



# MILWAUKEE ARTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

Presented to the Community and  
Economic Development  
Committee, May 20, 2026

# MILWAUKEE ARTS BOARD PURPOSE AND CREATION

320-12. Arts Board. 1. CREATION. There is created an arts board consisting of 17 members appointed by the mayor for 3-year terms and confirmed by the common council. At least one member shall be selected from among the members of the common council, one member shall be selected from the membership of the Cultural, Artistic and Musical Programming Advisory Council and 2 shall represent the Milwaukee board of school directors. All members shall be city residents. No member may participate in any decision that would directly assist any organization to which the member belongs, except as a dues-paying member, or from which the member receives any benefit, except as a dues-paying member.

2. DUTIES AND POWERS. The board shall:

- a. Promote the development, support and enjoyment of the arts in this city.
- b. Promote cultural diversity in the artistic life of this city.
- c. Promote the formation and growth of artistic projects or programs that are administered by and responsive to the needs, cultural history and experiences of all city residents and the city's artistic community.
- d. Promote the design, construction and landscaping of public projects and private buildings, including public and private improvements, that enhance the beauty of this city.
- e. Determine the amounts to be expended from the Milwaukee arts fund in accordance with the guidelines established under sub. 3 and any additional written guidelines adopted by the board.
- f. Review the designs of projects in accordance with the guidelines established under sub. 4. (*elucidated on next slide*)
- g. Administer the municipal art fund established by s. 304-27 and seek grant opportunities to supplement the municipal art fund when appropriate.
- h. Submit annual reports to the common council and the mayor with respect to the board's activities under s. 304-27 and this section.

# MILWAUKEE ARTS BOARD



From left to right, 2025 Artists of the Year Aaron Boyd and Amal Azzam, MAB members David Flores and Tim Murphy, Mayor Johnson, 2025 Friends of the Arts Symphony Swan-Zawadi and Nakeysha Roberts Washington, and MAB member Amy O'Neill.

# MILDRED L. HARPOLE ARTISTS OF THE YEAR AND FRIENDS OF THE ARTS AWARDS

- The MAB accepts public nominations for these awards, and received many deserving nominations to consider this year.
- Artists of the Year and Friends of the Arts should promote the development, enjoyment, and cultural diversity of arts in Milwaukee as dictated by the MAB Code of Ordinance purpose.
- Friends of the Arts should also demonstrate exemplary support of the Milwaukee arts community through mentoring, teaching, philanthropy, advocacy, and/or building community
- The 2026 will be honored at the annual Arts Celebration, June 9<sup>th</sup> in the City Hall Rotunda. We hope you will join us!



Milwaukee's Youth Poet Laureate Aleena Ahmed at the podium for a reading during the Arts Celebration



2025 Friend of the Arts Symphony Swan-Zawadi and her son making Visibility Patches with Vision Zero during the Arts Celebration

# SUSTAINING GRANT PROGRAM

In 2026, 49 arts based nonprofits, all based in the city of Milwaukee, were awarded either \$3,000 or \$6,000 grants based on their organizational income, for a total of \$267,600 in grants made.

The \$250,000 from the City budget is supplemented by annual Wisconsin Arts Board re-granting dollars - \$28,500 in 2026

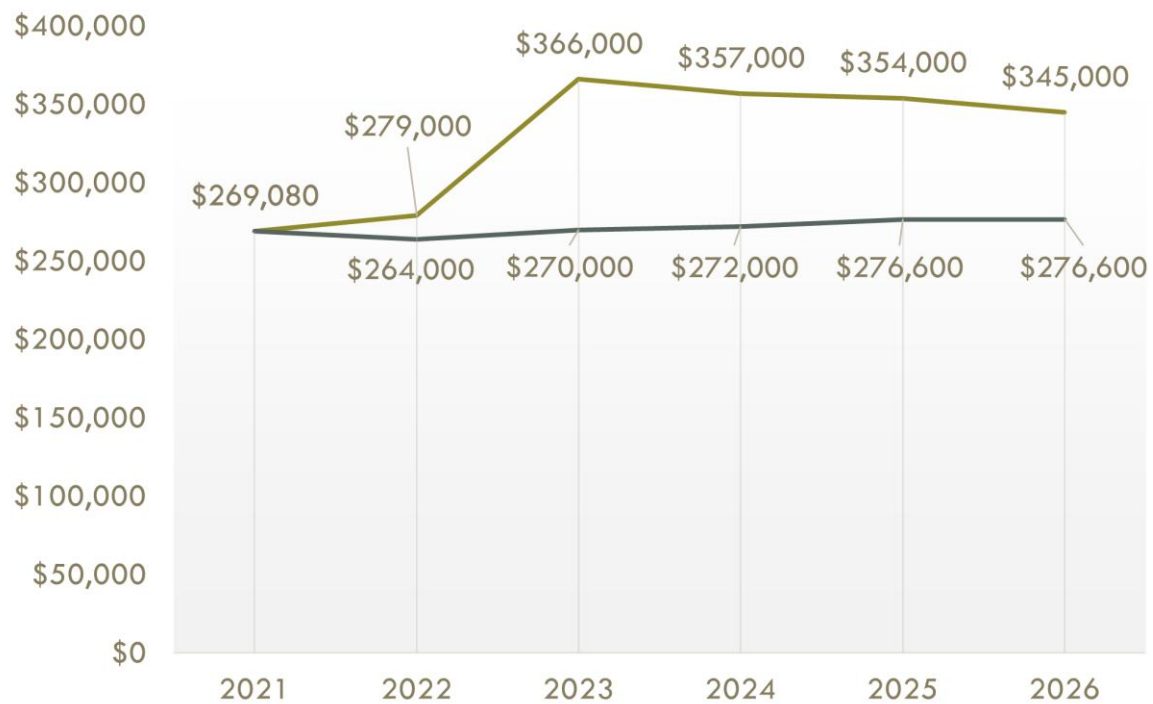
In 2026, MAB received 61 complete and eligible applications, which were reviewed by 8 panel members with recommendations for funding approved by the MAB.

