



arts  
wave

Funding Arts. Fueling Community.

discover  
together

Affinity Grants  
2026

stronger  
arts for a  
stronger  
region



# Welcome

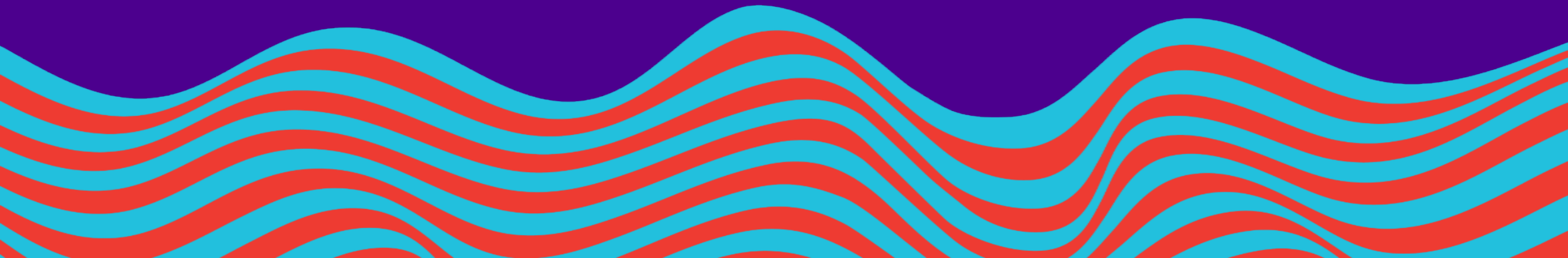
- *Session will be recorded and available at [ArtsWave.org/apply-for-funding/](https://ArtsWave.org/apply-for-funding/)*
- *Please type questions in chat*
- *Open Q&A at the end*



