

# Memorandum



**Date:** September 17, 2025

**To:** Members, Cultural Affairs Council

**From:** Ashlee K. Thomas, Interim Director *Ashlee Thomas*

**Subject:** FY 2025-2026 Youth Arts Enrichment Program Grant Award Recommendations

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council approve the funding of 27 grants for a total of \$550,000.00 from the FY 2025-2026 Youth Arts Enrichment Program.

## **BACKGROUND**

The FY 2025-2026 Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP) Grants Panel, chaired by Al Dotson, Jr., convened on September 4, 2025, to review 30 applications requesting a total of \$645,500.00. The Panel recommended funding 27 applications for a total of \$550,000.00.

YEP was created as a joint initiative of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and The Children's Trust. The objective of the YEP Grants Program is to enrich the lives of children through the arts by making the arts available to more children and families throughout Miami-Dade County, whereby children will have opportunities to have positive live arts experiences through:

- Arts Instruction
- Arts Intervention
- Healing/Expressive Arts
- In-school Arts Residencies and Performances
- Out-of-School/Public Arts Exhibitions and Performances

Applicants to this program must have a minimum one-year track record of providing high quality, cultural arts programs for children and/or youth. Units of government and educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities may not apply.

YEP is structured into three funding categories:

**CATEGORY A:** Provides project-based funding support to non-profit organizations for projects that provide children and youth the opportunity for ongoing/long-term direct participation in the arts, such as sequential arts instruction, after-school arts programs, in-school arts residency programs, etc. These projects must be able to measure the impact of repeated participation in these programs on the students over the project period. **Applicants in Category A may request up to \$30,000.**

**CATEGORY B:** Provides project-based funding support to non-profit organizations for arts enrichment experiences for children and youth. **Applicants in Category B may request \$10,000.**

**CATEGORY C:** Provides project-based funding support to non-profit organizations for projects that serve children, youth and young adults with disabilities through inclusive arts and cultural programs so that kids

of all abilities and their families can participate fully in the arts. **Applicants in Category C may request up to \$20,000.**

The Panel specifically evaluated each applicant organization based on the following competitive review criteria: 1) impact, 2) artistic merit, 3) management and financial capability, and 4) reach, giving priority attention to: projects that address children whose ability to participate in such programs may be limited by geography, economics or disability; and projects that provide children and youth the opportunity for ongoing/long-term direct participation in the arts.

Attached is a list describing the projects recommended for funding.

Funding for the YEP program is derived from the FY 2025-2026 grant awarded to the Department by The Children's Trust. All funding recommendations are contingent upon approval of the Department of Cultural Affairs' FY 2025-2026 budget by the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners and Mayor and are subject to the availability of funds.

**Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)**  
**FY 2025-2026 Grant Award Recommendations**

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**1 - Arts Ballet Theatre of Florida, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,541**

15939 Biscayne Boulevard  
North Miami Beach, Florida 33160  
*Arts Ballet Goes to Ojus Elementary*

*Grant funds will be used to support the seventh year of Arts Ballet Goes to Ojus Elementary School for 30 students Pre-K to 3rd Grade at Ojus Elementary School and at the Miami Dance, Inc. studios in Miami for a 22-week residency program. Children will learn the basics of ballet and other dance styles and will benefit from classes including an introduction to ballet appreciation, theory of dance, ballet vocabulary, and Russian ballet style.*

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**2 - ArtSouth, A Not-For-Profit Corporation**

**Recommended Award: \$29,542**

900 East Perrine Avenue  
Palmetto Bay, Florida 33157  
*Arts Beyond the Classroom (ABC)*

*Grant funds will be used to support Arts Beyond the Classroom for 110 students ages 6 to 15, October 13, 2025 to May 15, 2026, at Sweet Home Academy, 7th Day (SDA) Adventist School (Perrine), Young Men's Preparatory Academy (Miami) and Chapman Partnership (Homestead). Project activities will include dancing, singing, playing music, and 2-D/3-D art. Participants will engage in visual arts, music, dance, and benefit from performing skills learned for public demonstration.*

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**3 - Brazilian Voices, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$20,000**

1792 Bell Tower Lane  
Weston, Florida 33326  
*Music, Kids and Wellness*

*Grant funds will be used to support Music, Kids and Wellness for 600 students ages 0 to 21, October 2025 through May 2026, at the University of Miami's Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami's Holtz Children Hospital, University of Miami's Alex's Place and the Miami Learning Experiences School in Miami-Dade County. Project activities will include music, singing, and playing percussion instruments. Participants will engage in music through songs that incorporate percussion instruments, movement, and rhythm.*

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**4 - City Theatre, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$5,500**

