



Snohomish County

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Snohomish County Awards \$500,000 in Pandemic Recovery Grants to 21 Arts and Culture Organizations

SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash., May 10, 2023 – Executive Dave Somers today announced that Snohomish County is awarding \$500,000 to 21 arts and culture organizations. The Arts and Culture Recovery Grants fund organizations so they can continue activities that support public benefit and enhance community engagement through mid-to-large events and festivals held in Snohomish County. These grants are funded through the County’s federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation.

According to data from the Snohomish County Arts Commission’s [Future of Arts and Culture Project: Phase One Industries Assessment](#), the Snohomish County arts and culture industry lost approximately 30 percent of its workforce between 2019 and 2020. Despite initial progress, if the recovery rate continues without added support, the arts and culture sector will lag approximately 960 workers behind where it would have been had the pandemic never occurred.

“A thriving arts and culture sector is important for our economy, helps generate jobs, and is part of what makes Snohomish County an ideal place to live, work, and play,” said Executive Somers. “There’s no denying that artists, makers, and cultural organizations have been significantly impacted by COVID-19 and the resulting economic downturn. By supporting arts and culture, we can give our economy and workforce a boost and foster opportunities for us to gather as a community.”

“Arts and culture were two of the most impacted industries during the pandemic economic shutdowns,” said Vice Chair Nate Nehring ([District 1](#)). “Snohomish County is home to many great artists and creators who contribute to the beauty and enjoyment of our communities. These grants will help boost the arts and culture sectors of our economy and promote their contributions to Snohomish County.”

“Cultural events and performing arts increase our quality of life and celebrate our rich diversity. I’m excited to see these award winners and can’t wait to attend and support these events,” said Councilmember Megan Dunn ([District 2](#)).

“Our arts organizations and festivals suffered some of the worst economic effects during the pandemic, but these are exactly the places and spaces we need now, more than ever, as we start to gather again and to restore our sense of community,” said Councilmember Strom Peterson ([District 3](#)).

“By investing in arts and culture we keep our communities reflective of our residents and a vibrant place to live and visit. By doing this we are also supporting job creation and retention for artists while boosting our local economy,” said Councilmember Sam Low ([District 5](#)).

The Arts and Culture Recovery Grants were distributed in two categories:

1. Nonprofit Recovery Grants – Eligible Arts and Culture 501(c)(3) organizations with a minimum pandemic revenue loss of \$2,000.
2. Festivals and Events Recovery Grants – Events characterized as having an operating budget over \$100,000 and a pandemic revenue loss of at least \$2,000.

Awarded organizations represent a variety of smaller and grassroots arts and culture organizations serving Snohomish County. The loss experienced by applicants as a result of the pandemic ranged from \$2,000 to \$4,000,000, with a median loss of \$36,000. Grant awards range from \$5,000 to \$60,000. For a number of the awarded festivals and events, this award is enabling them to continue planned events for 2023 or 2024.

“At Ballyhoo, our specialty is working with LGBTQIA2S+ teens/young adults and their allies to tell either existing queer stories or adapting traditional stories to become queer inclusive while still honoring the original intention of the work. Our priority is to create a safe and inclusive space for young performers to be seen and joyously accepted, and to explore, learn and thrive,” said Shileah Corey, Artistic Director, Ballyhoo Theatre. “This grant will allow us to provide scholarships and travel stipends to numerous students, help us continue to create a diverse student body, allow us to present one of our summer shows completely tuition-free for all participants, and to further our mission of inclusive ticket pricing (including free tickets) for upcoming productions.”

"If you ask someone from Edmonds what they love so much about it here, there's a good chance they'd list off one of the signature events that the Edmonds Chamber of Commerce produces," said Ryan Crowther, President and CEO, Edmonds Chamber of Commerce. "Events are a piece of the soul of towns and cities across Snohomish County and are a vital tool in the recovery of small business and community connectivity. The Edmonds Chamber of Commerce cannot thank Executive Somers and Snohomish County enough for the timely response and for acknowledging the importance of arts, culture and gatherings in our community."

A full list of grantees and awarded amounts [is available here](#).

Executive Somers established the Office of Recovery and Resilience to guide the County’s recovery work by ensuring federal pandemic relief is administered quickly, effectively, and equitably. Information on the County’s recovery work can be found at www.snohomishcountywa.gov/recovery.

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