



STATE OF WASHINGTON

## WASHINGTON STATE ARTS COMMISSION

711 Capitol Way S, Suite 600, PO Box 42675 Olympia, WA 98504-2675  
(360) 753-3860 • FAX (360) 586-5351

September 13, 2025

K.D. Chapman-See, Director  
Office of Financial Management  
Insurance Building  
PO Box 43113  
Olympia, WA 98504-3113

Dear Ms. Chapman-See:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit decision packages for consideration as part of the 2026 supplemental budget. Since 1961 the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) has implemented many important statewide programs advancing the role of the arts, culture, and the creative economy in the lives of individuals and communities throughout our state. We have a productive history and have proven to be uniquely effective - supporting a cultural and creative landscape of enormous size and unmatched diversity. After almost 60 years, we continue to be a catalyst for the arts and the creative economy in Washington State.

As required, I have attached the necessary documents articulating our requests of the Capital Budget.

Thanks in advance for your kind attention to our requests.

If you have questions about this budget submittal, please contact Deane Shellman, Deputy Director at (360) 252-9985 or [deane.shellman@arts.wa.gov](mailto:deane.shellman@arts.wa.gov). Otherwise, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Hanan".

Karen Hanan, Executive Director  
Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA). [Karen.hanan@arts.wa.gov](mailto:Karen.hanan@arts.wa.gov). (360) 252-9976



**387 - Washington State Arts Commission**  
**Ten Year Capital Plan by Project Class**  
 2025-27 Biennium  
 \*

Version: C6 FY26 Capital Agency Request

Report Number: CBS001

Date Run: 9/15/2025 9:48AM

**Project Class: Grant/Loan**

<u>Agency</u> <u>Priority</u>	<u>Project by Account-EA Type</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>Total</u>	<u>Prior</u> <u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Current</u> <u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Reapprop</u> <u>2025-27</u>	<u>New</u> <u>Approp</u> <u>2025-27</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>2027-29</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>2029-31</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>2031-33</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>2033-35</u>
0	40000002 Additional 2025-27 Creative Districts Capital Construction Grants									
	057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	1,232,000				1,232,000				

**Total Account Summary**

<u>Account-Expenditure Authority Type</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>Total</u>	<u>Prior</u> <u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Current</u> <u>Expenditures</u>	<u>Reapprop</u> <u>2025-27</u>	<u>New</u> <u>Approp</u> <u>2025-27</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>2027-29</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>2029-31</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>2031-33</u>	<u>Estimated</u> <u>2033-35</u>
057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	1,232,000				1,232,000				

## Ten Year Capital Plan by Project Class

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Report Number: CBS001

Date Run: 9/15/2025 9:48AM

<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Entered As</u>	<u>Interpreted As</u>
Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Functional Area	*	All Functional Areas
Agency	387	387
Version	C6-A	C6-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Include Enacted	Yes	Yes
Sort Order	Project Class	Project Class
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids

## Capital Project Request

2025-27 Biennium

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Version: C6 FY26 Capital Agency Request

Report Number: CBS002

Date Run: 9/15/2025 9:49AM

Project Number: 40000002

Project Title: Additional 2025-27 Creative Districts Capital Construction Grants

Project Class: Grant/Loan

## Description

Starting Fiscal Year: 2026

Agency Priority: 0

## Project Summary

Washington's Creative Districts program is a proven economic and community development success, with a high return on investment. However, the current \$416,000 capital fund is now insufficient to maintain the program's equitable impact as the number of certified districts grows. With the number of districts projected to reach 25 by the end of FY26, per-district funding will be cut by nearly 50% if program funding does not keep pace. We request a modest biennial increase in the capital pool of \$1,232,000 to maintain previous funding levels and accommodate this growth, ensuring the program continues to drive creative economies, tourism, and placemaking statewide

## Project Description

1. Identify the problem or opportunity addressed. Why is the request a priority? This narrative should identify unserved/underserved people or communities, operating budget savings, public safety improvements or other backup necessary to understand the need for the request. For preservation projects, it is helpful to include information about the current condition of the facility or system.

The challenges of the current fiscal environment require strategic investments and a commitment to fiscal responsibility. This request is for a critical adjustment to maintain a highly successful program that has supported local economies since 2018. The Creative Districts program is a proven economic and community development tool that provides a high return on investment for the state.

The Creative Districts program encourages economic development, tourism, and job creation in the arts and culture sector—often referred to as the creative economy—within communities. These districts are a focal point, providing residents and visitors with a sense of place and access to creative businesses and activities that serve as a robust source of income.