FY2026

# Affinity Grant Programs

- Circle
- Pride
- Young Professionals



# ArtsWave Team



**Ray Gargano**  
Vice President, Community  
Investments



**Lori Burkhardt**  
Manager, Grant Programs



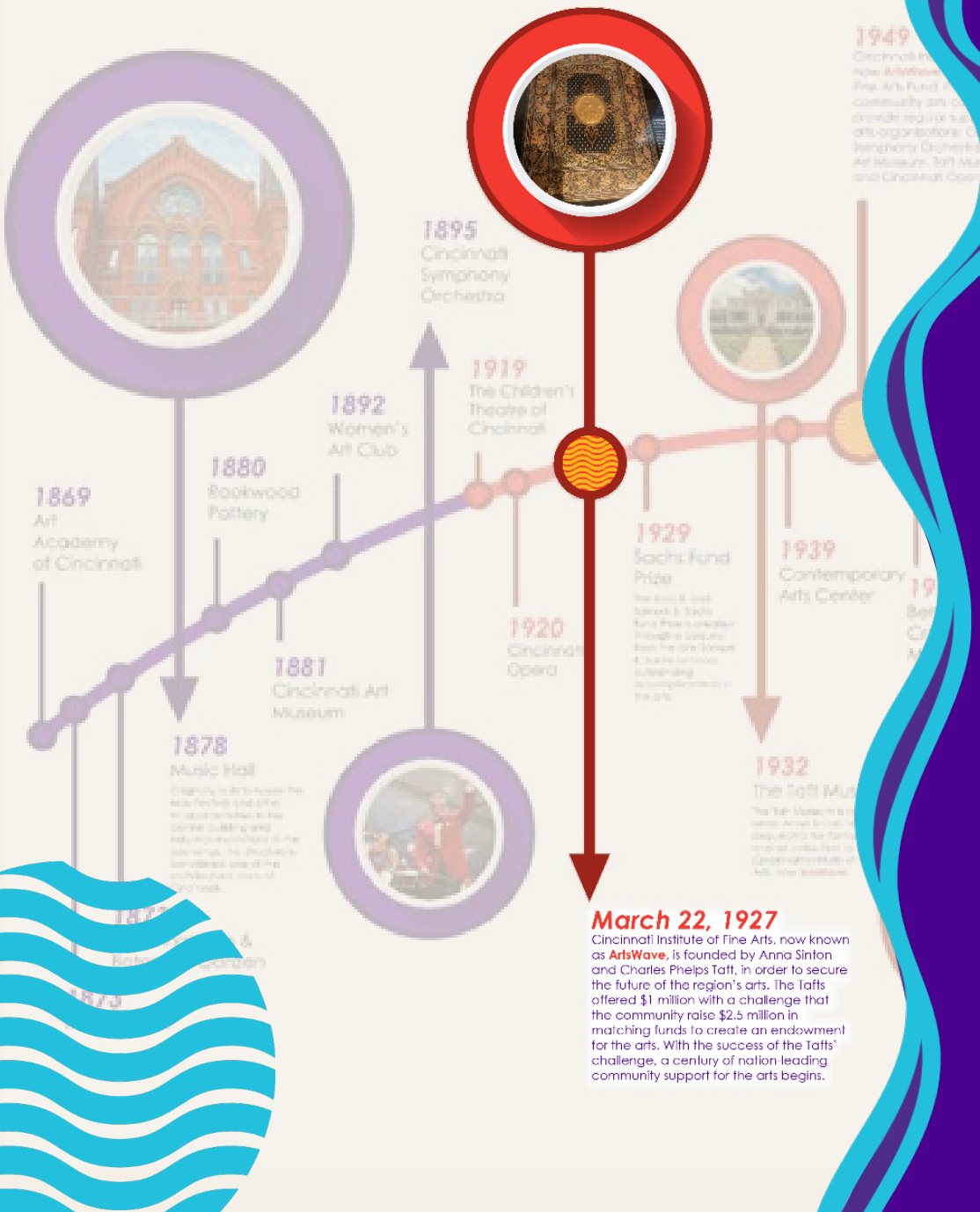
**Nick Wade**  
Manager, Community  
Campaign & Engagement



