



For Immediate Release

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**Oregon Arts Commission awards \$310,000  
in Arts Learning Grants to 31 organizations statewide**

SALEM, Ore. – Thirty-one Oregon arts organizations will receive \$10,000 grants to strengthen K-12 arts education during the 2026 fiscal year. The awards are part of a \$310,000 investment from the Oregon Arts Commission's Arts Learning Grant program. Every funded project is a collaboration with local schools and communities across Oregon.

"Through this grant program, thousands of students will have an opportunity to engage with creative practices that enhance cognitive skills, problem-solving and self-empowerment through the arts," said Tiff Harker, Arts Education Coordinator. "We congratulate these awarded arts organizations that partner with educators to make these new learning projects possible for Oregon students."

Arts Learning Grants support projects that provide K-12 students with responsive learning opportunities in and through the arts. These projects also foster the exchange of knowledge between artists and educators and positively impact the achievement, skills and attitudes of learners.

Applications were evaluated by a community review panel, based on project quality and responsiveness, project support and project impact. Priority for funding is given to projects that primarily impact schools in one or more of the following categories: Title 1 participation, location within a county with more than 16.9 percent of the population experiencing poverty, or location in a rural community.

**FY2026 Arts Learning Grants Awardees:**

**Architectural Foundation of Oregon, Portland**

To expand the outreach of the Architectural Foundation of Oregon's Architects in Schools (AiS) program into more low income, underinvested urban and rural schools around the state, including a free design residency that integrates what children are learning in school and connects to the community and world around them.

**Art Center East, La Grande**

To support offering six residency weeks of the Artists in Rural Schools improv program to the three Title 1 elementary schools in the La Grande School District to blend sequential arts and social and emotional learning for underserved rural youth.

**Astoria Arts and Movement Center, Astoria**

To support providing dance instruction twice a week during Physical Education classes to students at Hilda Lahti Elementary (grades K-8) and Knappa High School (grades 9-12) in partnership with the Knappa School District and the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology for the entire academic year.

**Beaverton Symphony Orchestra, Beaverton**

To provide a month-long music appreciation curriculum to Title 1 schools in Washington County that corresponds to the timing and programming of the Beaverton Symphony Winter 2026 Family Concert. The culmination of the program provides free tickets to all participants and their families.

**Crossroads Creative and Performing Arts Center Inc., Baker City**

To support a new teen pottery program and offer a high school summer residency at Crossroads for outstanding Baker High School seniors. Students will work with Pottery Studio Manager, Ryan Kitson, for six weeks and conclude with a gallery show.

**Dalles Art Association, The Dalles**

To support a two-week watercolor artist residency at Colonel Wright Elementary, providing hands-on instruction for K-5 students and professional development in visual arts for classroom teachers.

**Echo Theater Company, Portland**

To support Cesar Chavez School's 3rd - 5th graders through a personalized 10-week residency to empower students to collaborate, tell their own story, explore new skills and build confidence as they learn common core adapted curriculum through circus theater creation and performance.

**Empowered Movement Aerial, Hood River**

To support 120 hours of aerial arts education to the after-school programs at four Hood River County schools.

**Ethos Inc., Portland**

To support more than 200 youth in the Music Corps program that provides after-school and summer music education to schools and neighborhoods where Ethos reaches low-income and historically underserved youth, at a low cost to school sites and at no cost to students.

**Fishtrap Inc., Enterprise**

To support the continuum of Arts Learning opportunities that Fishtrap offers to youth across

Eastern Oregon. In 2025-2026, Fishtrap hopes to reach 700 young rural writers ages 5-18 through its youth writing programs.

**Illinois Valley Community Development Organization, Cave Junction**

To support RiverStar's sequential education in dance and theatre for youth ages 5-18 in the rural Illinois Valley of Josephine County.

**Lane Arts Council, Eugene**

To support Creative Link Arts Integration in the Bethel School District, pairing artists with educators to serve an estimated 60 students across four schools, including serving low-income, migrant and other vulnerable students, while providing training to approximately 16 educators.

**Literary Arts, Inc., Portland**

To support bringing 20-25 professional writers to classrooms at 13 public high schools to provide dynamic creative writing instruction during the school day in 30-40 semester-long writing residencies to increase student engagement with writing, build writing/editing skills and serve 1,050+ students.

**Maxtivity, Philomath**

To support a yearlong artist residency exploring three visual art forms at Blodgett Elementary, uniquely designed to celebrate and amplify the cultural assets of the Blodgett-Summit community while dynamically responding to the specific needs of the small rural school.

