

City Council OKs \$550,000 in local arts grants



The Salvador Dali Museum was awarded the largest city grant, \$19,216.35. Photo provided.

The St. Petersburg City Council voted unanimously to award \$550,000 in grants to local arts organizations, for fiscal year 2025.

The recommendations were made by the city's Arts Advisory Committee, a group consisting of nine St. Petersburg men and women who are in some way connected with the arts. "Not only do these individuals add a lot to our community by the work they already do in the arts," Councilmember Lisset Hanewicz said before the Nov. 21 vote, "they actually volunteer their time on this committee. They went through 38 applications, and it was a lot of work.

"We should all be very thankful for everything they do, because they keep our city special. And the arts keep our city special."

The council waived conflicts of interest for three committee members whose own arts organizations were awarded money: Erica Sutherlin (The Studio @620), Jorge Vidal (Florida Craft Art) and Rebecca Davis (St. Petersburg Opera Company).

Out of the 38 grant applications received, 37 were approved by the Arts Advisory Committee.

The annual city grants were especially gratifying, Sutherlin told the council, since Florida Governor Ron DeSantis vetoed all state funding for the arts last June.

She also stressed the importance of supporting each organization's backstage operations. The visual and performing arts are businesses. "It is the operations that allow the programs to happen. So without that operational support, as much as we love to stand behind the programs, they cannot exist."

The Studio @620's artistic executive director, who chairs the Arts Advisory Committee, also hinted at a brighter future for the city's cultural landscape.

“We had four new organizations apply for the grants,” she said, “so that tells me that we are going in the right direction as we continue to grow and expand arts in our community.”

FY 2025 arts grants (alphabetically)

1. Academy of Ballet Arts \$12,389.50
2. Al Downing Tampa Bay Jazz Assoc. \$5,940.21
3. Museum of the American Arts and Crafts Movement \$16,860.47
4. American Stage \$18,509.65
5. Artz 4 Life Academy \$17,187.64
6. Bill Edwards Foundation for the Arts (Big 3 Entertainment) \$18,147.36
7. Chorale Masterworks Festival/Master Chorale of Tampa Bay \$12,142.15
8. Creative Clay \$18,366.35
9. DMG School Project Inc. \$12,098.24
10. Embracing our Differences \$17,078.56
11. EMIT \$6,041.85
12. Florida CraftArt \$18,331.01
13. freeFall Theatre \$18,518.16
14. Friends of the Festival, Inc. (Tampa International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival) \$11,531.13
15. Girls Rock St. Pete Inc. \$11,483.88
16. Great Explorations Children’s Museum \$18,692.22
17. Gulf Coast Artists’ Alliance Inc. \$5,765.57
18. Imagine Museum \$17,209.45
19. In Touch with Communities Around the World, Inc./Arts Conservatory for Teens \$17,994.68
20. James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art \$18,496.35
21. Keep St. Pete Lit \$5,896.36
22. Morean Arts Center \$18,894.41
23. Museum of Fine Arts of St. Petersburg, Inc. \$18,670.84
24. Poynter Institute for Media Studies \$18,038.30
25. Salvador Dali Museum \$19,216.35
26. St Petersburg Int’l Folk Fair Society Inc \$5,969

27. St Petersburg Preservation Inc (Preserve the 'Burg) \$11,749.25
28. St. Pete Arts Alliance \$18,670.62
29. St. Pete College/Palladium Theater \$18,867.15
30. St. Pete Pride, Inc. \$17,493.01
31. St. Pete/Clearwater Film Society (Sunscreen Film Festival) \$12,083.26
32. St. Petersburg Historical Society, Inc./Museum of History \$18,256.42
33. St. Petersburg Opera \$18,575.41
34. The Studio@620 \$12,187.30
35. Tampa Bay Symphony \$6,005.50
36. The Florida Holocaust Museum \$18,735.40
37. Warehouse Arts District Association \$17,906.99