

Date: September 16, 2026

To: Members, Cultural Affairs Council

From: Ashlee K. Thomas, Director 

Subject: FY 2026-2027 Youth Arts Enrichment Program Grant Award Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council approve the funding of 27 grants for a total of \$550,000.00 from the FY 2026-2027 Youth Arts Enrichment Program.

BACKGROUND

The FY 2026-2027 Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP) Grants Panel, chaired by Gilda Mooney, convened on August 27th, 2026, to review 38 applications requesting a total of \$790,500.00. 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 2026-2027 grant awarded to the Department by The Children's Trust. All funding recommendations are contingent upon approval of the Department of Cultural Affairs' FY 2026-2027 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 2026-2027 Grant Award Recommendations

1 - America Scores Miami, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$22,394

161 NW 6th Street, Suite #1100
Miami, Florida 33136 (Dist 3)
Miami SCORES Power of Poetry
Program Commission District(s): 3

Grant funds will be used to support the 2026-2027 Miami SCORES Power of Poetry Program for 240 students ages 8-12, from October 2026 - April 2027 at 6 participating partner MDCPS schools in Liberty City and Little Haiti. Project activities will include Performance-based and creative writing-based poetry. Participants will engage in Poetry and benefit from performing their original, written poetry in front of their peers, families and school, including at 3 public performance opportunities.

2 - Arts Ballet Theatre of Florida, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$26,870

15939 Biscayne Boulevard
North Miami Beach, Florida 33160 (Dist 4)
Arts Ballet goes to Ojus Elementary
Program Commission District(s): 4

Grant funds will be used to support the ninth year of Arts Ballet goes to Ojus Elementary School for 40 students 1st to 3rd Grade, at Ojus Elementary School and at the studios of Miami Dance Inc, 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.

3 - Art South, A Not-For-Profit Corporation

Recommended Award: \$30,000

900 East Perrine Ave
Palmetto Bay, Florida 33157 (Dist 8)
Arts Beyond the Classroom
Program Commission District(s): 3, 8, 9, 11

Grant funds will be used to support ABC for 90 students ages 6-15, 10/12/26 - 05/14/27 at, Young Men's Prep, Wynwood; Sweet Home Academy and 7th-Day Adventist School/ Perrine and expanding to Everglades Correctional Institution Visitors Park. Project activities will include 2-D/ 3-D art, music and dance. Participants will engage in drawing, painting, singing, playing music and creative movement and benefit from learning cross-discipline arts curriculum, performance skills and gallery operations.

4 - Brazilian Voices

Recommended Award: \$20,000

1792 Bell Tower Lane
Weston, Florida 33326
Music, Kids & Wellness
Program Commission District(s): 3, 10

Grant funds will support "Music, Kids & Wellness" for approximately 600 students and pediatric patients, ages 0-21, from October 2026 through May 2027 at UM Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, UM Holtz Children's Hospital, UM Alex's Place, and Miami Learning Experience School in Miami-Dade County. Building on established site partnerships, the project delivers structured, interactive music engagement in healthcare and educational settings.

Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)
FY 2026-2027 Grant Award Recommendations

5 - Conecta: Miami Arts, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

848 NW 77th Street
Miami, Florida 33150 (Dist 3)
Miami International Children's Theatre Festival
Program Commission District(s): 3, 10

Grant funds will be used to support Miami International Children's Theatre Festival for 1000 students ages 5 -12, December 7 - 18, 2026 at the Westchester Cultural Arts Center and Miami Theater Center in Westchester and Miami Shores. Project activities will include theatrical performances followed by Q&A sessions with artists. Participants will engage in theater and benefit from fostering creativity, empathy, and cultural understanding while improving communication and social skills.

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

Recommended Award: \$30,000

3010 De Soto Boulevard
Coral Gables, Florida 33134 (Dist 6)
CAP Miami Jazz Institute – The Art of Inclusion
Program Commission District(s): 3, 6, 7

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 3, 2026 to May 24, 2027 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.

7 - El Ingenio, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$27,950

6300 SW 20 Terrace
Miami, Florida 33155 (Dist 6)
Centro Mater Arts Education Project
Program Commission District(s): 5

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.

8 - Friendship Circle of Miami, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$20,000

8700 SW 112th Street
Miami, Florida 33176 (Dist 8)
Friendship Circle of Miami Band
Program Commission District(s): 8

Grant funds will be used to support Friendship Circle of Miami Band Program for 30 students ages 5 and up, October 2026 through May 2027 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 engage in music and benefit from improving participant's memory. attention. concentration. and their ability to work as a group.

Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)
FY 2026-2027 Grant Award Recommendations

9 - GableStage, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

1200 Anastasia Avenue, Suite 230
Coral Gables, Florida 33134 (Dist 6)

GableStage Shakespeare in the Schools Tour 2027: Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2

Program Commission District(s): 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13,

Grant funds will be used to support the GableStage Shakespeare in the Schools tour for 5,500 students ages 13–19, February–March 2027 at Miami-Dade County Public Schools throughout the county. Project activities include performances, talkbacks, a teacher guide, and a student study guide. Participants will engage in theatre and benefit from experiencing a professional production, discussion with artists, and enhancing Shakespearean curriculum from page to stage through a contemporary adaptation.

10 - Karen Peterson and Dancers Inc.

Recommended Award: \$20,000

11760 SW 72 Avenue
Miami, Florida 33156 (Dist 7)

Everyone Dances!

Program Commission District(s): 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13

Grant funds will be used to support "Everyone Dances" for 175 teen students, with special needs, ages 13-18, January 1 - March 15, 2027, across Miami-Dade County in 15 middle and senior high schools. Project activities will include 15 weeks of dance instruction culminating in a final performance at the Miami Sr. High. Participants will engage in weekly movement and creative sessions and will develop self-esteem, teamwork, physical confidence, and the joy of performance.

11 - Marjory Stoneman Douglas Biscayne Nature Center, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

6767 Crandon Boulevard
Key Biscayne, Florida 33149 (Dist 7)

A Day Where Arts Meets Nature

Program Commission District(s): 7

Grant funds will support A Day Where Art Meets Nature for 400 students aged 6-17 at the MSD Biscayne Nature Center in Key Biscayne, FL, from Oct 1, 2026, to May 31, 2027. 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.

12 - Miami Chamber Music Society, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$27,180

14155 SW 88th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33176 (Dist 8)

Ignite ChamberLab

Program Commission District(s): 7, 8,

Grant funds will support the MCMS Chamber Music Residency at Southwood Middle School (Ignite ChamberLab) for approximately 65 students ages 11–14 from September 2026–May 2027 in Palmetto Bay, Miami-Dade County. Activities include weekly chamber rehearsals, coaching, guest artist workshops, and student performances for the school and community. Students engage in classical chamber music, strengthening musicianship, teamwork, and performance confidence.

Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)
FY 2026-2027 Grant Award Recommendations

13 - Miami City Ballet, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$28,104

2200 Liberty Avenue

Miami Beach, Florida 33139 (Dist 5)

Ballet Bridges: Dance in Every Classroom – MCB's Explore Dance Residencies

Program Commission District: 2, 3, 4

Grant funds will be used to support Explore Dance Residences for 150 students ages 5-9, from October 1, 2026, to May 31, 2027, at Title 1 public schools in Districts 2, 3, & 4. 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.

14 - Miami Community Music Center, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

4133 SW 62nd Avenue

Miami, Florida 33155 (Dist 7)

MCMC Chamber Music Residency

Program Commission District(s): 6, 7, 8, 9, 11

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.

15 - Miami New Drama, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$26,950

1040 Lincoln Road

Miami Beach, Florida 33139 (Dist 5)

Miami New Drama In-School Residencies

Program Commission District(s): 4, 5, 10,

Grant funds will be used to support Miami New Drama In-School Residencies for 100 students ages 11-17, from Oct 2026-May 2027 at Miami Beach Senior, Miami Coral Park Senior, Nautilus Middle School and Miami Beach South Pointe Elementary. Project activities will include courses focused on history, writing, voice, movement, acting & design. Participants will engage in Theater and benefit from training in developing their own original production gaining tools for artistic and personal expression.

16 - Michael-Ann Russell Jewish Community Center, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

18900 NE 25 Avenue

North Miami Beach, Florida 33180 (Dist 4)

Alan and Diane Lieberman Children's Cultural Arts Series

Program Commission District(s): 2

Grant funds will be used to support the Alan & Diane Lieberman Children's Cultural Arts Series for 2,000 students in Pre-K through 6th Grade, October 2026 through March 2027 in North Miami Beach's Julius Littman Theater. Project activities will include four professional theatre productions with Q&A, classroom prep using a study guide, and reading the book on which a show may be based. Children will be engaged in the excitement of live educational and values-based theatre.

Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)
FY 2026-2027 Grant Award Recommendations

17 - Museum of Contemporary Art, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$27,450

770 NE 125 Street
North Miami, Florida 33161 (Dist 2)
MOCA Teen Art Force 2026-2027
Program Commission District(s): 2

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

18 - Murray Dranoff Foundation, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

9889 Hammocks Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33196 (Dist 11)
The Piano Slam 2027 Poetry Competition
Program Commission District(s): 6

Grant funds will be used to support The Piano Slam 2027 Poetry Competition for 1,000 students ages 11-17, From Jan. 14 - April 30 at all Miami-Dade County Public Schools and The Miracle Theatre in Miami-Dade County. 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.