This funding package requests additional funds for the Creative Districts Capital Projects (CDCP) grant program, which supports small-scale creative placemaking projects to enhance a district's built environment.

ArtsWA proposes additional funding for the CDCP grant program for new and existing Creative Districts to maintain appropriate and equitable levels. This will ensure parity across Creative District communities and bolster the statewide creative economy, for which these Districts serve as vital hubs. Because Creative District communities have a wide geographic distribution and are among the most visited cities and towns in the state, continued investment in Creative District communities will touch millions of residents in Washington State and the thousands of out-of-state visitors who regularly seek out these communities as desirable travel destinations.

The success of the Creative Districts program has sparked strong interest from communities across the state, who now seek certification. Looking ahead, the program is strategically set to expand by five new districts each year for the foreseeable future. It is essential that new and old districts have access to a capital funding pool in order to both enhance and maintain their districts, resulting in the attraction and retention of creative businesses, creative workers, and tourists, as well as enhancing the quality of life through intentional placemaking and shared identity.

The Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) manages the Creative Districts program with a minimal administrative footprint, demonstrating an efficient use of existing resources. The core of the agency's dedicated resources for this program is the salary and benefits for one FTE who oversees the program's administration, including the certification of new districts and the management of grant cycles.

The agency's existing resources allow it to manage the program effectively, but they are not sufficient to fund the capital projects themselves. The agency's implementation decisions are guided by the principle of maximizing the impact of every dollar. The agency can effectively certify new districts, provide technical assistance, and manage the grant application and distribution process, but the funding for the grants must come from the capital budget.

The agency's related budget items from the past two biennia for this purpose include:

• **2021-23 Biennium:** \$412,000 in capital funding, sourced from the state building construction account, for Creative Districts Capital Projects.

• **2023-25 Biennium:** \$416,000 in capital funding, sourced from the state building construction account, for Creative Districts Capital Projects, plus a one-time allocation of \$75,000 for Creative District highway signs (WSDOT).

2. What will the request produce or construct (i.e., predesign or design of a building, construction of additional space, etc.)? When will the project start and be completed? Identify whether the project can be phased, and if so, which phase is included in the request. Please provide detailed cost backup.

This funding package will purchase small-scale capital investments for Washington's certified Creative Districts, directly

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2025-27 Biennium

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Project Class: Grant/Loan

## Description

enabling them to enhance their built environment. The funds will be distributed to eligible administering organizations within the districts for projects that include, but are not limited to, wayfinding, lighting, public art, and performance spaces. Projects in this biennium would begin around March 2026 and are planned to be completed by June 30, 2027.

This funding solves a critical problem: without it, the Creative Districts program would be little more than a certification, with no funding to back up its promise of growth. The interest and engagement from communities would likely decline significantly if the grants were to go away or be substantially reduced from prior years' levels.

These investments are small in cost but have a powerful, catalytic effect. They are crucial for solving the problem of maintaining a vibrant, thriving program that can keep up with its own successful growth. By providing these tangible improvements, we are not only sustaining a successful program but are also enabling the districts to attract new visitors, spur local economic activity, and provide a greater sense of pride for their communities. If Washington is to continue utilizing the Creative Districts program to grow the creative economy statewide, then this funding is necessary to ensure the program remains a high-return investment.

3. How would the request address the problem or opportunity identified in question 1? What would be the result of not acting?

This proposal is the best option to address the challenges facing the Washington State Arts Commission by responsibly maintaining a successful program in a difficult fiscal environment. Our request is not for a new initiative, but for a critical adjustment to sustain a program that provides a high return on investment for the state.

In the previous fiscal biennium, 23-25, the Creative Districts program received a total capital funding pool of \$416,000 for 16 districts, as well as \$75,000 for WSDOT Creative District highway signs (10 at \$7500 each). As we enter the 25-27 biennium, we anticipate the number of districts will grow to 25, yet the capital funding pool has remained at \$416,000. This reality of adding more districts without additional funding would cut the capital money available to each district by nearly half, from a theoretical average of \$30,688 to just \$16,640.

To prevent this significant reduction and maintain the program's momentum, we are requesting a modest increase of \$1,232,000, bringing the total capital funding pool to \$1,648,000 for the biennium. This will not only maintain funding levels equal to the previous biennium but also ensure that current and future districts have the resources to thrive.