444 Brickell Avenue, Suite 229  
Miami, Florida 33131  
*HOMEGROWN: Coral Reef Senior High Residency*

*Grant funds will be used to support HOMEGROWN: Coral Reef Senior High Residency for up to 50 students (ages 14 to 18) from October 2025 to May 2026 at Coral Reef Senior High in Miami, FL. Lead by working theater professionals, students will engage in playwriting workshops, professional mentorship, and staged readings to develop storytelling, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. This hands-on program exposes students to script development, artistic expression, and career pathways in the arts.*

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**Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)**  
**FY 2025-2026 Grant Award Recommendations**

**5 - Coral Gables Congregational Church (United Church of Christ), Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,542**

3010 De Soto Boulevard  
Coral Gables, Florida 33134  
*CAP Miami Jazz Institute – The Art of Inclusion*

*Grant funds will be used to support CAP Miami Jazz Institute – The Art of Inclusion for 100 students ages 10 to 18, from across Miami-Dade County, from October 4, 2025 to May 25, 2026 at Coral Gables Congregational Church. Project activities will include twice-weekly harmony classes, instrument coaching, and jam sessions. Participants will explore unique musical ideas, benefit from freedom of expression over many musical styles, and include all children to embrace their creativity without borders.*

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**6 - El Ingenio, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,542**

6300 SW 20 Terrace  
Miami, Florida 33155  
*Centro Mater Arts Education Project*

*Grant funds will be used to support the Centro Mater Arts Education Project program for 90 students, ages 6 to 12 years, from October 6, 2025 to May 15, 2026 at the Centro Mater East Center in Little Havana. Project activities will include theater, movement, music, and drawing. Participants will engage in painting, singing, dancing, acting, musical therapy, and makeup. Children will learn how to improve their skills and use them in two bilingual theater productions through art activities.*

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**7 - Friendship Circle of Miami, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$20,000**

8700 SW 112 Street  
Miami, Florida 33176  
*Friendship Circle Band*

*Grant funds will be used to support Friendship Circle's Band Program for 20 participants ages 6 to 22, October 2025 to May 2026 at the Friendship Circle of Miami in Kendall, Florida. Project activities will include music instruction where participants will engage in rhythm, playing instruments, music education, and other musical activities. Participants will benefit from improving participant's memory, attention, concentration, and their ability to work as a group.*

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**8 - GableStage, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$10,000**

1200 Anastasia Avenue, Suite 230  
Coral Gables, Florida 33134  
*GableStage 2026 Shakespeare-in-the-Schools Tour*

*Grant funds will be used to support GableStage's 2026 Shakespeare-in-the-Schools Tour for 5,500 students ages 13 to 17, February to March 2026 at various Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Project activities will include performances, talkbacks with actors, and a study guide. Participants will engage in theatre and benefit from experiencing a live production, meeting and learning from theatre professionals, and hands-on experience of the curriculum through Shakespeare.*

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**Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)**  
**FY 2025-2026 Grant Award Recommendations**

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**9 - Karen Peterson and Dancers Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$20,000**

11760 SW 72 Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33156  
*Everyone Dances!*

*Grant funds will be used to support Everyone Dances!, a 15-week long dance residency for students with special needs ages 13 to 18 years, taking place at ten schools including Palmetto SHS, Hialeah SHS, Cutler Bay Middle, Miami Beach SHS, and Feinberg Fisher Middle School. The unique project will culminate with a final show of 150 student dancers at the Miami Senior High School Auditorium. Now in its 16th year, this program will help students demonstrate their physical and creative abilities, self reliance, discipline, and team work.*

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**10 - Marjory Stoneman Douglas Biscayne Nature Center, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$10,000**

6767 Crandon Boulevard  
Key Biscayne, Florida 33149  
*A Day Where Arts Meets Nature*

*Grant funds will be used to support A Day Where Art Meets Nature for 400 students ages 6 to 17 at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Biscayne Nature Center in Key Biscayne, from October 1, 2025 to May 31, 2026. Led by local artists, students will engage in outdoor art sessions, exploring nature's colors, textures, and patterns through drawing, sculpture, dance, and poetry, creating beautiful artworks reflecting their appreciation of the natural world.*

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**11 - Miami City Ballet, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$30,000**

2200 Liberty Avenue  
Miami Beach, Florida 33139  
*Ballet Bridges: Dance in Every Classroom – MCB's Explore Dance Residencies*

*Grant funds will be used to support Ballet Bridges: Dance in Every Classroom - MCB's Explore Dance Residencies for 300 students ages 5 to 9, from October 1, 2025 to May 31, 2026, at Title 1 public schools. Project activities will include on-site dance classes with live music by qualified musicians and performance opportunities. Participants will engage in introductory dance classes and benefit from creative expression, increased access to arts education, and potential pathways to future training.*

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**12 - Miami Community Music Center, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$10,000**

