



June 11, 2025

Kayla DeMonte
Co-Chair
Citizen University

Holly Jacobson
Co-Chair
Path with Art

Leslie Anderson
National Nordic Museum

Avery Barnes
Taswira Gallery

Linda Chavez-Lowry
Seattle Means Business
Magazine

Dhyana Garcia
Artist, DAIPANbutoh
Collective

Ricky Graboski
The Vera Project

Yoon Kang-O'Higgins
Friends of Waterfront Park

Ed King
Pottery Northwest

Rodney King
Artist, Kingspen

Megan Kiskaddon
On the Boards

Jo Mikesell
Shunpike

Kate Nagle-Caraluzzo
Town Hall Seattle

Carmen Pan
YMCA Get-Engaged Member

Yolanda Spencer
Arts Advocate

Vanessa Villalobos
Artist, Balorico Dance

Mayor Bruce Harrell
City of Seattle
600 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mayor Harrell,

On behalf of the Seattle Arts Commission, thank you for your ongoing support of arts and culture in our city. Your continued commitment to the Office of Arts & Culture (ARTS) has helped keep Seattle a vibrant, creative, and welcoming place for residents and visitors alike. Last year's decision to maintain the city's Admissions Tax in support of ARTS demonstrated this commitment, and we are deeply grateful that you understand the necessity of protecting this dedicated funding stream.

As you consider your budget priorities, we write to:

1. Urge you to protect the ARTS budget from cuts

As federal and philanthropic arts funding becomes increasingly uncertain, with devastating cuts to National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Institute for Museum and Library Service (IMLS), and more, *it is essential that local support remains strong*. Seattle's ARTS office is a stabilizing force, and even modest reductions would have ripple effects across the city – impacting youth, artists, educators, and community organizations that rely on the funds they distribute to give life to the city's art ecosystems.

2. Reaffirm the immense value of the arts sector to Seattle's identity and vitality

Seattle's arts sector doesn't just enrich lives: it drives economic growth, attracts and retains talent, supports mental health and belonging, and keeps our neighborhoods vibrant. ARTS funding support like the Centering Arts and Racial Equity program (**CARE**) have opened new pathways for equitable investment, and go directly towards supporting community-based organizations like El Centro de la Raza, Seattle JazzED, and Wa Na Wari. ARTS' partnership with every public school in the Seattle School District through the Creative Advantage program brings [immense positive impacts](#) to the health and well-being of future citizens and decision makers of our city.



We deeply appreciate your leadership and shared alignment in continuing to support these efforts. *The benefits of these programs reach far beyond the arts sector:* They support workforce development, education, tourism, business growth, public health, and civic pride—all priorities that we are grateful to have in common.

3. Affirm ARTS as a strategic partner in delivering on the Mayor's priorities.

The Office of Arts & Culture recently completed a strategic plan and realigned their work to support your priorities for a thriving, connected, safe, and innovative city. With major civic opportunities on the horizon—like the FIFA World Cup in 2026 and creative placemaking in neighborhoods—ARTS is poised to be a powerful partner across city departments. To realize this potential, ARTS requires steady and sustained investment.

We ask you now not simply to protect ARTS's budget—but to continue investing in what makes Seattle strong.

Thank you again for your dedication to our city's cultural life. We look forward to working together to ensure Seattle continues to lead as a city that values creativity not only in moments of challenge, but also in shaping a vibrant future.

With appreciation,

Kayla DeMonte (Jun 11, 2025 14:06 PDT)

Holly Jacobson (Jun 12, 2025 13:47 PDT)

Kayla DeMonte and Holly Jacobson,
Co-Chairs, on behalf of Seattle Arts Commission

Cc: Greg Wong, Deputy Mayor, Mayor's Office (email only)
Israel Rios, External Affairs Liaison, Mayor's Office (email only)
Patty Camacho, External Affairs Operations Manager, Mayor's Office (email only)
Gülgün Kayim, Director, ARTS (email only)
Kelly Davidson, Deputy Director, ARTS (email only)
Seattle Arts Commission (email only)