This funding is a priority because these grants will serve as a catalyst for investment and growth in communities across the state. For many newly certified districts, these grants will fund the first visible project they have undertaken, signaling a commitment to their communities. For others, the grants will allow for the completion of multi-phase projects or the initiation of new ones. These small but impactful investments will help attract and retain creative businesses, workers, and tourists, directly supporting local economies and improving the quality of life for residents.

The Creative Districts program also has a significant equity impact. It serves nearly 800,000 people—almost 10% of Washington's population—in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Many of the communities in the pipeline for certification are in rural areas or have average household incomes below the state average. Continued investment will ensure that these communities, which have historically been excluded, have the resources they need to prosper and provide hope to residents worried about the future of their towns.

4. What alternatives were explored? Why was the recommended alternative chosen? Be prepared to provide detailed cost backup. If this project has an associated predesign, please summarize the alternatives the predesign considered.

This proposal is the most responsible option because it addresses the consequences of inaction and protects a prior state investment. As the sole manager of the Creative Districts program, the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA) is the only entity that can carry out this work, meaning alternatives to the proposal itself are not feasible.

The true alternative to this funding request is to maintain the status quo of the current funding level, not the status quo of the program's success. Maintaining the current funding level would risk negative consequences for a high-performing program.

•**Risk to Prior Investment:** Creative Districts and the state have already invested significant time and resources into the certification of new communities. Without this funding, those investments are devalued, and the districts will be challenged to achieve the goals set out during their certification.

•**Reduced Impact:** The significant reduction in available capital funding would force districts to scale back or delay projects, directly impacting their ability to attract visitors, create local jobs, and enhance their communities.

•**Loss of Momentum:** The success of the program has generated significant interest, with many communities in the pipeline for certification. A failure to provide adequate funding now would likely reduce interest in the program as a whole and undermine its future growth.

5. Which clientele would be impacted by the budget request? Where and how many units would be added, people or communities served, etc.

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## Description

There are currently 22 certified Creative District communities in cities and towns across Washington State: Anacortes, Bainbridge, Bremerton, Burien, Chewelah, Coupeville, Cowalla (Walla Walla/College Place), Edmonds, Ellensburg, Hillyard (Spokane), Issaquah, Langley, Moses Lake, Newport, Olympia, Port Townsend, Rainier Valley (Seattle), Soap Lake, South Columbia (Kennewick), Tenino, Twisp, and Woodinville. At least another ten communities are in the pipeline for certification within the next two years: Pioneer Square (Seattle), Prosser, Long Beach, Yelm, Lone, Tieton, La Conner, Everett, Garland (Spokane), and Shelton among others. Nearly 800,000 people live in these communities, in urban, suburban and rural regions. This is close to 10% of Washington's population.

The organizations that manage these Creative Districts are dedicated to making high-quality, visible investments that directly improve the livability and desirability of their communities. By intentionally hiring local artists and using materials from local suppliers, these projects serve as a powerful catalyst for economic growth and provide hope to residents who are worried about the future of their towns. Ensuring Creative Districts have appropriate funding allows them to not only thrive but also to provide tangible, positive impacts for our constituents.

6. Does this project or program leverage non-state funding? If yes, how much by source? If the other funding source requires cost share, also include the minimum state (or other) share of project cost allowable and the supporting citation or documentation.

The current Creative Districts Capital Grants Program requires each District to contribute matching funds, in accordance with the program outlines. All communities are required to provide a minimum 1:1 match for the pilot program and must certify the availability of said funds. Matching funds may come from appropriations and cash, bonds (council or voter), donations (including in-kind), force account or proceeds of a letter of credit or binding loan commitment.

7. Describe how this project supports the agency's strategic master plan or would improve agency performance. Reference feasibility studies, master plans, space programming and other analyses as appropriate.

This appropriation request is in line with ArtsWA's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, which states in relation to Creative Districts that the agency should:

- Increase funding and resources for Creative Districts and their local initiatives.
- Increase funding for capital projects.
- Increase startup grant funding to Districts.
- Increase equity for Creative Districts' membership by reducing or removing financial barriers.
- Develop partnerships and resources to increase effectiveness of local Creative
- District programs. Give support through training and technical assistance.

Additionally, the Creative Districts Capital Projects Program relates to Results Washington Goal 2: Prosperous Economy, Quality of Life. A primary goal of the Certified Creative Districts program is to help increase economic vitality in communities across the state through the creative sector. Providing funding for capital projects in Creative Districts will have exactly this effect by employing local artisans. Once complete, the projects themselves will be focal points of the community, attracting tourists and other potential investment.