The 2025 final reports are due June 30, 2026. In the 2024 final report, grantees reported on a program that met the purposes of the Arts Board. In total there were:

- 3,129 artists engaged (students, musicians, actors, artists, educators etc.)
- 435,033 people served (audience members, gallery attendees, zoom views, listeners, etc.)  
over 7,816 sessions

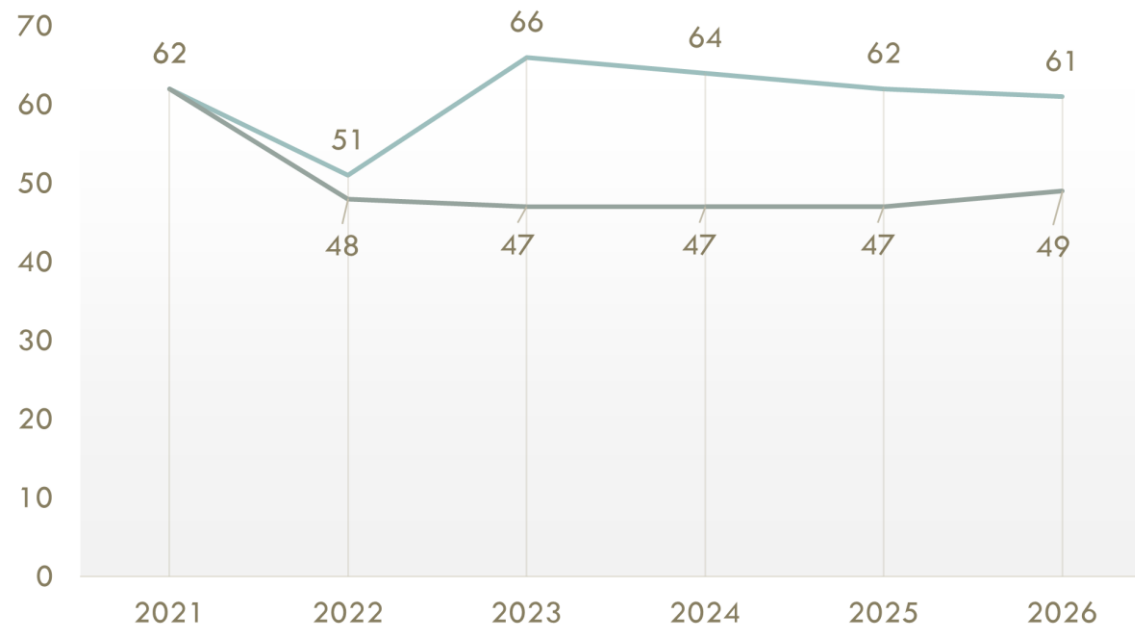
# SUSTAINING GRANT PROGRAM

### Dollar Amount Applied vs. Awarded



— \$ amount requested (eligible apps)  
— \$ amount awarded

### Applications Received vs. Awarded



— Total no. of eligible applications  
— No. of grants awarded

# SUSTAINING GRANT PROGRAM



Arts @ Large Artist in Residence DeMar Walker reciting a spoken word poem that speaks directly to his father, who passed away two years ago. DeMar has finished the dance portion of the show and is now accompanied by a local jazz musician as he speaks.



The New State (formerly West Side Arts Un Limited) DJ Sessions students from the 2024-25 season



Walker's Point Center for the Arts Summer Art Camp participants gather around Guest Teaching Artist Cabeatrice Hart during Environmental Arts week.