4133 SW 62 Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33155  
*MCMC Chamber Music Residency*

*Grant funds will be used to support the Miami Community Music Center Chamber Music Residency by teaching artists serving 50 students ages 11 to 18, October 2025 to May 2026, at seven (7) public middle and high schools in South Miami-Dade. Project activities will include coachings by professional musicians and public performances. Participants will engage in chamber music rehearsals and performances, gaining training in ensemble skills, rehearsal, performance techniques, and the development of musical and instrumental proficiency.*

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**Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)**  
**FY 2025-2026 Grant Award Recommendations**

**13 - Miami New Drama, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,542**

1040 Lincoln Road  
Miami Beach, Florida 33139  
*Miami New Drama In-School Residencies*

*Grant funds will be used to support Miami New Drama In-School Residencies for 100 students ages 11 to 17, from October 2025 to May 2026 at Miami Beach Senior, Miami Coral Park Senior, Nautilus Middle School, and Miami Beach South Pointe Elementary. Project activities will include courses focused on theater history, writing, voice, movement, acting, and design. Participants will engage in theater and benefit from training in performance and creation to develop tools for artistic and personal expression.*

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**14 - Michael-Ann Russell Jewish Community Center, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$10,000**

18900 NE 25 Avenue  
North Miami Beach, Florida 33180  
*Alan and Diane Lieberman Children's Cultural Arts Series*

*Grant funds will be used to support the Alan and Diane Lieberman Children's Cultural Arts Series for 2,000 students in Pre-K through 6th Grade, November 2025 through March 2026 in North Miami Beach's Julius Littman Theater. Project activities will include four (4) professional theatre productions with Q&A, classroom prep using a study guide, and reading the show-themed book. Children will be engaged in the excitement of live educational and values-based theatre.*

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**15 - MUD Foundation, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,541**

350 NE 75 Street, Unit 360-123  
Little Haiti, Florida 33138  
*XRCamp*

*Grant funds will be used to support XRCamp for 50 students, ages 8 to 17, during Winter Break (December 2025) and Spring Break (March 2026) at the MUD Foundation XRHub Lab in Little Haiti. Project activities include hands-on XR workshops, digital art creation, and interactive exhibitions. Participants will engage in 3D modeling, basic coding, and AR/VR creation, developing skills for future careers in creative technology and the arts.*

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**16 - Murray Dranoff Foundation, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$10,000**

9889 Hammocks Boulevard  
Miami, Florida 33196  
*The Piano Slam 2026 Poetry Competition*

*Grant funds will be used to support The Piano Slam 2026 Poetry Competition for 800 students ages 11 to 17, From January 14 to April 30. Open to all Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the program will culminate at the Adrienne Arsht Center in Downtown Miami. Project activities will include poetry writing, performance coaching, and finalist rehearsals with a professional crew of artists and benefit from improved creative writing and oral expression, increased self-esteem, meaningful prosocial relationships, and cultural engagement.*

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**Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)**  
**FY 2025-2026 Grant Award Recommendations**

**17 - Museum of Contemporary Art, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,542**

770 NE 125 Street  
North Miami, Florida 33161  
*MOCA Teen Art Force 2025-2026*

*Grant funds will be used to support MOCA Teen Art Force for a core group of 25 students ages 13 to 17 attending 25 days, from September to May at the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami. Activities will include sequential art courses, field trips, community service projects, artist presentations, and student exhibitions. Participants will engage in fashion and textiles, drawing and portfolio, mixed media and sculpture, digital art and photography, museum experience, and benefit from foundational training in art.*

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**18 - New World Symphony, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$10,000**

500 17 Street  
Miami Beach, Florida 33139  
*NWS Education Concerts*

*Grant funds will be used to support New World Symphony's Education Concerts for approximately 1,800 students ages 9 to 17 on February 11, 12 and 13, 2026 at the New World Center in Miami Beach, Florida. These free daytime concerts will introduce major orchestral works and composers to Miami-Dade County students. A study guide will be sent in advance to all participating classes and roundtrip bus transportation will be provided free of charge.*

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**19 - Nu Deco Ensemble, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,542**

2100 Biscayne Boulevard  
Miami, Florida 33137  
*Nu Deco NXT 2025-2026 Season*

*Grant funds will be used to support Nu Deco NXT for 40 students ages 12 to 18, from October 1, 2025 to May 30, 2026 at various venues including the Moss Center, Adrienne Arsht Center, YoungArts, and Miami Beach Bandshell. Project activities include monthly workshops, field trips, masterclasses, and an annual full-week spring intensive. Participants will work with NDE teaching artists to hone their music skills through 21st-Century performance, musical creation, wellness, and leadership.*

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**20 - O, Miami, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,542**