**Richard Mead**  
Manager, Community  
Campaign & Engagement



**Mahmoud Said**  
Manager, Community  
Campaign & Engagement



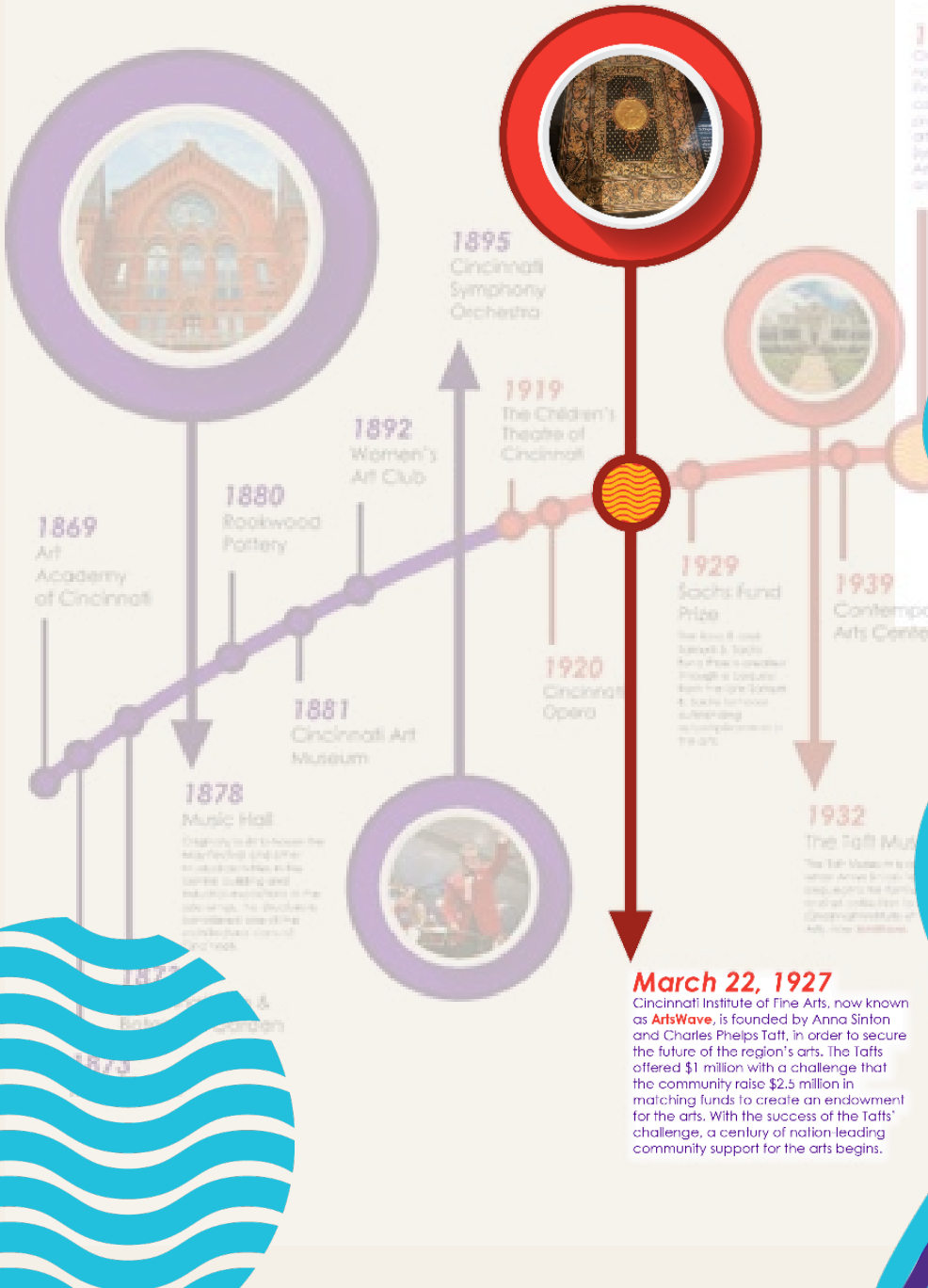
# A SHARED VISION *from the start*

## March 22, 1927

Cincinnati Institute of Fine Arts, now known as **ArtsWave**, is founded by Anna Sinton and Charles Phelps Taft, in order to secure the future of the region's arts. The Tafts offered \$1 million with a challenge that the community raise \$2.5 million in matching funds to create an endowment for the arts. With the success of the Tafts' challenge, a century of nation-leading community support for the arts begins.

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### March 22, 1927

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# A SHARED VISION accelerates



Funding Arts. Fueling Community.

# FAST FORWARD TO **TODAY**

Cincinnati's diverse arts are key to creating a...

**Vibrant Economy**

**Connected Community**

**TOP 20  
ARTS-VIBRANT  
REGION!**







# Arts Funding in Cincinnati



## TAXES?

There are no city, property or state taxes that fund local arts.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES?

No municipal or county-run agencies fund annual budgets for local arts.



