



Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2027, 2028, 2029

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IMAGINING WHAT PCF CAN MAKE POSSIBLE

PCF's 3-year strategic plan for fiscal years 2027, 2028, and 2029 was developed in collaboration with AFE Strategies to clarify its role, values, and vision for Philadelphia's art and culture sector.

Building on the foundation of participatory grantmaking established with PCF 35 years ago, our approach:

- Ensures that PCF's decisions are shaped by what our community says they need to be healthy, sustainable, and impactful.
- Reignites PCF and sparks its role as a transformational partner that helps strengthen, champion and sustain our community.

The strategic plan will evolve as a living roadmap, and what our community tells us is working—or not working—matters. The plan includes regular opportunities for reflection and assessment to evaluate PCF's impact on grantees, the broader community, and PCF itself.

VISION

the Philadelphia we want to create:

A Philadelphia where creativity is valued and cultures thrive.

MISSION

why PCF exists:

PCF champions equitable grantmaking for Philadelphia's art and culture community by providing sustainable, unrestricted funding to community-based art and culture organizations.

VALUES

what guides our equity-centered approach to grantmaking:

Accessibility • Artistic & Creative Expression • Community
• Interconnection & Collaboration • Learning & Reflection •
Wellness & Sustainability • Trust

STRATEGIC PILLARS

What PCF will work toward during the life of the plan:

PILLAR 1

We advance community, equity & access by supporting a more equitable and connected art and culture ecosystem where community voice shapes decisions, barriers to access are reduced, and Philadelphia's art and culture organizations have the resources, relationships, and support they need to thrive.

PILLAR 2

We build relationships & advance the sector by strengthening the partnerships, advocacy, and public and philanthropic relationships needed to expand investment in art and culture and elevate their essential roles in Philadelphia.

PILLAR 3

We sustain and strengthen PCF's people, systems, governance, and resources so we can live PCF's values, steward public and philanthropic dollars responsibly, and sustain our support for Philadelphia's art and culture community over time.

A 3-YEAR GRANT CYCLE

PCF will introduce a multi-year funding cycle with fixed-amount general operating grants in the 2027 Grant Cycle.

Multi-year grantees will receive funding over the course of 3 years (2027, 2028, 2029). While PCF will not be accepting new applications within those three years, PCF will be offering free, public capacity-building programming for professional development, workshops, gatherings, and opportunities for shared learning.

Through this initiative, PCF will support long-term organizational health that impacts art and culture organizations' sustainability, capacity, and ability to plan for the future.

ART and CULTURE DEFINITIONS and PRACTICES

These elements were made public in October 2025 with the launch of the first phase of PCF's Strategic Plan. Phase 1 guided and informed PCF's execution of the 2026 Grant Cycle.



is the expression of
creativity.



is the shared experience of traditions,
histories, values, and environments.

Art & Culture connect us through our pasts, presents, and futures. While interrelated, they can also exist separately.

PCF funds art and culture organizations across artistic disciplines and cultural practices, and we use broad definitions to acknowledge those expansive, multidisciplinary practices.

PCF Categorizes PRACTICES of Art and Culture as:

1. **CREATION** *DEVELOPING*

2. **EDUCATION** *TEACHING*

3. **EXHIBITION &
PERFORMANCE**
DISPLAYING, EMBODYING, SHOWING

4. **PRESENTATION**
CURATING, PRODUCING, PUBLISHING

5. **PRESERVATION**
MAINTAINING AND PROTECTING

6. **SERVICE**
Providing access for specific
communities to art & culture practices
and/or providing a specific assistance
for those within the art and culture
community.

PRIORITIES, IMPLEMENTATION, AND IMPACT

Our strategic plan has three pillars that create clear priorities for PCF. Each pillar is supported by an objective.

PILLAR 1: Advancing Community, Equity & Access

- **Focus:** Direct support to grantees and communities, including grantmaking, capacity building, and community engagement.
- **Objective:** Support a more equitable and connected art and culture ecosystem where community voice shapes decisions, barriers to access are reduced, and Philadelphia's art and culture organizations have the resources, relationships, and support they need to thrive.

PILLAR 2: Building Relationships & Advancing the Sector

- **Focus:** PCF's outward-facing roles as a partner, convener, advocate, and intermediary.
- **Objective:** Strengthen the partnerships, advocacy, and public and philanthropic relationships needed to expand investment in art and culture and elevate their essential roles in Philadelphia.

PILLAR 3: Sustaining & Strengthening PCF

- **Focus:** PCF's internal infrastructure, including staffing, operations, finance, communications, data, and governance.
- **Objective:** Strengthen people, systems, governance, and resources so we can live our values, steward public and philanthropic dollars responsibly, and sustain our support for Philadelphia's art and culture community over time.

Across all three pillars, the work moves through a shared implementation arc:

Year 1: Building the Foundation - design, clarify, and launch the tools, structures, relationships, and practices needed to support implementation.