8365 NE 2 Avenue, Suite 202  
Miami, Florida 33138  
*The Sunroom*

*Grant funds will be used to support The Sunroom, O, Miami's classroom residencies for 200 students ages 6 to 17, from October 2025 to May 2026 at various Miami-Dade County Schools in Coconut Grove, Liberty City, Westchester and Morningside. Project activities will mix poetry with other art forms such as music and visual art. Participants will engage in literary arts, performing arts, and visual arts and benefit from thinking critically, discovering the value of their own stories, and gaining confidence.*

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**Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)**  
**FY 2025-2026 Grant Award Recommendations**

**21 - Orchestra Miami, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$10,000**

P.O. Box 557598,  
Miami, Florida 33255  
*Orchestra Miami/ Carnegie Hall Link Up Program*

*Grant funds will be used to support the Orchestra Miami/ Carnegie Hall Link Up program for 1,300 students ages 8 to 10, from October 6, 2025 to May 22, 2026 taking place at the Miami Scottish Rite Auditorium and in various schools. Project activities include weekly lessons taught by MDCPS teachers, classroom activities with Orchestra Miami musicians, and a final concert where students perform with the orchestra. Participants will engage in music lessons, learning to play an instrument, and learning about classical music.*

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**22 - Saint Martha Concerts and Cultural Affairs, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$10,000**

1235 NE 96 Street, Suite 3  
Miami Shores, Florida 33138  
*Student Art Gallery*

*Grant funds will be used to support the Student Art Gallery for 90 students ages 11 to 18 directly after concerts between October 2025 and April 2026 in La Merced Chapel of Corpus Christi Church in Allapattah. Students will create works for the covers of the concert program and gallery brochure. They will engage in creating art for the art gallery at their schools and learn how to exhibit and sell their art in the chapel.*

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**23 - Seraphic Fire, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,542**

2153 Coral Way, Suite 401  
Miami, Florida 33145  
*Choral Education Residency 2025-26*

*Grant funds will be used to support the Choral Education Residency 2025-2026 for 75 students ages 8 to 11, from October 1, 2025 to May 15, 2026 at the Comstock Elementary School in Allapattah, and Kendale Lakes Elementary School in Kendall. Project activities will include instruction in vocal techniques and music theory provided by professional singers/educators. Participants will engage in choral music and benefit from improved academic performance, enhanced life skills, and music literacy.*

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**24 - South Florida Symphony Orchestra, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$10,000**

441 NE 5 Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301  
*Freedom: 250 Years of the Declaration of Independence*

*Grant funds will be used to support the student concert entitled 'Freedom: 250 Years of the Declaration of Independence' in April 2026 for up to 800 second and third graders at Barry University. Project activities will include attendance at a symphony performance. Participants will engage in this arts-integrated STEAM standards-based program that takes young learners on a musical journey. Students will experience and learn about the music and the instruments that played an important role on the battlefield. All grant activities are scheduled to take place in Miami-Dade County.*

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**Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)**  
**FY 2025-2026 Grant Award Recommendations**

**25 - The Dance NOW! Ensemble, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,541**

PO Box 416525

Miami Beach, Florida 33141

*Dance NOW! Miami residency at Miami Arts Studio 6-12 at Zelda Glazer*

*Grant funds will be used to support the Dance NOW! Miami residency at Miami Arts Studio 6-12 at Zelda Glazer. This 10-week public school residency will reach 80 students ages 11 to 17 from October 2025 to May 2026. Students will benefit from participating in dance classes, creative workshops and seminars, creation of new works, coaching, performance opportunities, and attending a free performance by Dance NOW! Miami at the Little Haiti Cultural Complex.*

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**26 - The Deering Estate Foundation, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$29,541**

16701 SW 72 Avenue

Palmetto Bay, Florida 33157

*Discover Deering STEM + Arts After-School Program*

*Grant funds will be used to support Discover Deering STEM + Arts After-School Program for 180 students ages 6 to 14, October 8, 2025 to May 27, 2026 at the Deering Estate in Palmetto Bay. Project activities will include poetry, painting, drawing, and photography of our natural environments. Participants will engage in STEAM activities and benefit from making connections to nature while documenting memories through integrated arts, environmental science, and outdoor play.*

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**27 - True Mirage, Inc.**

**Recommended Award: \$10,000**

15616 SW 85 Terrace

Miami, Florida 33193

*Mini Mirage Theater's Winter Musical Premiere*

*Grant funds will be used to support Mini Mirage's Winter Musical Premiere for 300 students ages 11 to 18 from October 15, 2025 to January 18, 2026 at the Mini Mirage Theater in South Dade and The Seminole Theater in Homestead. Project activities will include rehearsing a full length musical and performing it for various school groups. Participants will engage in musical theatre and benefit from gaining social skills and confidence, musicianship, acting, and dance skills.*