## TICKET SALES?

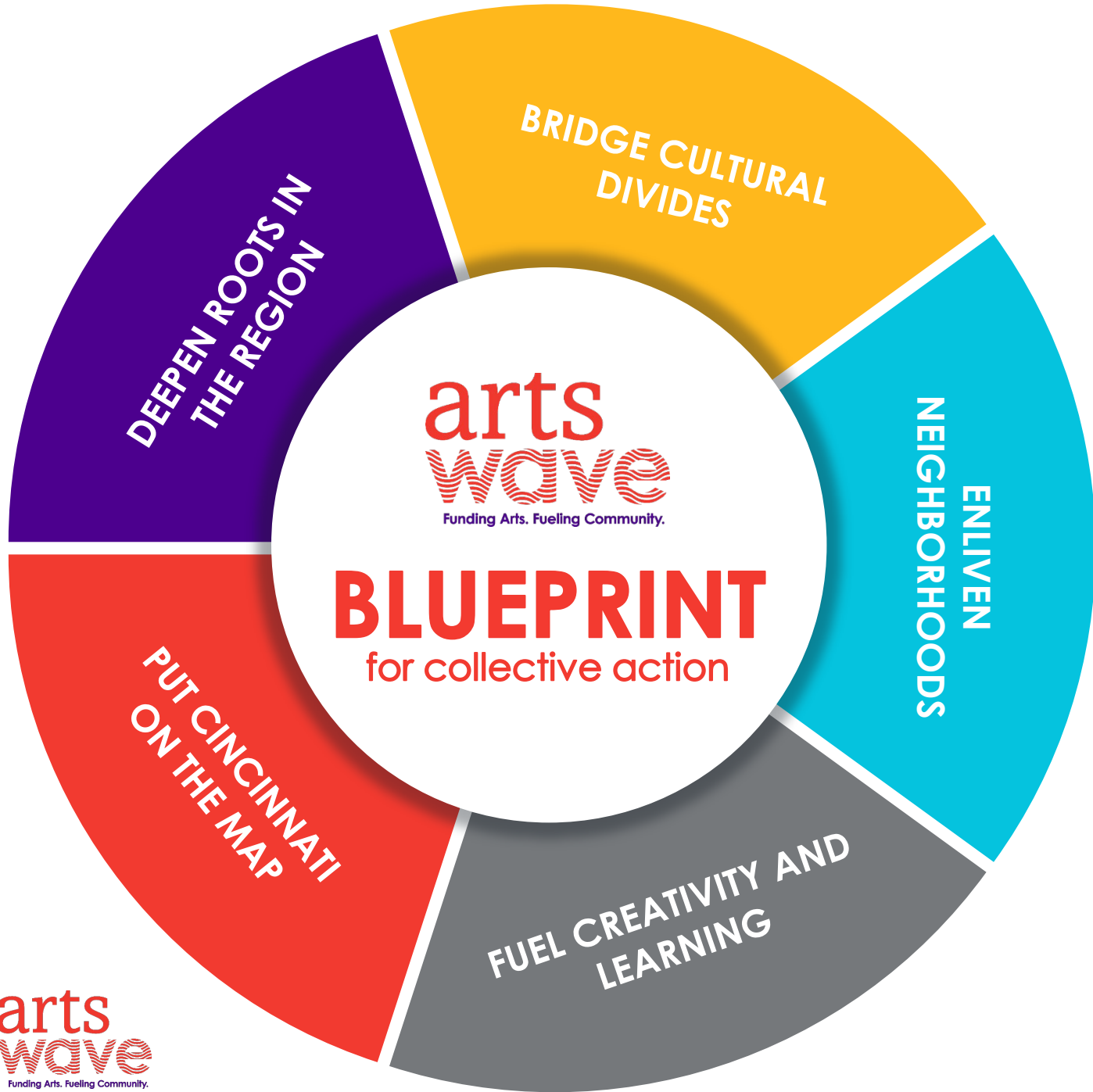
Ticket sales cover only some of annual operating expenses. The balance must come from people like you and me.



## NEARLY 25,000 PEOPLE GIVE TO ARTSWAVE!

ArtsWave provides critical funding to 150+ arts organizations every year.