**MetroEast Community Media, Gresham**

To serve 200 K-12 students at East Multnomah County schools, and another 100 at community events and summer workshops, with hands-on digital media and filmmaking education, encouraging youth to integrate arts and technology to create their own unique work.

**Miracle Theatre Group, Portland**

To support the UNIDAD arts-integrated residencies for schools, which includes the creation and presentation of a bilingual puppet performance and classroom instruction highlighting the contributions and importance of puppetry as an innovative pedagogical tool in educational work within schools.

**Montavilla Jazz Festival, Portland**

To support an 8-week Latin Jazz residency led by Carmelo Torres and local artists at Vestal Elementary, a Title 1 Portland school, where all K-5 students engage in 60+ hours of music, cultural learning and performance, culminating in a student-led Social Justice Night.

**Oregon Ballet Theatre, Portland**

To support OBT's Learn About Ballet (OBT LAB), a program bringing the educational, social and emotional benefits of dance to under-resourced schools in the Portland area.

**Oregon Coast Youth Symphony Festival Association, Newport**

To support the organization's efforts to give Toledo High School and Waldport High School students real-world internship experiences in arts administration and management in these underserved coastal and rural communities.

**Oregon Symphony Association in Salem, Portland**

To support the second year of a Side-by-Side concert series in partnership with the Salem-Keizer School District, encouraging artistic growth and strengthening retention in music programs for 600+ Willamette Valley K-12 students.

**Play It Forward, Beaverton**

To support free, weekly 45-minute group lessons in piano, keyboard, guitar and ukulele at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary in Portland, serving up to 130 K-5 students in 2025-26 who perform in a year-end recital.

**Portland Playhouse, Portland**

To support the planning, implementation and evaluation of the 2025-26 Social Justice Theatre Program and bring the power of creating live performance to 425 students at 8-10 elementary, middle and high schools in the Portland metro area.

**Rainbow Dance Theatre, Monmouth**

To support up to 12 hours of dance and coding integration residencies at eight middle schools in Polk, Lincoln, Curry, Coos, Linn, Malheur, Marion and Tillamook counties.

**Rex Putnam Music Boosters, Milwaukie**

To support basic program needs for the Rex Putnam Indoor Percussion program, such as uniforms, equipment, competition and clinician fees and transportation costs to Northwest Association for Performing Arts and WGI Sport of the Arts winter percussion competitions in the Pacific Northwest.

**Riverbend Live!, Winston**

To support a free, six-week Summer Youth Theater Camp serving 48 children ages 8-17 in rural Douglas County, integrating acting, singing, choreography and set design, culminating in two public performances of "Seussical the Musical" at Riverbend Park.

**Rogue Valley Art Association, Medford**

To support the Elementary Arts Outreach program that provides visual art instruction to up to 900 5th grade students attending underserved schools in Jackson County, through either a comprehensive arts programming option or a one-time field trip option.

**Ross Ragland Theater, Klamath Falls**

To support 102 youths in Klamath County public schools to attend summer camp programs, including younger students (ages 6-10), who will explore the basics of acting, music and movement, and older youths (ages 10-18), who will learn the different aspects of theater life.

**STAGES Performing Arts Youth Academy, Hillsboro**

To support 172 hours of theater arts education after-school residencies and “no-school day” workshops, serving up to 250 students at Hillsboro School District elementary and middle schools in Washington County, including three Title I schools and two schools outside the urban growth boundary.

**The High Desert Museum, Bend**

To support the High Desert Museum’s Kids Curate program, which will partner with La Pine Elementary to provide 50 hours of engaging learning experiences in and through the arts to more than 50 underserved 4th grade students over the course of the school year.

**Willamette University - Pacific Northwest College of Art, Salem**

To support free art and design workshops and an after-school creative professional development cohort, serving approximately 200 Roosevelt High School students in grades 9-12.

**Wordcrafters in Eugene, Eugene**

To support 77 creative writing residency sessions (with the proven ability to improve academic skills, creativity and school engagement) for five Lane County schools educating underserved urban and rural, low-income and at-risk students.

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The Oregon Arts Commission provides leadership, funding and arts programs through its grants, special initiatives and services. Nine commissioners, appointed by the Governor, determine arts needs and establish policies for public support of the arts. The Arts Commission became part of Business Oregon in 1993, in recognition of the expanding role the arts play in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of Oregon communities. The Arts Commission is supported with general funds appropriated by the Oregon legislature and with federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts as well as funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust. More information about the Oregon Arts Commission is available online at [artscommission.oregon.gov](http://artscommission.oregon.gov).