

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

Solara Clark, Lead Specialist
Eileen May, Arts & Culture Director

SUBJECT

Resolution 2026-096 Approving FoCo Creates Grant Disbursements

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to approve FoCo Creates (formerly Fort Fund) grants from the Cultural Development and Programming Account and the Tourism Programming Account for the randomly-selected recipients of the Artist Opportunity Grant category.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Resolution.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The FoCo Creates grant program (formerly Fort Fund), established in 1989, distributes lodging tax revenues from the City's Cultural Development and Programming Account and the Tourism Programming Account in accordance with Section 25-244 of the City Code. Under the Code, 25% percent of lodging tax revenues are allocated to the Cultural Development and Programming Account, and 5% are allocated to the Tourism Programming Account. The Artist Opportunity Grant is funded through the Tourism Fund because the program was originally established as part of the City's tourism investment strategy.

The Artist Opportunity Grant is a new funding category introduced for the 2026 FoCo Creates grant cycle. The program provides unrestricted grants of \$3,000 to individual artists residing in Northern Colorado and Southern Wyoming and requires artists to present their arts to the community of Fort Collins. Eligible recipients are selected through a random lottery drawing. The FoCo Creates grant program currently consists of three funding categories: Program Support Grants (March application deadline), Artist Opportunity Grants (June application deadline), and Special Event Grants (September application deadline). The funding source reflects the program's connection to tourism and economic vitality goals, recognizing that a thriving arts community contributes to the City's cultural identity and attractiveness to visitors. While the grants are awarded directly to artists, the broader public benefit is the promotion of Fort Collins' creative sector and cultural assets.

FoCo Creates grants support arts and cultural programs, events and artists that strengthen the community's creative vitality, celebrate local heritage and diversity and expand opportunities for arts and cultural participation. The program also advances Fort Collins as a creative destination and contributes to the quality of life for residents and visitors. Grant recipients are required to provide a public benefit component

at the conclusion of their project, such as a performance, exhibition, presentation, or other community-facing event that is free and open to the public. City staff also partners with Visit Fort Collins to promote these events and opportunities, helping to showcase local artists and strengthen awareness of Fort Collins as a destination for arts and culture.

At the close of the June 12, 2026, application period, 312 applications had been submitted for the Artist Opportunity Grant. Following an eligibility review, 278 applicants were determined eligible and entered into the random lottery drawing. Staff conducted the drawing with Nancy Zola, Chair of the Arts and Culture Board, who selected the recipients at random. Twelve artists were selected to receive grants. Staff recommends approval of \$36,000 in grant funding for the selected applicants, as identified in Exhibit A to the Resolution.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The FoCo Creates (previously Fort Fund) grant program, established in 1989, disburses lodging tax revenues deposited in the City's Cultural Development and Programming Account and Tourism Programming Account in accordance with the provisions of Section 25-244 of the City Code. This Resolution would distribute \$36,000 from the Cultural Development and Programming Account and Tourism Programming Account to local non-profit organizations. These funds were budgeted and appropriated in the 2026 budget. Lodging tax is collected pursuant to Section 25-242 of the City Code.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Board approval is not required for this grant category, as recipients are selected through a random lottery process. The Arts and Culture Board Chair was invited to conduct the drawing of the selected artists, and the Arts and Culture Board will be informed of the selection results. Staff are presenting these funding recommendations to Council for approval of the grant in the amount of \$3,000 each to the selected artists, with funding provided through the Cultural Development and Programming Account and the Tourism Programming Account.

Exhibit A to the Resolution identifies the artists selected to receive funding through this grant program.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

None.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution 2026-096