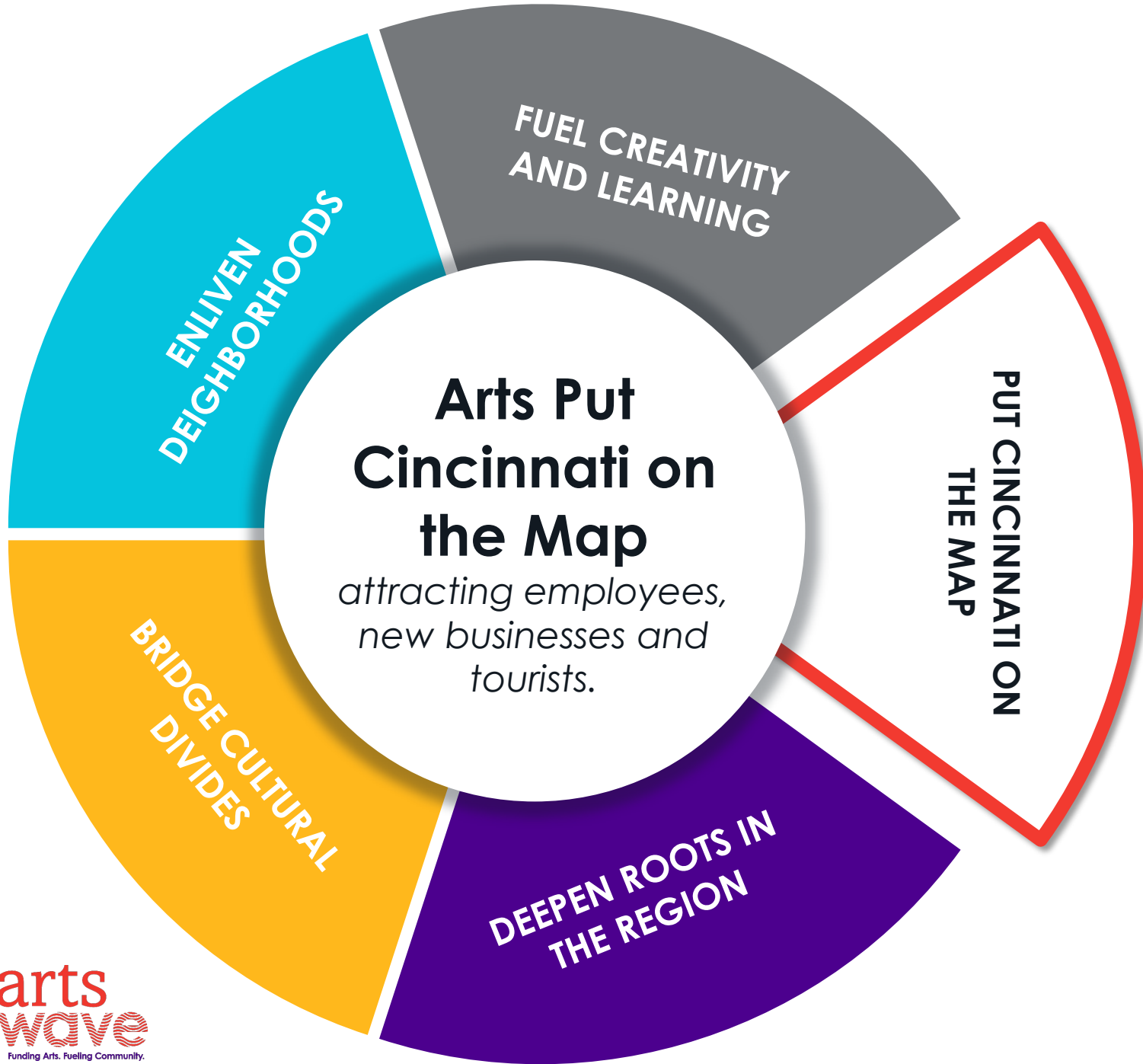




# **DRIVING IMPACT**

ArtsWave invests in five economic and social outcomes...through 150+ arts partners & projects





