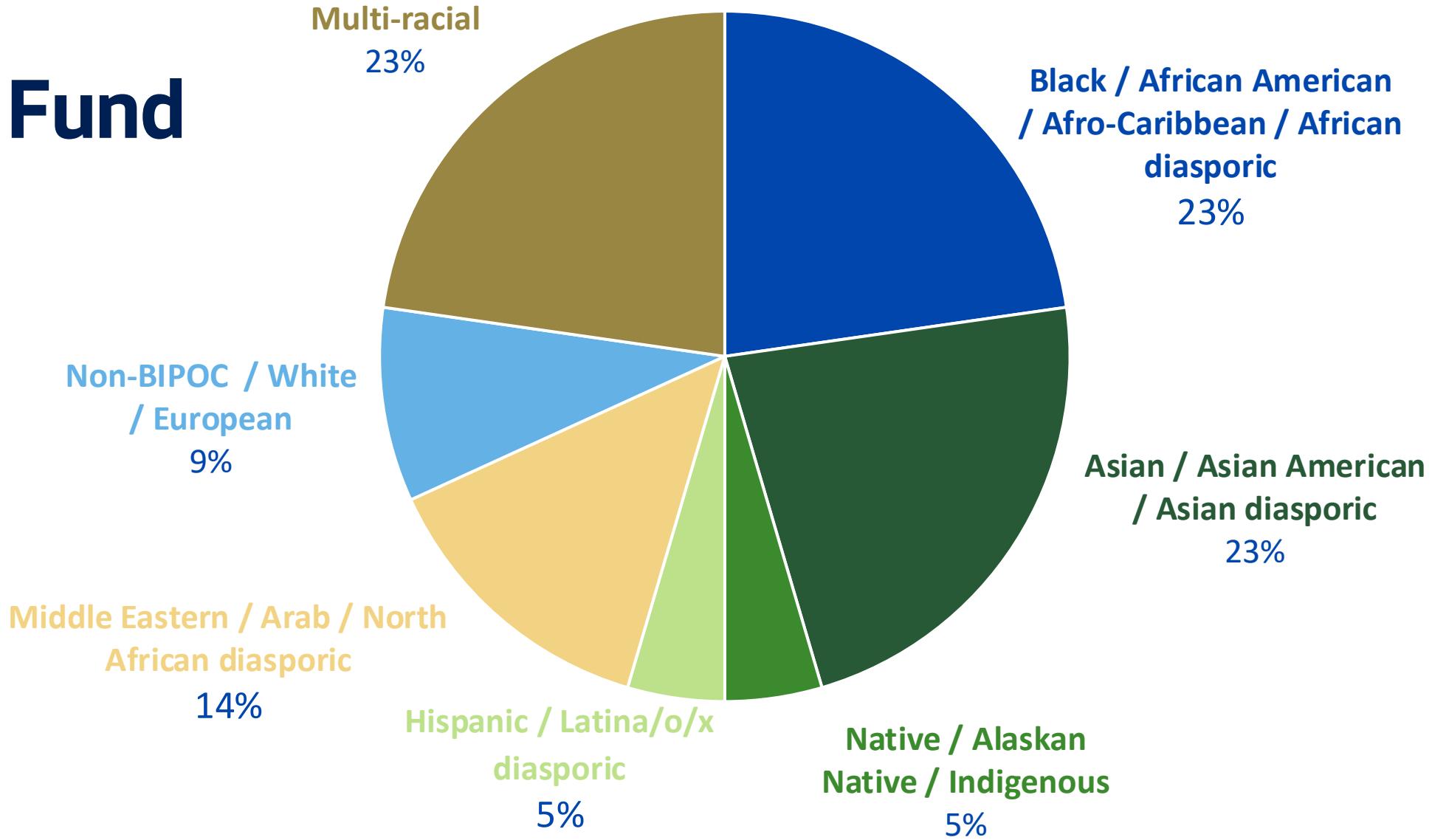
Strategic Plan

- Stabilization and systems review
- Centering values and mission in operations
- Implementation started in 2025
 - Filled Policy position
 - Creative Placemaking



