

Meeting Minutes
Metro Arts Commission
Grants and Funding Committee
September 15, 2026
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
1417 Murfreesboro Pike
Nashville, TN 37217



Committee Members Present: Heather Lefkowitz (Chair), Camille Greer, Shawn Knight, Henry Walker, Ashley Bachelder (Executive Director, ex-officio)

Committee Members Absent: Timothy Jester

Metro Staff Present: Jackie Hansom, Josiah Golson, Sydney Ortiz, and Vivian Foxx

A. Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Lefkowitz called the meeting to order at 1:12 p.m. Vivian Foxx conducted a roll call and welcomed new committee members.

B. Public Comments

No public comments were submitted online or offered in-person.

C. Approval of Minutes: August 10, 2026

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commissioner Lefkowitz. The motion passed.

D. Discussion/Action Items

1. FY27 Guidelines for Community Arts Leaders of Nashville (CALN) Internship Program (Action)

Josiah Golson presented the proposed FY27 guidelines for the Community Arts Leaders (CALN) of Nashville internship program. CALN provides paid internships at Nashville-based arts organizations, mentorship with local arts professionals, and professional development for undergraduate students. Each participating arts organization that serves as an intern host site will receive a \$6,700 grant, of which \$3,750 is paid to the intern, \$450 to the mentor, and \$2,500 for administrative support for the host site. Staff anticipate awarding six to eight internships for the spring 2027. Josiah reviewed outcomes from the previous year, additional program goals and details, and a tentative timeline. Commissioners asked follow up and clarifying questions.

A motion was made to approve the FY27 Community Arts Leaders of Nashville internship program guidelines by Commissioner Knight and seconded by Commission Walker. Motion passed.

The recommended guidelines will go to the full commission for approval, then Metro Council. Applications will open on October 7, 2026, pending all approvals.

2. FY27 Grant Cycle Debrief: Staff Report and Discussion

Jackie Hansom presented a staff report on activities since the August grants meeting. All grant applicants have been notified of the outcomes and next steps. Staff are preparing to process contracts. Upcoming engagement opportunities include structured Report-Back Sessions, drop-in sessions, a new grant writing support session, and virtual welcome/kickoff sessions for grantees and fiscal sponsors.

Jackie provided a summary of technical denials, noting six denials in Operating and 20 in Thrive, down significantly from the previous cycle. She recapped total requested funds in this cycle. Fully funding the 90 eligible Operating applicants would have required approximately \$6.4M, against an actual Operating budget of approximately \$1.9M. Fully funding the 186 eligible Thrive applicants would have required approximately \$2.8M, against an actual Thrive budget of \$1.3M.

The committee reviewed data from panelists' post-panel survey. Survey data showed strong overall agreement and satisfaction with the process, with numerous testimonies and examples. The primary area for concern noted in the surveys was that application review took longer than expected.

Staff are incorporating feedback into process improvements, along with other "parking lot" considerations. Planning is underway to re-open panelist applications before the year-end. Ongoing staff priorities include contract execution, vendor set up, engagement sessions, finalizing closeout reports, and analysis and planning for the next cycle. The committee continued discussion and reflections, including priorities to highlight for the full commission.

3. Monthly Meeting Time

The committee discussed the need to adjust the monthly meeting time. The remaining meetings for the year will be moved to Tuesdays, and the schedule will be re-evaluated in the new year. Revised remaining meetings dates, at 1:00 p.m., are:

- Tuesday, October 13, 2026
- Tuesday, November 10, 2026
- Tuesday, December 8, 2026

E. New Business

A request as made for staff to identify their top priority items from the committee's ongoing "parking lot" list, to help guide the committee focus on going into the next grant cycle.

F. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:37 p.m.