



Arapahoe County

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Board Summary Report

File #: 25-389

Agenda Date: 7/22/2025

Agenda #: 7.a.

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Michelle Halstead, Director, Commissioners' Office

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

Presenter: Daniela Villarreal, Management Analyst, Commissioners' Office

Subject:
Arapahoe County Cultural Council's 2025-2026 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 2025/2026 Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) Tier III awards.

Background and Discussion: The Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) is a seven-county tax district established in Colorado law, approved by the General Assembly, and repeatedly renewed by voters for over 30 years. SCFD distributes funds from a 0.1% (one-tenth of one percent) sales and use tax to eligible cultural organizations across the Denver metro area through three tiers:

- Tier I: The largest cultural institutions receive direct funding based on a formula defined in state statute.
- Tier II: Regional organizations, such as the City of Aurora Cultural Services Division and Wings Over the Rockies, qualify for funding by meeting specific budget and attendance thresholds.
- Tier III: Each participating county receives a portion of the tax revenue and allocates those funds to local organizations through its County Cultural Council.

The Arapahoe County Cultural Council is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to solicit and screen applications from eligible non-profit and/or governmental entities for Arapahoe County's portion of the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District sales tax, consistent with SCFD's established grant process and timeline, ultimately making recommendations to the BOCC for approval and ratification by the SCFD Board of Directors. Over the last five years, more than \$12 million of Tier III funding has supported over 500 local art, cultural, scientific, and historical organizations that benefit Arapahoe County's residents. For 2025/2026, Arapahoe County's share of the SCFD tax revenue is \$2,572,863.94.

The SCFD issued the Tier III competitive grant call for applications earlier this year. The multi-county grant deadline was March 5, 2025, and the single-county deadline was March 12, 2025. Tier III funding can be used to support both general operating costs and specific projects. The Arapahoe County Cultural Council met weekly from April 3 through June 5, 2025, to review and evaluate 93 qualified grant submittals, using established criteria from the County Cultural Council. The proposed recommendations for 2025/2026 funding include awards to 31 general operating support (GOS) requests and 62 project requests. The Board of County Commissioners reviewed the Cultural Council's recommendations during the June 16, 2025, study session,

which is attached for reference.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact, funds are received through SCFD.

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

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- ☐ Be fiscally sustainable
- ☐ Provide essential and mandated service
- ☒ Be community focused

Staff Recommendation: To approve the Arapahoe County Cultural Council recommendations for the 2025/2026 SCFD Tier III awards.

Concurrence: Arapahoe County Cultural Council.

Suggestion Motion: I move to approve the 2025/2026 funding recommendations of the Arapahoe County Cultural Council for the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District Tier III awards as presented.

Resolution: Attached is a copy of the recommended draft resolution.