8. Does this decision package include funding for any Information Technology related costs including hardware, software (to include cloud-based services), contracts or staff? If the answer is yes, you will be prompted to attach a complete IT addendum. (See Chapter 10 of the operating budget instructions for additional requirements.)

N/A

9. If the project is linked to the Puget Sound Action Agenda, describe the impacts on the Action Agenda, including expenditure and FTE detail. See Chapter 14 (Puget Sound Recovery and Governor's Salmon Strategy) in the 2025-27 Operating Budget Instructions.

N/A

10. How does this project contribute to meeting the greenhouse gas emissions limits established in RCW 70A.45.050, clean buildings performance standards in RCW 19.27A.210, or other statewide goals to reduce carbon pollution and/or improve energy efficiency? Please elaborate. For buildings subject to the clean buildings performance standards, describe your compliance pathway for the building, and include information about energy audits, metering, and energy benchmarking. The projects contribute to statewide goals to reduce carbon pollution by providing places for people in local communities to interact with arts, culture and the creative economy. With these resources being sited within local (particularly rural) communities, residents do not have to drive long distances to experience arts and culture. This, of course, reduces automobile emissions, and consequently, carbon emissions.

11. How is your proposal impacting equity in the state? Which communities are impacted by this proposal? Include both

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## Description

demographic and geographic communities. How are disparities in communities impacted?

Creative Districts exist across Washington and possess incredible geographic and demographic diversity. There are currently 22 certified Creative District communities in cities and towns across Washington State: Anacortes, Bainbridge, Bremerton, Burien, Chewelah, Coupeville, Cowalla (Walla Walla/College Place), Edmonds, Ellensburg, Hillyard (Spokane), Issaquah, Langley, Moses Lake, Newport, Olympia, Port Townsend, Rainier Valley (Seattle), Soap Lake, South Columbia (Kennewick), Tenino, Twisp, and Woodinville. Approximately 570,000 Washingtonians (2022) live within the zip codes of the 22 certified Creative Districts. 17 of these communities are outside of the Seattle MSA. Seven of them have populations of less than 15,000 and are primarily rural communities.

There are ten additional communities actively working toward their district certification, including: Pioneer Square (Seattle), Prosser, Long Beach, Yelm, Lone, Tieton, La Conner, Everett, Garland (Spokane), and Shelton. Nearly 200,000 people live in these potential future Creative Districts. Eight of these communities are outside the Seattle metropolitan area, and six of those are in rural areas that serve populations with average household incomes below the state average. There are often fewer opportunities for residents to engage with arts and culture than in more densely populated areas. Many of these communities are in a period of transition because their demographics or their regional economy is changing. They are looking to create a sense of place for their residents, as a way for them to feel reengaged in the community. They also want to attract new businesses and visitors to their communities.

Prior to making this request, the agency received input from districts that identified a need for capital funding to complete high-visibility, high-quality projects that serve as a catalyst for community growth. ArtsWA extends eligibility for the CDCP grant program to all certified districts, and engages with communities throughout the Creative Districts certification process, which requires direct local engagement and partnership. Because of this, no Creative District community is at risk of being marginalized by the program. However, if additional funding is not provided, the Creative District communities – which include many rural cities and towns that depend on this kind of investment – run the risk of negative, inequitable outcomes, especially compared to their peer districts that have already received previous funding.

The current Creative Districts Capital Grants Program requires each District to contribute matching funds, in accordance with the program outlines. All communities are required to provide a minimum 1:1 match and must certify the availability of said funds. Matching funds may come from appropriations and cash, bonds (council or voter), donations (including in-kind), force account or proceeds of a letter of credit or binding loan commitment.

In order to provide equity for under resourced or underrepresented communities, the grant program has a match reduction component. This program is based on a similar program the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office instituted in 2016. Applicants are required to meet the following criteria to be considered eligible for match reduction:

· Communities in need: A city, town, Tribe, or eligible special purpose district with a median household income in their ZIP code(s) of 99.99% or less than the current state median household income, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Creative Districts within communities that meet this criteria are eligible for up to a 50% reduction in required matching funds.

This ensures that a lack of local resources does not exclude communities that need this investment the most. Without this proposal, these communities would be disproportionately impacted by the reduced funding, making it more difficult for them to secure the capital needed for projects.

12. Is this project eligible for Direct Pay? If the answer is yes, you must include this project to the list of direct pay projects and information for submittal (see Chapter 1.7 of the capital budget instructions for additional instructions).

N/A

13. Is there additional information you would like decision makers to know when evaluating this request?

Attached letters of support.

