



Arapahoe County

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Board Summary Report

File #: 26-374

Agenda Date: 7/28/2026

Agenda #:

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Michelle Halstead, Director, Commissioners' Office

Prepared By:
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Presenter: Daniela Villarreal, Management Analyst, Commissioners' Office

Subject:
Arapahoe County Cultural Council 2026-2027 Funding Recommendations for the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District Tier III Awards

Purpose and Request:

The Arapahoe County Cultural Council requests formal adoption of the recommended 2026-2027 Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) Tier III awards as presented in the Study Session on June 16, 2026.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Economic Resilience and Stability - Support long-term economic resilience through responsible fiscal and investment strategies.

Background and Discussion:

The Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) is a seven-county tax district established under Colorado law, approved by the Colorado General Assembly, and repeatedly renewed by voters for more than 30 years. SCFD distributes funds generated by a 0.1% (1/10 of 1%) sales and use tax to qualified cultural organizations across the Denver metro area through a three-tier funding structure:

1. Tier I provides direct funding to the largest cultural organizations based on a formula defined in state statute.
2. Tier II supports regional organizations, such as the City of Aurora Cultural Services Division and Wings Over the Rockies, which qualify by meeting specific budget and attendance thresholds.
3. Tier III allocates funding to each participating county, which in turn distributes its share through local Cultural Councils, such as the Arapahoe County Cultural Council (ACCC).

The Arapahoe County Cultural Council (ACCC) is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to review applications and make funding recommendations for the County's share of SCFD revenue, in accordance with SCFD's established grant process and timeline. Once the BOCC approves the ACCC's recommendations, they are submitted to the SCFD Board for final ratification. For the 2026/2027 grant cycle, Arapahoe County's share of SCFD tax revenue is \$2,621,753.14, including \$9,782.00 uncommitted funds from the previous year. Tier III funds may be used for general operating support or for specific projects proposed by eligible non-profit and governmental entities. SCFD issued a call for grant applications earlier this year, with deadlines of:

- March 4, 2026, for multi-county Tier III applications.

- March 11, 2026, for single-county application.

The ACCC met weekly from April 2 through May 21, 2026, to review and evaluate 108 grant submissions, using the council's established evaluation criteria (see attached for details). For this cycle, the Cultural Council recommends funding all submitted applications, which include:

-32 of 33 eligible General Operating Support (GOS) requests

-75 Project requests Please see the attached summary for a breakdown of the ACCC's recommendations.

Alternatives: The Board could choose not to approve the recommendations.

Fiscal Impact: Arapahoe County's share of SCFD Tier III funding for the 2026/2027 grant cycle is \$2,621,753.14, which includes uncommitted/returned funds from the previous year. The total recommended funding amount is equal to Arapahoe County's available share of funds.

Alignment with Strategic Implementation Strategies: N/A

Concurrence: Arapahoe County Cultural Council.