

Arts Grants Review

For Our Creative Future

A Cultural Plan for the Portland Metro Region and
Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties

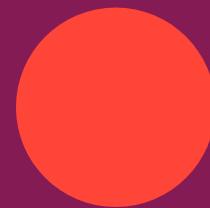


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Introduction

This study has been commissioned to inform Our Creative Future, a cultural plan now being developed for Portland’s tri-county region (Clackamas, Washington & Multnomah counties). The study’s purpose is to understand the overall characteristics of public and private arts grants in the region. Grants to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations as well as individual artists are an essential element of the health and sustainability of the region’s arts and culture sector. It is useful to a cultural plan to examine the magnitude of grantmaking in the sector, how it is changing, and who is receiving funding.

The study is based on analysis of the five most recent years (FY2018-FY2022) of grantmaking by the most significant public and private arts funders in the region (as described below in the methodology section). By focusing on the largest funders, this scan provides a “big picture” view of the major flows of grant funding in the arts ecosystem. It was not evident that this or similar research has been undertaken or done recently in the region, so this scan is timely to inform development of Our Creative Future. The findings and observations are intended to help set the context for decisions about funding policy for the region’s overall sector, and the individual cities and counties in the region.

Methodology

The study is based on a five-year (FY2018 through FY22) analysis of grants to arts and cultural organizations and individual artists in Portland's tri-county region: Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties. Grantmakers were selected as the largest arts funders in the region, including public agencies, private foundations and a community foundation.

Participating agencies and foundations providing grantmaking data:

Public Funders

- Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC)¹
- Oregon Arts Commission
- Oregon Cultural Trust

Private Funders

- Collins Foundation
- Lamfrom Foundation
- Meyer Memorial Trust
- Miller Foundation
- Murdock Trust
- Oregon Community Foundation

Total grants to organizations over the five years were calculated, as well as total amounts to individual organizations. Data on budget sizes of grantees was not uniformly available, so characterizing funding to large- or mid-sized budgets was done by review of the organizations by people familiar with the arts community.

The study acknowledges several limitations, based on the scope of the work and available data:

- Grants are not categorized by equity metrics in a coordinated, systemic way. This is a national issue and not unique to the Portland region. The result is that there is not an accepted taxonomy to assess how much funding goes to BIPOC organizations or other organizations reflecting specific communities. This would have required contacting each organization and requesting they each identify and classify themselves. While some organizations have some classifications in their databases, it

¹ RACC's grants funding is primarily provided by public/tax dollars, especially the City of Portland but also including Metro, Washington County, and Multnomah County.

was not uniform and was inconsistent and therefore unreliable for a broader scan that included hundreds of organizations. Similarly, it does not address grants to mainstream organizations made for the purpose of advancing equity.

- The study does not address all forms of grants or contributed income in the regional arts ecosystem. For example, there are smaller foundations, individual cities in the region, as well as county cultural councils and other sources making arts grants in the region. These grants are important to the recipients and to the ecosystem but are relatively small in comparison to the major grantmaking programs included in the study. The study does not capture individual philanthropy as well.

The Big Picture: Analysis of Cumulative Funding FY2018-FY2022

TOTAL GRANTS AND GRANTEES

Total Grants and Grantees (cumulative FY2018-FY2022)

Total number of grants awarded	7,076	
Total number of organizational grants awarded	6,193	
Total number of grants to individuals awarded	883	
Total number of unique organizations/grantees	761	
Total number of individuals/grantees	728	
Total grant dollars awarded to organizations	\$144,064,348	98.4%
Total grant dollars awarded to individuals	\$2,284,828	1.6%
Total all arts funding	\$146,349,176	

Over the five-year period, total arts grants were approximately \$146 million. More than 7,000 grants were made to 761 nonprofit organizations and 728 individual artists. It is noteworthy that about 98% of all funding (\$144 million) went to nonprofit grantees and 2% to individuals (\$2 million). Note that funding for organizations included some grants to intermediary organizations that re-granted to individuals, although these are not identified in the data.

COUNTY BREAKDOWN OF GRANTMAKING

Organizational Grants (\$'s) by County (FY2018-FY2022)

County	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	GRAND TOTAL	%
Clackamas	464,726	324,084	1,021,138	474,632	321,800	2,606,379	2%
Washington	486,151	1,776,133	2,232,777	558,394	568,956	5,622,411	4%
Multnomah	22,778,070	29,890,031	34,209,341	24,439,508	24,518,608	135,835,558	94%
Total	23,728,947	31,990,248	37,463,256	25,472,534	25,409,364	144,064,348	100%

Organizations in Multnomah County received the great majority of all grant funds over the five-year period (94%), followed by Washington (4%) and Clackamas counties (2%).

PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE FUNDING

Breakdown by sources of arts grants data for organizations and individuals

- Public Funding: Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Cultural Trust, RACC (primarily public)
- Private Foundations: Collins, Lamfrom, Meyer, Miller, Murdock
- Oregon Community Foundation

Total Public vs. Private Funding (FY2018-FY2022)		
Public Funding	57,025,711	40%
Private foundations	42,417,474	29%
Oregon Community Foundation*	44,621,163	31%
Total	144,064,348	100%

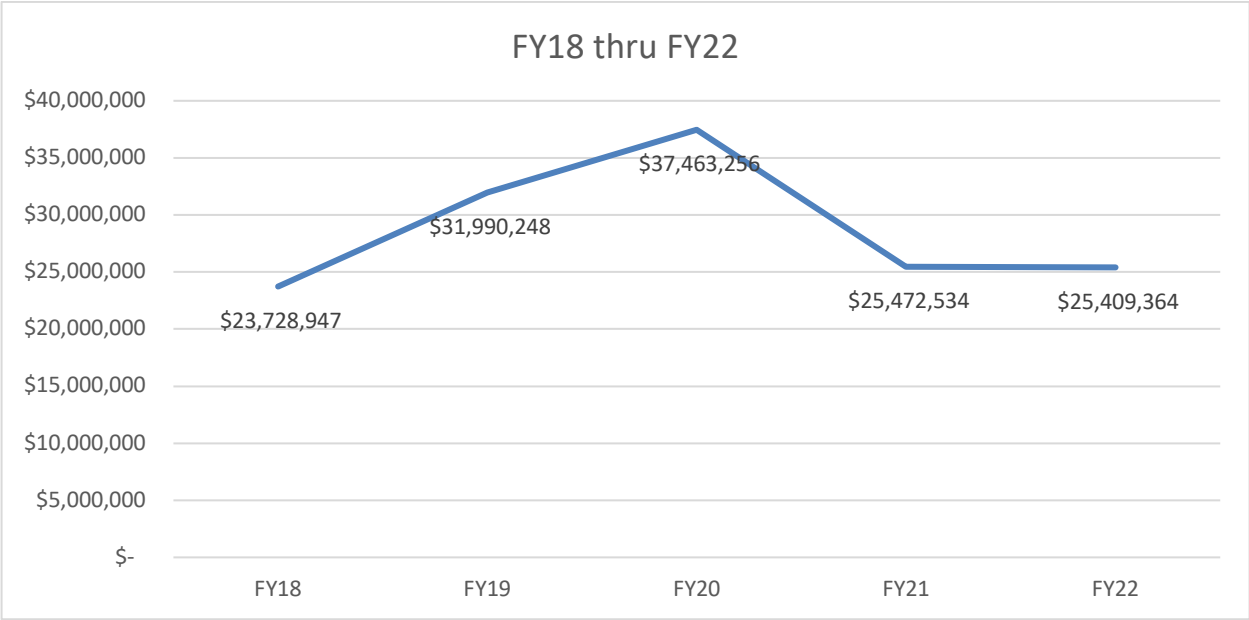
*OCF total includes both discretionary programs and donor advised funds.

Forty percent of all funds in the five-year period were from public sources and 60% from private. Arts grantmaking by the Oregon Community Foundation is notably large and comprises slightly more than the other five private foundations combined in the study (31% versus 29%) and nearly one-third of all arts funding.

Total Organization and Individual Grants – Public vs. Private Sources (FY2018-FY2022)				
	Individuals	Orgs	Total	%
Public	2,281,828	57,025,711	59,307,539	41%
Private	3,000	87,038,637	87,041,637	59%
Total	2,284,828	144,064,348	146,349,176	100%

When grants for individual artists are included, 41% of all funds in the five-year period were from public sources and 59% from private. The great majority of grants to individual artists was from public sources. Note that the figures for individual artist grants included a substantial portion of one-time COVID relief funds. As noted above, additional resources were distributed to individual artists through intermediary organizations though specific amounts were not available for this study.

ORGANIZATIONAL GRANTS: FIVE-YEAR TREND



In inflation-adjusted dollars, total organizational grants declined approximately 6% from FY2018 to FY2022. Total grants rose sharply in FY2019 and FY2020: FY2019 is higher because of several large capital grants and FY2020 is an anomaly because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the infusion of substantial one-time relief funding from several sources. Funding in FY21 and FY22 returned to levels similar to FY18, the last fiscal year before COVID. FY2022 is 7% higher than FY18 before adjustments for inflation, which was 13%. This produces the net decrease of 6% in total funding.