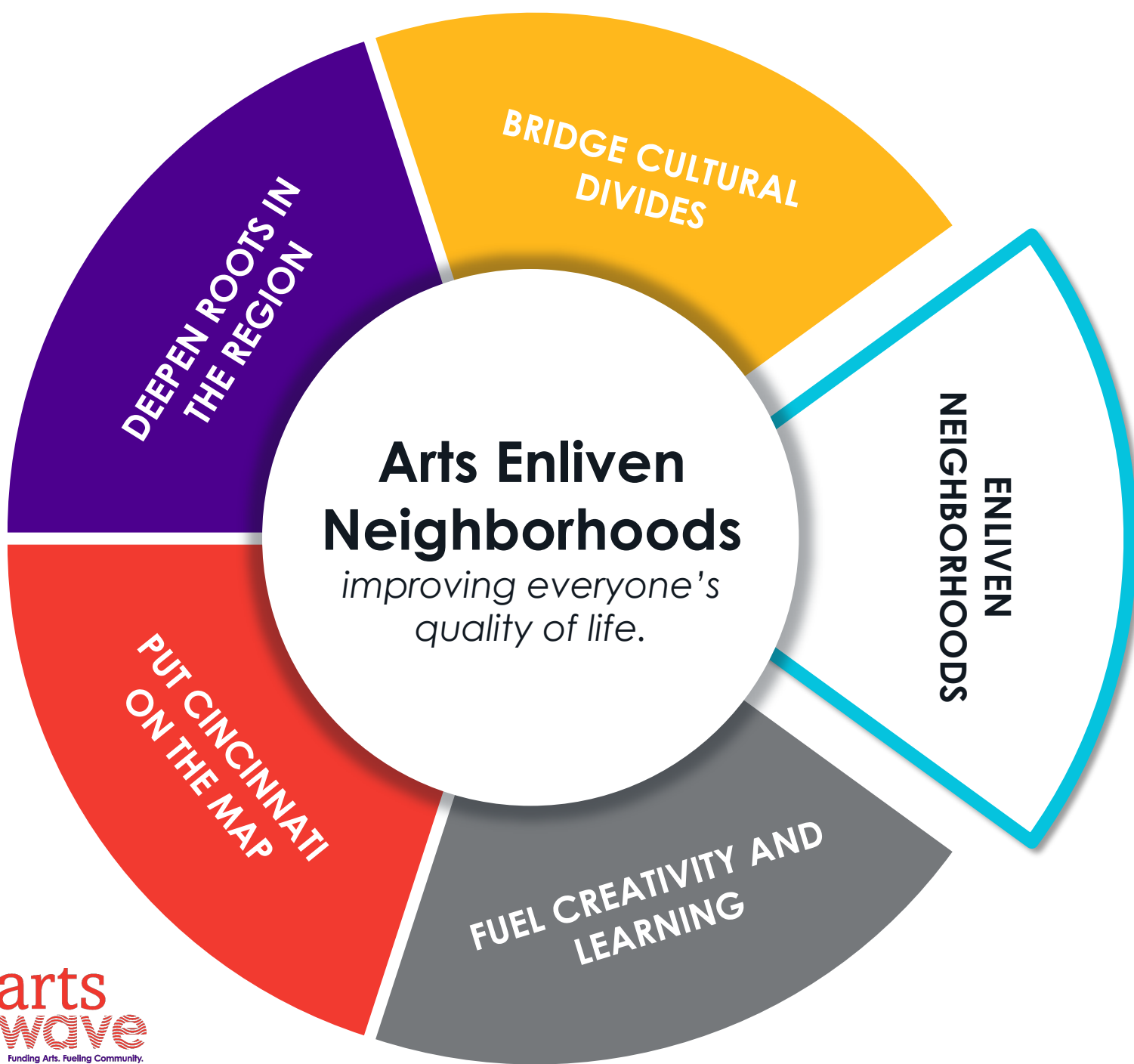
Cincinnati's **creative industries lead** Ohio in economic contribution.



Cincinnati ranks No. 2 in the nation for Street Art.



**BLINK®**, illuminated by **ArtsWave**, welcomed **2+ Million people** in 2022, making it Cincy's largest event ever and the largest immersive art experience in the nation.