19 - New World Symphony, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

500 17 Street
Miami Beach, Florida 33139 (Dist 5)
NWS Education Concerts
Program Commission District(s): 5

Grant funds will be used to support New World Symphony's Education Concerts for approximately 1,800 students ages 9-17, on February 2, 3, & 4, 2027 at the New World Center in Miami Beach, Florida. These free daytime concerts will introduce major orchestral works and composers to students from Miami-Dade County. A study guide will be sent to all participating classes to provide additional context and information about the concerts, and roundtrip bus transportation will be provided free of charge.

20 - Nu Deco Ensemble, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$30,000

2100 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, Florida 33137 (Dist 3)
Nu Deco NXT 2026-2027 Season
Program Commission District(s): 3, 4, 8

Grant funds will be used to support Nu Deco NXT for 40 students aged 12-18, October 1, 2026 - May 30, 2027 at 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.

Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)
FY 2026-2027 Grant Award Recommendations

21 - O, Miami, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$30,000

8365 NE 2 Avenue, Suite 202

Miami, Florida 33138 (Dist 3)

The Sunroom

Program Commission District(s): 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 13

Grant funds will be used to support O, Miami's Classroom Residencies for 100 students ages 6-17, from October 2026 to May 2027 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.

22 - Orchestra Miami, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

8821 SW 54 Terrace

Miami, Florida 33165 (Dist 10)

Orchestra Miami/ Carnegie Hall Link Up Program

Program Commission District(s): 1, 3, 7, 8, 13

Grant funds will be used to support the Orchestra Miami/ Carnegie Hall Link Up program for 1,300 students ages 8-10 Oct 5, 2026- May 21, 2027 at the Miami Scottish Rite Auditorium & in schools. Project activities include weekly lessons taught by MDCPS teachers, classroom activities with OM musicians, & a final concert where students perform with the orchestra. Participants will engage in music lessons, learning to play an instrument, & learning about classical music.

23 - Ruta Teatral, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

1140 101st Street, Suite 402 B

Bay Harbor Islands, Florida 33154 (Dist 4)

Theatre 4 Education

Program Commission District(s): 3, 12

Grant funds will support Theatre 4 Education for approximately 1,500 students ages 5-12 from October 2026 through March 2027 at West Mater Center Child Care and Brownsville Middle School. Activities include live bilingual musical theatre performances followed by interactive learning stations. Students will engage in theatre and musical theatre, strengthening communication, collaboration, creativity, empathy, language development, and critical thinking skills.

24 - Seraphic Fire, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$28,142

2153 Coral Way, Suite 401

Miami, Florida 33145 (Dist 5)

Choral Education Residency 2026-2027

Program Commission District(s): 3, 6, 11

Grant funds will be used to support the Choral Education Residency for 75 students ages 8-11, from 10/1/2026 to 5/15/2027 at the Maya Angelou Elementary and Christina Eve Elementary Schools in North and South Miami. 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.

Youth Arts Enrichment Program (YEP)
FY 2026-2027 Grant Award Recommendations

25 - South Florida Symphony Orchestra, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

441 NE 5 Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301
Symphony of Nations: Music of the Olympic Spirit
Program Commission District(s): 3

Grant funds will support Symphony of Nations: Music of the Olympic Spirit, an educational concert for approximately 650 Miami-Dade students ages 8–14, presented Spring 2027 at Corpus Christi Catholic Church. Activities include a live orchestral performance with narration introducing orchestral instruments & global musical traditions. Students will engage in music appreciation & cultural learning, gaining insight into how music reflects international cultures, collaboration, & creativity.

26 - The Dance NOW! Ensemble, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$27,988

PO Box 416525
Miami Beach, Florida 33141 (Dist 4)
Dance NOW! Miami Long term residency at Hialeah Middle School
Program Commission District(s): 3, 13

Grant funds will be used to support a 10-week Public School Residency for 60 students ages 11–14, Oct 2026–May 2027 at Hialeah Middle School. Students will take dance technique classes, creative composition workshops, and mentoring sessions in performance development. Activities also include creating original choreography, coaching in contemporary and modern dance, and performing in school/community showcases. The residency includes a free DNM performance at the Little Haiti Cultural Complex.

27 - True Mirage, Inc.

Recommended Award: \$10,000

15616 SW 85 Terrace
Miami, Florida 33193 (Dist 11)
Mini Mirage Theater
Program Commission District(s): 7, 8

Grant funds will be used to support Mini Mirage Theater for 70 students ages 12-18, October 1, 2026 to May 30, 2027 at the True Mirage Theater in Kendall. Project activities will include rehearsing full length musicals and plays, and participating in various public performances. Participants will engage in musical theatre, acting and technical theatre, and benefit from gaining social skills and confidence, musicianship, performance techniques, and historic knowledge.