Who We Fund

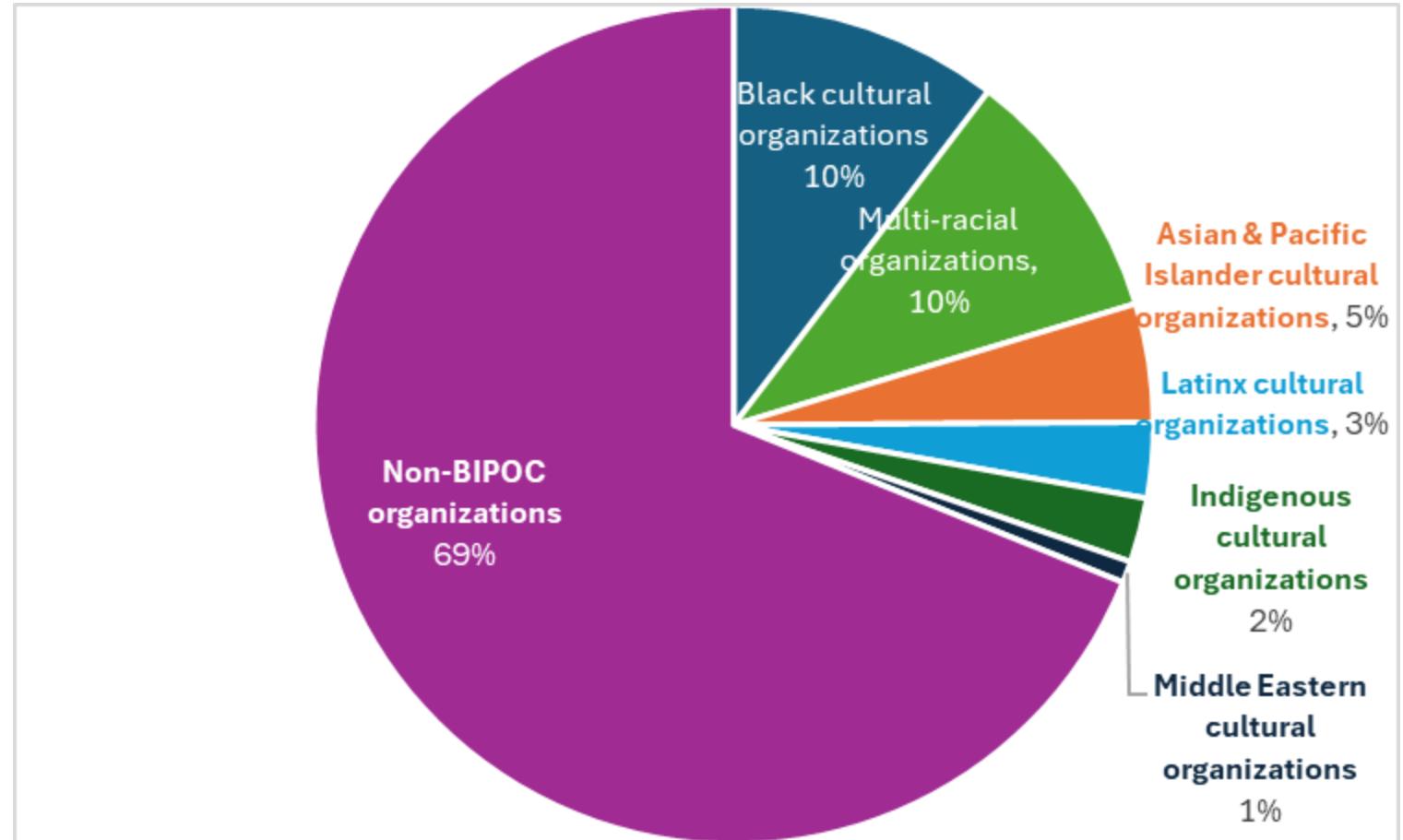
2026 Hope Corps and King Street Station activation grantees



Who We Fund

Centering Art & Racial Equity Grant

- In the 2023-2025 grant, nearly 1/3rd are BIPOC
- Application pool for this non-competitive grant is over 300 in 2026



Funding Streams: 1% for Art

The 1% for art ordinance funds the work of our Public Art Division and mandates capital construction departments to include “an amount for works of art equal to at least one percent (1%) of the total cost of any such construction project.”

Engine 32½
by Sean Orlando



Funding Streams: Admission Tax

Carmina Burana
Spectrum Dance Theater

The Admission Tax funds arts and cultural programming and operations.

We use these resources to build and sustain the creative sector.



One Time General Fund

\$1,445,000 was added in Council Budget Action items in 2026.