When after-school arts programs are available, **neighborhood crime drops up to 5%.**

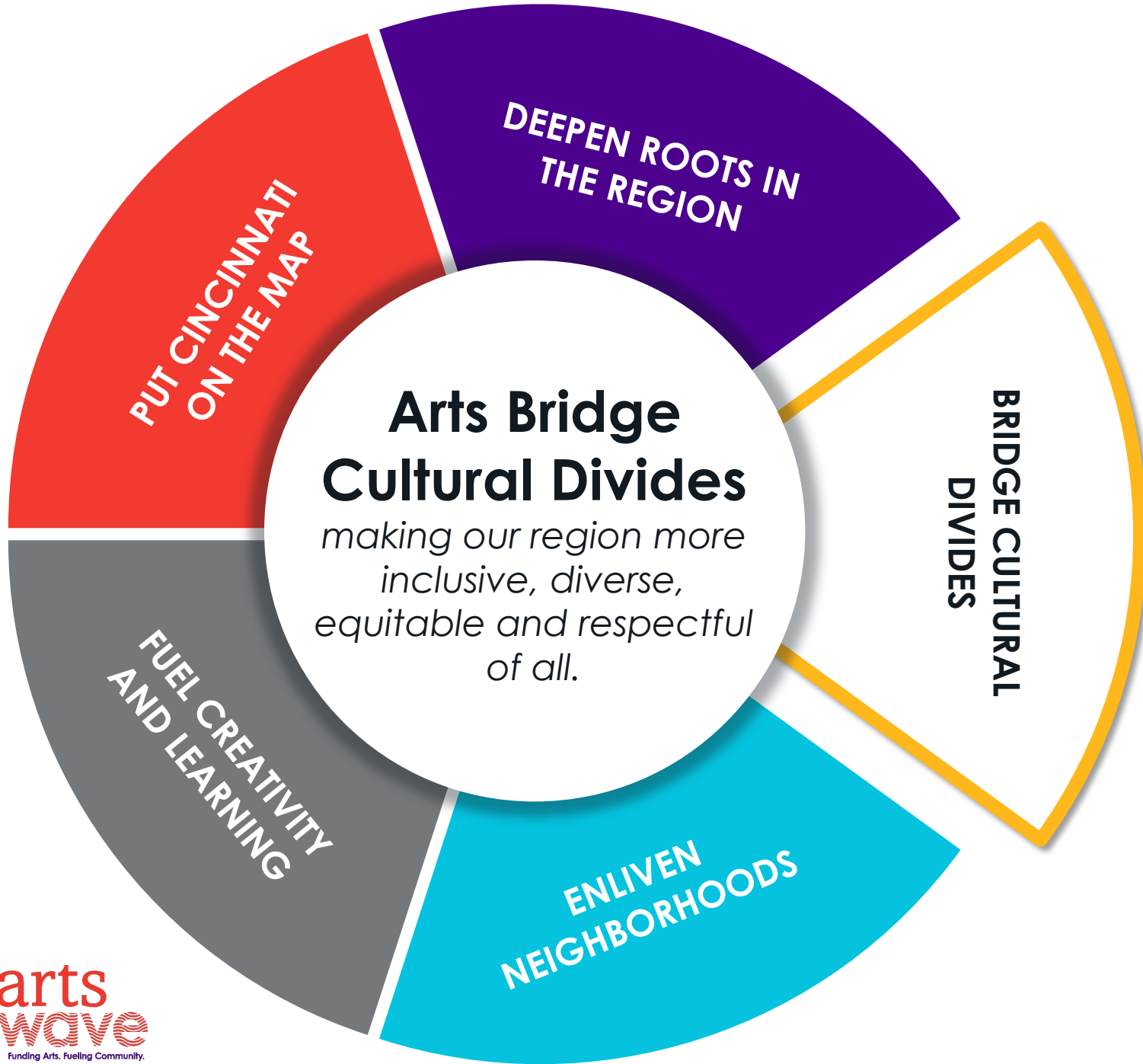


Residents of arts-rich neighborhoods are **2x as likely to feel connected.**



Last year, ArtsWave organizations inspired **2.3 million** people with **free or low-cost arts events** in neighborhoods across the region.