ORGANIZATIONAL GRANTS: DISTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

Organizational Grants Analysis (FY2018-FY2022)			
Factor	All Organizations/ All Sources (cumulative)	Funded by public sources	Funded by private sources
Total number of unique organizations funded:	761	534	515
# of organizations receiving \$1M or more over five years (avg. \$100,000 or more per year)	29	8**	13**
Percent of total funding represented by these organizations	55%	31% of funds only from public sources 12% of all funds cumulative	48% of funds only from private sources 29% of all funds cumulative
# of organizations receiving \$500,000-\$1M over the five fiscal years	30	17	20
# of organizations awarded between \$100,000-\$500,000	132	77	103
Percent of total funding represented by organizations receiving between \$500K-\$1M over the five fiscal years	14%	24% of funds only from public sources 21% of all funds cumulative	16% of funds only from private sources 10% of all funds cumulative
# of organizations receiving greater than \$500K over 5 years; and percent of total \$	59 organizations received \$100,717,608 representing 70% of total grants awarded	25 organizations received \$30,854,745 representing 33% of total public grants awarded	33 organizations received \$55,985,572 representing 64% of total private dollars awarded
Total amount awarded to organizations receiving \$100K-\$500K and percent of total funding represented by these organizations	\$32,278,062 22%	These 77 organizations received \$18,775,920 in total awards representing 33% of public grants awarded	These 103 organizations received \$22,309,697 in total awards representing 26% of private funds awarded
# of organizations receiving \$100,000 or more over five years; percent of total	191 organizations were awarded \$100,000 or more over the five fiscal years, totaling \$132,995,670 or 92% of all funds awarded.		

**An additional 8 organizations received \$1M or more over five years when adding both public and private sources together. These 8 are reflected in the total of all organizations.

Organizational grants were relatively concentrated in awards to large- and mid-sized organizations based on a scan of the list. Fifty-five percent of all funding over the five years went to 29 of all 761 organizations, each of which received more than \$1 million cumulatively. Such concentration of funding is typical in metropolitan areas, where the largest institutions often receive 56-60% of all arts funding². While common, such

² The Local Arts Index, a research project of Americans for the Arts from 2009-2015 included an indicator examining the concentration of philanthropy to the largest nonprofit cultural organizations in a community. This concentration was consistently between 56% - 60% over the period of the research project.

concentration of funding is increasingly scrutinized because it raises questions of equity and community impact.

Looking at organizations receiving \$100,000 or more over the five years, the distribution broadens somewhat. One hundred ninety-one organizations (out of 761 total organizations) received this level of funding, representing 92% of all funds.

It is noteworthy that public arts funders award their grants to a broader range of organizations, including smaller budget groups: 33% of public funding was distributed to organizations receiving \$500,000 or more over the five-year period, while 64% of private funding was distributed to such organizations.

GRANTS TO INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS

Individual Artists Grants (FY2018-FY2022)

County	COVID Relief	Non-COVID	Total
Clackamas	134,800	4,950	139,750
Washington	156,100	22,700	178,800
Multnomah	1,345,900	620,378	1,966,278
Grand Total	1,636,800	648,028	2,284,828

As noted, grants to individual artists were a small portion – 2% – of all funding and even this amount was inflated by the availability of one-time COVID relief funding. COVID relief funds comprised 72% of all grants to individual artists. It is also noteworthy that 99% of all funding for individual artists was from public sources (see Public Versus Private Funding, above).

Findings and Conclusions

- **The total pool of available arts grants in the region has declined:** While there is increased need for arts funding, the total pool of available dollars has not increased significantly in the past five years. Two years (FY19 & FY20) are anomalies, reflecting one-time COVID relief funding and several large capital grants. Adjusted for inflation this is a decrease of 6% in total grants.
- **Large organizations have greater access to capital than smaller, more diverse organizations:** Out of a total of 761 organizations, 29 primarily large and mid-sized organizations received 55% of all funds over a five-year period (more than \$1 million cumulatively). In this measure, the tri-county region is on a par with other US metropolitan areas, where the national average of arts grant funding going to larger budget organizations is approximately 56%.
- **Compared to private funders, public arts funders award their funds to a broader range of organizations, including smaller budget groups:** 33% of public funding was distributed to organizations receiving \$500,000 or more over the five-year period, while 64% of private funding was distributed to such organizations.
- **Public arts funders are positioned to continue to expand equity and access to resources through intentional public policy and practices.**
- **Private arts funders can consider voluntary policy and practices to increase equity and access to resources.**
- **Total grant funding for individual artists is very low:** Less than 2%³ of all grant dollars. The national average is approximately 2% but even the lower tri-county figure is distorted by the fact that 72% of grants made to individuals in the region were one-time COVID relief grants.
- **Public and private funders can increase available funding for individual artists grants either directly or through intermediary organizations.**
- **There is a need for shared definitions of equity in grantmaking to support data collection and evaluation:** Similarly, there is a need for better tracking of funding to individual artists.

³ The 2% figure excludes a small number of organizational grants made to intermediary organizations for re-granting to individuals.

- **A DeVos Institute study adds corroboration to the findings of this arts grants review:** The *Portland Metropolitan Area Arts Ecology Study (2020)*⁴ finds that the region’s major institutions are less-well capitalized than their peers in other US cities, validating the financial need expressed throughout the cultural planning process, even though this arts grants review shows they are receiving a similar share of available grants. The same study documents funding challenges for most other arts and cultural organizations, of all budget sizes.

⁴ [DeVos Institute study of Portland Metro Area Arts Ecology](#)