



August 24, 2023

Dear Senator Noel Frame,

As an employee of a Seattle arts organization that relies on grant funding, I am writing to urge you to vote this Fall in support of ArtsWA's request for increased funding for the State Arts Commission. ArtsWA is requesting a \$2 per capita fund, for a total annual operating budget of \$15,902,300. This would increase the agency's operating budget by \$9M! This would make an incredible difference to the amount of support ArtsWA is able to provide to the many artists and art organizations that rely on funding from organizations like ArtsWA in order to survive. In 2024 for one grant program alone ArtsWA received over \$2.8 million in funding requests with only \$540,000 of funding to distribute.

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the arts is in a period of recovery and needs this support more than ever if we are to continue to help Washington State's arts community thrive. So please, vote in favor of increasing the State Arts Commission budget to \$15,902,300 and support the incredibly important work being done by our arts community to enrich our lives and our economy.

Thank you for supporting the arts!

Best,

Caroline Parry

RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Lori Hogan
Recreation and Cultural Services Superintendent
220 4th Avenue South
Kent, WA 98032
Fax: 253-856-6050

PHONE: 253-856-5050

August 14, 2023

Office of Financial Management
Attn: Governor Inslee and David Schumacher, Director, OFM
302 Sid Snyder Ave SW STE 300
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Governor Inslee and Mr. Schumacher,

I am writing in support of ArtsWA's FY24 supplemental budget requests. As I am sure you are aware, our state Arts Commission is woefully underfunded. Despite significant growth in Washington state's creative economy and overall population in the 60+ years of ArtsWA's existence, agency funding has lagged in comparison.

The Kent Arts Commission has received ArtsWA funding for programs serving Kent residents for many years. Kent is the sixth largest city in the state and the eighth most diverse in the nation. Ethnic minorities make up 60% of our population, and over 28% of residents are foreign-born. Kent's median household income is 21% lower than the rest of King County, and 15% of Kent residents live in poverty. Over the years, ArtsWA funding has enabled us to build community through offering high quality arts and cultural activities to this population. These funds have supported educational activities led by professional artists in underserved schools, as well as free summer concerts for more than 3,000 residents annually. Audiences have been particularly grateful to experience live music in a community setting after the isolation of the pandemic.

Last week I received very disappointing news that the Kent Arts Commission will not receive ArtsWA funding during FY 24-25. I immediately reached out to ArtsWA Executive Director, Karen Hanan for feedback. She reported that, due to lack of resources, they were forced to deny funding to hundreds of organizations, despite 99% of them being worthy of funding. ArtsWA has been very successful in outreach efforts to bring more organizations into the fold statewide, but as a result, they have much too little to offer everyone.

It is incredibly discouraging to be an arts agency serving one of the largest cities in the state and most diverse cities in the nation and not receive funding from our state arts agency. Providing programs that do not generate income is challenging without grant support. Unfortunately, this is exactly the type of programming our population needs.

We simply must modernize funding for our state arts organization. The past couple of years have been extremely difficult for the arts field. Our work is focused on bringing people and communities together, and ArtsWA funding is vitally important to sustaining this work. I urge you to support their FY24 operating budget request of \$15,900,000, including a \$2-per-capita funding model to fully and sustainably support the state's arts and cultural sector.

Thank you for your consideration. If I can provide additional information, please contact me at rbillerbeck@kentwa.gov or 253-856-5055. On behalf of the residents, artists, and community members in Kent, I extend sincere thanks for the state's investments in our work. Please fully fund ArtsWA to ensure these investments in the future.

Sincerely,

Ronda Billerbeck

Ronda Billerbeck
Director, Kent Arts Commission
Cultural Programs Manager, City of Kent

From: [Becky Henschman](#)
To: [Dhingra, Manka](#); [Goodman, Roger](#); [Springer, Larry](#)
Cc: [Jackson, Ashley \(LEG\)](#); [Koreski, Audrey \(LEG\)](#); [Wills, Emily \(LEG\)](#); [Ingalls, Linnea \(ARTS\)](#)
Subject: Please support \$2 per capita funding request for the Arts from Washington State Arts Commission
Date: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 1:18:56 PM

External Email

The honorable Roger Goodman, Larry Springer and Manka Dhingra,

On behalf of the entire Studio East organization, I'm writing to urge your support of the Washington State Arts Commission's budget request of \$2 per capita for funding for the arts in the coming budget cycle.

Studio East has been a VERY grateful recipient of pandemic relief grants from the Washington State Arts Commission [ArtsWA]. The funding that the Legislature previously allocated toward the ARTS has been vital in our ability to secure grants to support our staff and faculty; this, in turn, allowed us to not only continue providing best-in-class programming for our students during the most difficult phases of the pandemic, but ensure needed employment for our faculty – actors, teachers, directors, choreographers – who depend heavily on the steady employment we provide in the arts 'gig' economy.

Like many performing arts organizations, however, we are currently moving through the 'liminal space' of rebuilding our programming to our pre-pandemic capacity and much-needed state financial support has dried up. And, our costs are rising for facility rental, insurance, payroll and more. This year, our grant request for sustaining support from ArtsWA was denied, NOT because our application was lacking, but because there simply wasn't enough funds in their budget to go around. In fact, the panel that reviewed our application touted our FREE summer programming, our sensory-friendly children's theater performances, our scholarship support and school outreach programs, and the inclusivity of our planning process.

As detailed in a Crosscut article, **“Washington State historically provides a low level of support for the arts,” the report goes on to note. “In terms of per capita spending on state arts agencies, Washington is 46th in the nation,” with \$0.34 spent per capita in the fiscal year 2022.* THIS IS APPALLING**, considering the strength of our economy.

It is time for the legislature to act. It is time to stop giving lip service to the mental health crisis our young people are facing, and then reduce funding for the very activities that help IMPROVE teen well-being. Young people need the arts now more than ever.

I urge you to reach the logical conclusion and support Washington State Arts Commission's budget request of \$2 per capita for funding for the arts in the coming budget cycle.

**Crosscut Article: Report: Puget Sound's arts and culture sector in danger of exodus
[<https://crosscut.com/culture/2022/08/report-puget-sounds-arts-and-culturesector-danger-exodus>]*

Becky Henschman – Grant Writer

Studio East Training for the Performing Arts | **StoryBook Theater**

Main Office: 425.820.1800 | Location: 348 Kirkland Ave. Kirkland, WA 98033

www.Studio-East.org | www.StoryBookTheater.org

Studio East works to create confident, compassionate, responsible young people through training in the art and craft of theater.