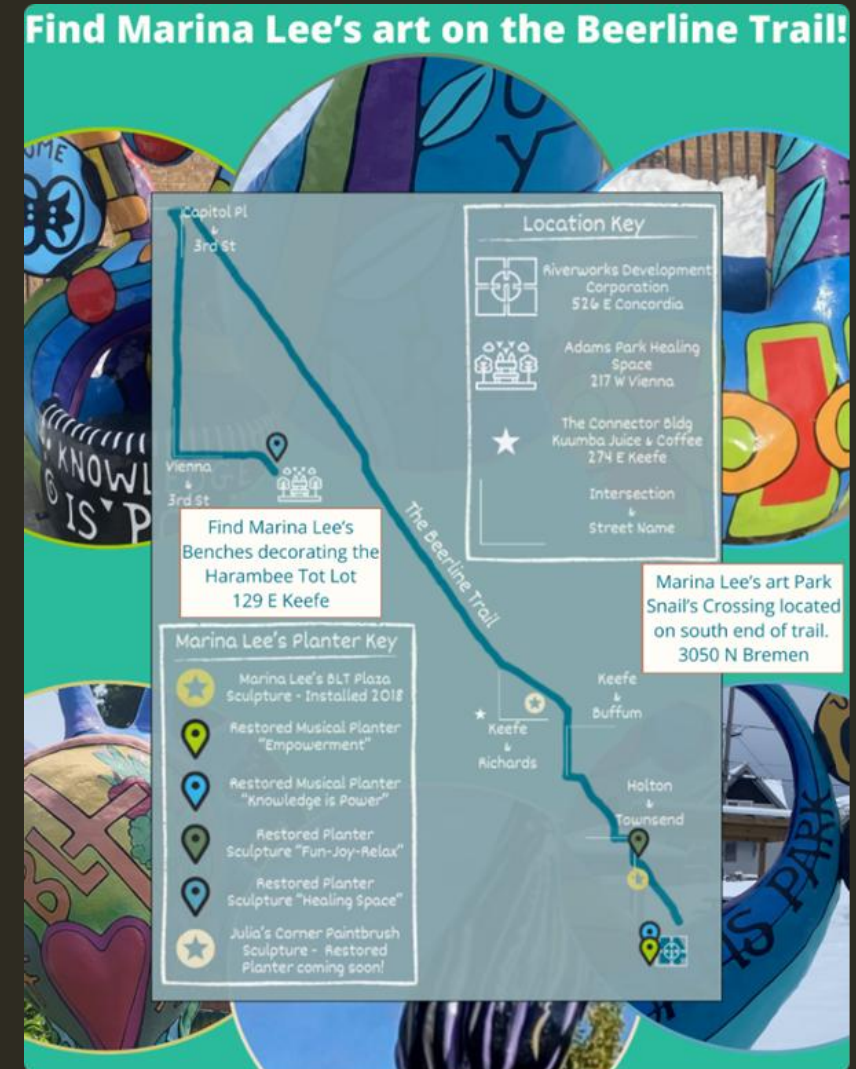
# PUBLIC ART CONSERVATION FUND



\$3,000 to restore and apply protectant to Reynaldo Hernandez's *Landmarks: A Tribute to a United Community* mural, awarded in 2025



\$4,000 to restore and resite four Marina Lee Planters, awarded and completed in 2025.



# PUBLIC ARTIST IN RESIDENCE (PAIR) PROGRAM

The Milwaukee Arts Board continues to operate the PAIR pilot program which embeds an artist in a City of Milwaukee department to bring an artist's voice, way of thinking, and creative vision to a specific pressing civic issue. Through mutual education between the artist and host department, PAIR demonstrates art's ability to spark important community conversations.

For this next iteration, the Milwaukee Fire Department has been selected as the host department. An artist and a PAIR liaison will be working with MFD and Milwaukee residents to address safe housing, a foundational issue impacting all Milwaukeeans and all City departments.

In alignment with Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson's designation of 2026 as the "Year of Housing," the residency will utilize the visibility of MFD's fire stations and vehicles to highlight the fundamental human right to affordable housing and safe, survivable housing. MFD is uniquely positioned as anchors in every neighborhood and centrally immersed in every one of the many diverse communities in Milwaukee.

The PAIR team will be attending a future CED meeting for a communication file related to the program, please stay tuned for that to be scheduled and look for communication from the PAIR Liaison asking for your questions!



# QUESTIONS?

More information at: [Milwaukee.gov/MAB](https://milwaukee.gov/MAB)

Contact [ArtsBoard@Milwaukee.gov](mailto:ArtsBoard@Milwaukee.gov)