14. Reappropriation: if the project was originally funded prior to the 2021-23 biennium, describe the project and each subproject, including the original appropriation year, status of the project and an explanation why a reappropriation is needed.

N/A

15. If the project is linked to the Governor's Salmon Strategy provide an explanation of how the budget request relates to a salmon strategy action, is urgent in the coming biennium to advance salmon recovery, is aligned with a federally approved salmon recovery plan, and/or advances a known tribal priority.

N/A

16. In the agency summary, include the statement, "Related to implementing the Governor's Salmon Strategy." See Chapter 14 in the 2025-27 operating budget instructions for more information.

N/A



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2025-27 Biennium

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Project Class: Grant/Loan

## Description

## Location

City: Statewide

County: Statewide

Legislative District: 098

## Project Type

Grants - Competitive

Grant Recipient Organization: Local governments and non-profits

RCW that establishes grant: 43.46.100

## Application process used

To apply for this grant, only Creative District administering organizations are eligible, including local governments, nonprofits, special districts, and tribal governments. The administering authority must certify that the project will provide public benefit for at least five years. If the authority doesn't own the project property, a binding partnership agreement with the property owner is required, including a joint-operating agreement outlining project oversight, public benefit, and contingency plans. Each Creative District may submit up to two separate applications. Applicants must ensure they meet all eligibility criteria, have matching funds, and align with the funding timeline. Applications are submitted online and reviewed through December 2025, with funding decisions made in February 2026. Approved applicants will enter a contract with ArtsWA before starting the project, expected in March 2026. This is a reimbursement-based grant, with funds disbursed quarterly upon submission of required documentation. A final report is due by June 30, 2027.

## Growth Management impacts

Not applicable.

## Funding

Acct Code	Account Title	Estimated Total	Expenditures		2025-27 Fiscal Period	
			Prior Biennium	Current Biennium	Reappropriations	New Appropriations
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State	1,232,000				1,232,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,232,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,232,000</b>
Future Fiscal Periods						
		<b>2027-29</b>	<b>2029-31</b>	<b>2031-33</b>	<b>2033-35</b>	
057-1	State Bldg Constr-State					
	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

## Operating Impacts

## No Operating Impact

## Narrative

The more creative districts that get approved the more capital requests the agency will receive but operating funds for certification and re-certification won't necessarily result in more capital requests.

## Capital Project Request

2025-27 Biennium

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Biennium	2025-27	2025-27
Agency	387	387
Version	C6-A	C6-A
Project Classification	*	All Project Classifications
Capital Project Number	40000002	40000002
Sort Order	Project Class	Project Class
Include Page Numbers	Y	Yes
For Word or Excel	N	N
User Group	Agency Budget	Agency Budget
User Id	*	All User Ids



The Chewelah Creative District (CCD) and the City of Chewelah have seen transformational impact thanks to the capital project grants we've received from ArtsWA. These grants have been the catalyst for a series of projects that are not only beautifying our town but also building a culture of collaboration and engagement among our local organizations, businesses, and residents.

Our first capital grant supported placemaking & public art projects, including wayfinding signs, an information kiosk & gathering space, and four mural projects. These projects allowed us to introduce the newly-formed Chewelah Creative District to our community despite COVID restrictions. The second capital grant we received, funded additional murals and critical maintenance, including the restoration of a historic David Govedare collaboration mural. It also supported the creation of a Chewelah Creative District sign at the town's entrance, which is expected to be completed soon. The mural restoration opened conversations that led to the City of Chewelah's year-long lease to display the Govedare Lead Centennial Stallion in Chewelah City Park. All of these projects have been instrumental in promoting community pride and attracting both residents and visitors to explore the creative district & the community.

Most recently, thanks to ArtsWA's support & the culture of collaboration that it has fostered, we have been able to take on an even more ambitious projects for 2024/2025: the activation and expansion of the market & festival space in the City Park, the development of an outdoor sculpture gallery, and, critically, long-overdue collaboration with the Spokane Tribe. This partnership will not only bring Indigenous art into the installations but will also result in a named outdoor sculpture gallery and a land acknowledgment monument in town, signifying our respect and recognition of the land and its original stewards. These upcoming projects will enhance our public spaces and create economic opportunities for local businesses & artists while fostering deeper cultural connections within our community.