Year	CBA Number	Title
	2026ARTS-001-B-1	Increase ARTS by \$25,000 GF for creative spaces and low-income artist support in Capitol Hill and increase SPR by \$75,000 GF for activation of Cal Anderson Park
	2026ARTS-002-A-2	Increase ARTS by \$100,000 GF for a Black choreography showcase
	2026ARTS-003-B-1	Increase ARTS by \$300,000 GF for theater upgrades
	2026ARTS-005-A-2	Increase ARTS by \$200,000 GF to fund venue improvements for cultural film venues
	2026ARTS-006-A-2	Increase ARTS by \$90,000 GF for Brewery District murals through Hope Corps Program
	2026ARTS-007-D-1	Increase ARTS by \$400,000 GF to support the fabrication and installation of the Sadako Renewal Project and impose a proviso
	2026ARTS-008-A-2	Increase ARTS by \$190,000 GF to archive and preserve the historically significant Black Scholar Journal
	2026ARTS-009-B-1	Decrease ARTS by \$1.5 million Arts and Culture Fund and increase ARTS by \$1.5 million Arts and Culture Fund to make arts-related appropriations to SPR and CEN one-time and create corresponding transactions in SPR and CEN
	2026ARTS-010-A-1	Increase ARTS by \$50,000 GF for procurement and archival of Black artifacts
	2026ARTS-011-A-1	Increase ARTS by \$100,000 GF for arts installations at storefronts in the vicinity of the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute

Seattle Arts Commission

The Seattle Arts Commission supports our office by advocating for arts policy, creating access for equitable participation in the arts, and fostering and enriching arts engagement for all residents.



Overview of Programs

Khu.éex'
Artist at the Center grantee



Public Art

Our Public Art program gives people opportunities to encounter art in their daily lives.

“Dancer’s Series: Steps”
by Jack Mackie



Public Art

- Civic Art Collection
- Public Art Boot Camp
- Fresh Perspectives
- Planning Artists
- Public Artist Roster
- Waterfront

2025 Fresh Perspectives
Cohort



Partnerships, Education, and Grants

Our grant programs make meaningful impacts by expanding access to arts and culture for residents and visitors of all ages throughout the city, building capacity of individual artists and arts organizations.



Here Lies Love
Funded by
Civic Partners

Grants

Our funding of cultural organizations and individual artists makes Seattle more vibrant and spurs economic growth.

38% increase in applications in 2025.

Guelaguetza
Funded by Arts in Parks



Arts Education - The Creative Advantage

We partner with Seattle Public Schools, the Seattle Foundation, and community arts organizations to reinvest in Seattle's students and our community's economic and creative future.



Creative Placemaking

We invite artists to shape Seattle's present and future by infusing City funds into neighborhoods and encouraging people to experience local arts and culture.

This Much Brass, WALK DON'T RUN
Funded by Hope Corps



Cultural Space

- Two programs:
 - Cultural Facilities Funding
 - Cultural Districts
- Rebuild via Cultural Planning process
- Georgetown Cultural District approval will come to Council Committee in 2026.



Facilities

Langston Hughes
Performing Arts
Institute (LHPAI)

Over 16K visitors
in 2025.



LHPAI Programming

We partner with the nonprofits LANGSTON and the Historic Central Area Arts and Cultural District to steward African American arts and culture at LHPAI.

A new long-term contract with Langston is being established now and will come to Council Committee for approval.



The Every 28 Hours Plays

Facilities

ARTS at King Street Station is a cultural space in the heart of the city, dedicated to increasing opportunities for communities of color to generate and present their work.

14,661 visitors in 2025 (18% increase).



Programming at ARTS at King Street Station



Facilities

Denny
Substation
(partnership with
City Light)



Summary of Challenges

- Increased need in community
- Staffing capacity and new programing
- Desire to strengthen Departmental partnerships
- Unpredictable Admissions Tax
- Sustainability of programing



Hamstrung
by Humaira Abid

2026 Adopted Budget

Budget Summary Level	2026 Adopted Budget
Arts & Cultural Programs	\$12,214,047
Public Art	\$5,559,086
Creative Placemaking	\$1,774,379
Leadership & Administration	\$5,470,895
Total 2026 Adopted Budget	\$25,018,408
Total FTE Count: 44.75	



2026 Priorities

- Citywide activations and programming for World Cup
 - King Street Station
 - Union Station
 - Benaroya Hall
 - Pioneer Square, CID, Stadium District
 - Neighborhood activations in every Council district
- PIVOT: major program implementation
- Planning and policy development
 - Citywide cultural plan