Year 2: Deepen the Work - put those structures into practice, expand support for grantees and partners, and strengthen alignment across programs, partnerships, operations, finance, and governance.

Year 3: Reflect & Refine - assess what is working, refine approaches, and strengthen the systems needed to sustain the work over time.

To evaluate our evolving role and impact, some questions we will be asking are:

1. How accessible are PCF's application and funding processes? Are there barriers to applying or participating?
2. Are we modeling PCF's values in our organizational, staff, and Board culture?
3. How do grantees and community members define capacity building, and how is PCF meeting those needs?
4. What benefits do grantees, panelists, and community members gain from engaging with PCF (e.g., knowledge, relationships, wellness, funding, etc.)?
5. In what ways has PCF's funding stabilized, even as funding from the City of Philadelphia's allocation varies each year?

SUPPORTING THE CONDITIONS FOR A THRIVING SECTOR

A 3-YEAR FUNDING CYCLE AND CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMS

A core facet of this plan is PCF's implementation of a more equitable funding model that better meets organizations where they are and recognizes the real costs of sustaining community-based art and culture work. Building on PCF's history of multi-year funding, PCF will offer fixed grant amounts, greater predictability, and a more intentional focus on grantee support and community-building.

Through a multi-year funding cycle with fixed grant amounts for fiscal years 2027, 2028, and 2029, PCF will support long-term organizational health that impacts organizations' sustainability, capacity, and ability to plan for the future.

The three-year funding model reflects PCF's commitment to more equitable, reliable, and relationship-centered grantmaking. It is informed by feedback from nearly 100 grantees and community members who participated in surveys and focus groups during the planning process.

Participants consistently emphasized that equity is not only about access to funding, but also about reliability and the ability to plan. Feedback also highlighted the importance of professional development, workshops, gatherings, and opportunities for organizations to learn from one another. This support can allow funders to provide professional development and foster community among grantees.

As one focus group participant reflected: “[Longer-term funding] is not just a grant disbursement, it’s an embrace.” For grantees, the model is designed to provide:

1. Greater predictability and stability through multi-year support.
2. Stronger organizational planning and capacity, particularly for smaller and community-based organizations.
4. More opportunities for relationship-building, shared learning, and peer connection.
5. Deeper engagement between PCF and grantees beyond the grant itself through our capacity-building initiatives.

For PCF, the model is also designed to provide stronger organizational and operational capacity to deepen our impact, support the professional development of our staff and Board, and afford us more opportunities to build relationships with the art and culture sector and beyond.

Questions about the new funding model? See the [FAQ](#).

WHAT COMES NEXT

LEARNING AS WE EVOLVE

The strategic plan will evolve as a living roadmap. What our community tells us is working—or not working—matters.

The three-year funding cycle is not intended as a permanent commitment, rather it is an opportunity to test and learn from a more equitable and relationship-centered approach. The plan includes regular opportunities for reflection and assessment to evaluate PCF’s impact on grantees, the broader community, and PCF itself.

PCF’s commitment is to our core values like equity, community, trust, collaboration, learning and reflection, and wellness. As PCF gathers feedback and evaluates outcomes, the model can continue to evolve to best serve the community and advance the organization’s mission.

Additionally, we will continue growing PCF’s role beyond grantmaking – as a convener, connector, advocate, and partner. The strategic plan gives this work greater clarity and structure for PCF’s capacity-building programming so PCF can strengthen organizations, elevate community-based arts and culture, build aligned partnerships, and attract the resources needed for a more sustainable sector.

FAQ: 3-Year Grant Cycle

How long will the new grant cycle be?

The multi-year Grant Cycle (included as part of our FY27-FY29 strategic plan) will open in 2027 and be closed until 2029. Grantees within the 2027 Cycle will be awarded a multi-year grant and will receive fixed grant amounts in 2027, 2028, and 2029 based on continued eligibility without having to reapply

Will PCF be open for new applications from FY27-FY29?

No. After the 2027 Grant Cycle Application closes, PCF will not be accepting new applications until 2029.

This decision reflects PCF's commitment to more equitable, reliable, and relationship-centered grantmaking. It is informed by feedback from nearly 100 grantees and community members who participated in surveys and focus groups during the strategic planning process. Participants consistently emphasized that equity is not only about access to funding, but also about reliability of funding and the ability to plan longer-term.

Will grantees receive the same amount of funding each year?

Art & Culture Grant amounts depend on the yearly allocation amount to PCF from The City of Philadelphia. The Community Impact Grants, powered by a 4-year grant to PCF from the William Penn Foundation (for grant cycles years 2026, 2027, 2028, and 2029), will be consistently awarded in the amount of \$10,000.

When will the 2027 Grant Applications open?

Applications for the Art & Culture Grant or the Community Impact Grant will open in the fall of 2026.

Still have questions? Please reach out to us at info@philaculturalfund.org