The ripple effects of these projects have been far-reaching. Not only have we seen the tangible benefits of placemaking and infrastructure improvements, but Chewelah has also experienced a dramatic shift in how our community works together. The Creative District's presence and influence have been a major impetus for this newfound energy and efficacy. Our projects have been intentionally collaborative, reducing duplication of effort, increasing capacity across our local organizations, and uniting the community around shared goals.

In a small rural town like Chewelah, organizations have historically tended to work in silos, often competing for resources, recognition, funding, and volunteers. However, the Creative District's capital projects have given us the leverage and positioning necessary to foster a culture of cooperation and collaboration, which is now fast becoming the norm. This cultural shift is significant and has been a key part of our journey toward sustainability and growth.

Without the funding from ArtsWA, none of this progress would have been possible. These capital grants have empowered us to move forward confidently, transforming our public spaces and reshaping the way our community works together. We are truly grateful for this support, as it has been instrumental in creating the vibrant, collaborative future we envision for Chewelah.

Sincerely,

Larah Ritchie  
Executive Director

Chuck Ritchie  
President



## City of Tenino Creative District

149 Hodgden St. S  
PO Box 4019  
Tenino, WA 98589  
(360) 264-2368  
Fax (360) 264-5772

RE: Creative District Capital Grant Program.

In 2023, the Tenino Creative District completed the Metal Banner Project funded in part by the Creative District Capital Grant Program. This project achieved several goals. It brought the community together and created excitement over the project, it gave artists an opportunity to participate in public art, it provided a job for a local metal artist, it created a sense of place in our downtown corridor, and it continues to be a source of Tenino pride for the community as they look at the art daily.

The banner designs were selected through an art contest that encouraged participants to express through images what Tenino means to them. All designs needed to represent things that are unique about Tenino. This process was something that the community could get behind. The Tenino Creative District received applications from all age groups and from both amateur and professional artists. The art was then scored by an anonymous jury of community members. The final conceptual designs were then rendered into metal banners by artist, Stew Waldrop. We celebrated our artists and unveiled the banners at City Hall before the 23 pieces of art were installed on our light poles running down the main thoroughfare, Sussex Street.

Projects like this physically define a Creative District. A Creative District needs a strong identity, and nothing says that more than public art that speaks directly to the uniqueness of the community that created it. It says, we value our culture and heritage. It says, this place supports artists and the creative economy. It says, we see a future as a Creative District.

This project would not have been possible without a grant from the Washington State Arts Commission. While we hope that someday the local creative economy will be self-supporting, we first need to build that infrastructure, and grants like this are the boost that we need to propel us in the right direction.

Sincerely,

Jessica Reeves-Rush  
Tenino Creative District Manager



CITY OF  
**ISSAQUAH**  
WASHINGTON



**Arts Program**  
P.O. Box 1307  
Issaquah, WA 98027  
425-837-3024

[issaquahwa.gov/arts](http://issaquahwa.gov/arts)

September 10, 2025

RE: Creative District Capital Grant Program

I am writing to express my strong support for ArtsWA's Creative Districts Capital Grant Program and specifically to highlight the transformative impact it has had on the Issaquah Creative District.

The Issaquah Creative District has been profoundly and positively transformed by ArtWA's capital investments in our community. Through this essential grant support, Issaquah has integrated vibrant murals, artistically enhanced utility boxes and compelling original public artworks throughout the district. These projects reimagined and revitalized our shared spaces and also illuminated and celebrated the unique cultural identity that defines our city.

With support from the Creative District Capital Grant Program, we have been able to create public spaces that invite people to gather, connect and engage with one another. At a time when rebuilding community bonds is more important than ever, these investments help foster social connection and activate our creative district in ways that are both meaningful and enduring. Equally important, these projects have supported and elevated the work of local Washington artists, whose creativity and vision have been instrumental in shaping the identity and success of our Creative District.

What makes these outcomes especially significant is the collaborative spirit that has driven them. Each project has been brought to life through inclusive, cross-sector partnerships, with our small business community, the Downtown Issaquah Association, the Chamber of Commerce, nonprofit organizations, residents of all ages, and our vibrant creative sector. The relationships and trust built through this process have been just as impactful as the physical projects themselves.

The Creative District Capital Grant Program has been a true catalyst for community innovation and cultural investment. It has equipped Issaquah with the tools and confidence to reimagine our public spaces, elevate local artists, and support our creative economy in visible, lasting ways. These transformative projects could not, and would not, have happened without the strategic support of ArtsWA.

On behalf of the City of Issaquah Creative District and the broader Issaquah community, thank you for your investment in Washington's creative communities.

Sincerely,

Amy Dukes  
Cultural Arts Manager