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Oregon Arts & Culture Awards and Summit returns Dec. 1-2; awards nominations now open

*Nominate the individuals, organizations, communities and businesses
shaping the state's creative and cultural life ahead of December events*

SALEM, Oregon — Oregon's revitalized Arts & Culture Awards and Summit returns to the Oregon Convention Center Dec. 1-2, 2026, and [nominations for the 2026 Arts & Culture Awards are open now.](#)

Oregon's cultural sector is a powerhouse, supporting more than 50,000 jobs and contributing \$8.9 billion to the state's economy each year. Oregon is also consistently ranked as one of the top 10 most culturally vibrant states in the nation, according to [Southern Methodist University's DataArts Index.](#)

The Arts & Culture Awards and Summit will bring people together from across Oregon to innovate, collaborate and celebrate this vital sector and its intersections in economies and communities.

"This gathering of arts and culture leaders with our friends and supporters comes at an extraordinary moment for our state," said Amy Lewin, Oregon director of arts & culture. "Arts, culture, heritage and humanities have the power to unite and uplift communities. This new summit creates an opportunity to celebrate generational impact and shape how we contribute to Oregon's future with collaboration, connection and fearless determination."

Through September 4, [Arts & Culture Awards nominations](#) for the people, organizations, communities and businesses that elevate Oregon's cultural life are being accepted across seven award categories:

- **Emerging Cultural Innovator Award:** Honors an early-career artist or cultural worker showing exceptional promise and community impact. Eligibility: Individuals
- **Traditional Arts and Culture Keepers Award:** Honors a traditional/folk artist or culture bearer in passing living traditions and cultural heritage to communities. Eligibility: Individuals
- **Lifetime Achievement Award:** Honors an individual or organization for sustained decades-long contributions that have shaped Oregon's cultural landscape. Eligibility: Individuals and organizations
- **Community Catalyst Award:** Recognizes an organization or community whose arts and culture work meaningfully improved a specific community or region. Eligibility: Communities or organizations
- **Youth Engagement Award:** For an organization engaging and expanding equitable arts and culture learning opportunities for K-12 youth. Eligibility: organizations
- **Art and Culture in Public Places Award:** Celebrates outstanding public art and cultural projects that enrich Oregon's shared spaces. Eligibility: Individuals, projects, organizations
- **Business of the Year Award:** Distinguishes a business that has demonstrated consistent and significant support of arts and culture in a meaningful way. Eligibility: For-profit businesses

The awards recognize contributions ranging from Indigenous culture-keeping to fine art to historic preservation. Nominations can be submitted at culturaltrust.org/awards-nominations.

A selection committee will review submissions and choose one awardee per category. Winners will be honored Tuesday, Dec. 1 at the Arts & Culture Awards Celebration from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Oregon Convention Center. The evening will also mark 25

years of the Oregon Cultural Trust--a funding model unique to Oregon--and celebrate its impact and vision for the future.

The convening continues Wednesday, Dec. 2 with the Arts & Culture Summit from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The full-day gathering will bring together cultural organizations, funders, educators, Tribal representatives, tourism and business leaders, policymakers, statewide partners and more for learning, alignment and conversation. The Summit will feature the release of a new Creative Economy Report, breakout sessions on education and cross-sector collaboration, a keynote and time for connection. A networking gathering will follow the close of the Summit at 3 p.m.

The Arts & Culture Awards and Summit is an effort of Oregon's Arts and Culture Program, which supports the state's cultural infrastructure through the Oregon Cultural Trust and the Oregon Arts Commission. Registration opens Sept. 14, and those interested in attending can sign up to be notified when it opens at culturaltrust.org/summit.

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About the Oregon Cultural Trust

Created in 2001 by the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon Cultural Trust serves as an ongoing funding engine for arts, heritage and humanities. Funding comes through the Cultural Tax Credit, which empowers Oregonians to direct a portion of their state taxes to support cultural opportunities. A percentage of donations go directly to 45 county and Tribal Cultural Coalitions and qualified nonprofits, and a portion goes toward helping grow a permanent endowment. Nested within Business Oregon, the Cultural Trust's investments support the economies, educational opportunities and vibrancy of communities throughout the state. Learn more at CulturalTrust.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About the Oregon Arts Commission

The [Oregon Arts Commission](#) provides leadership, arts programs and funding for nonprofits and artists through its grants, special initiatives and services. Commissioners appointed by the Governor establish policies and provide advisory support for public investment in the arts. Nested within Business Oregon, the Arts Commission works to support the economies, educational opportunities and vibrancy of communities throughout the state. The Arts Commission is supported with funds appropriated by the Oregon Legislature, as well as by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Oregon

Cultural Trust. Learn more at oregonartscommission.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).