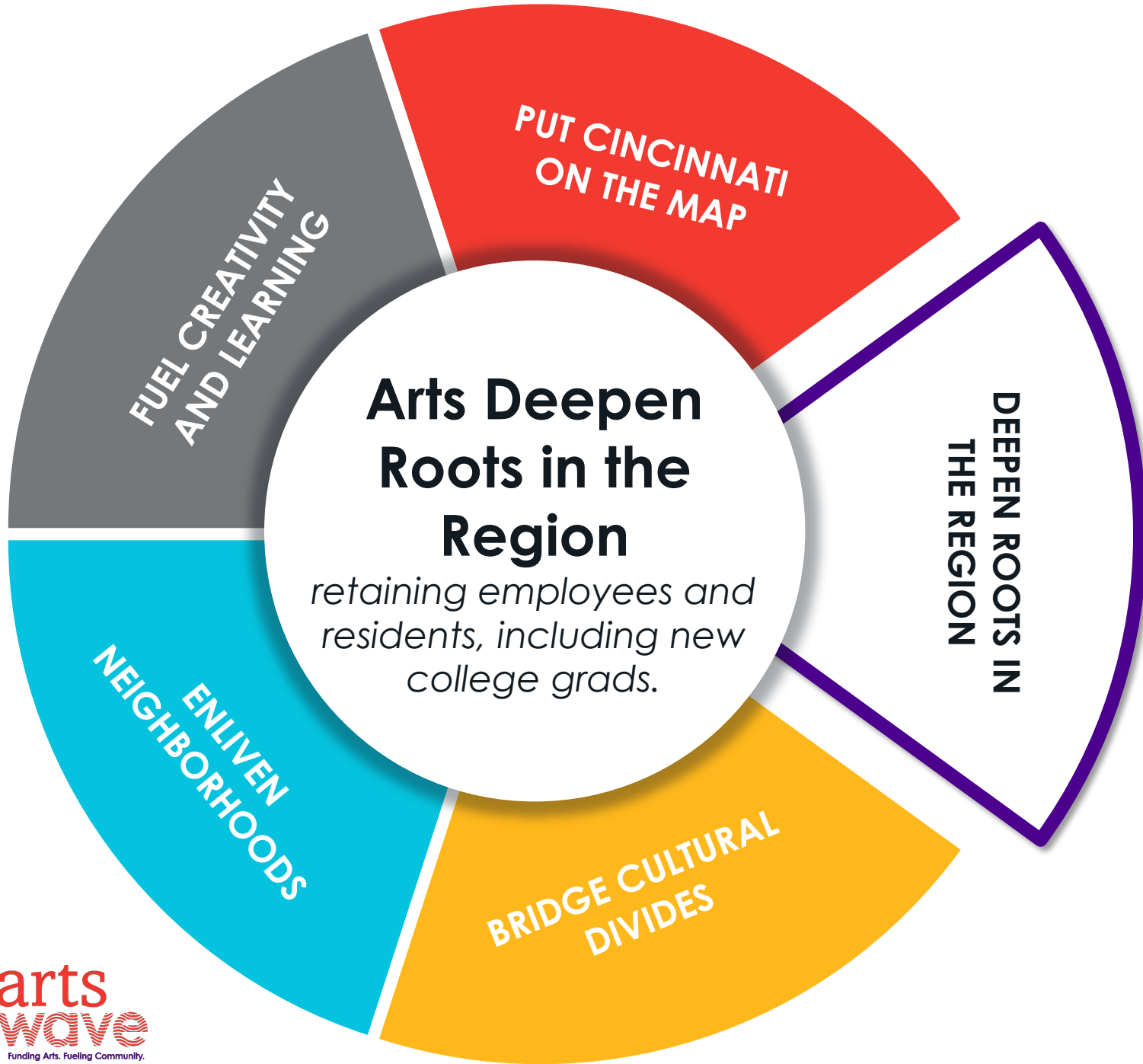
Students who participate in the arts are **40% more likely to have friends of diverse races & ethnicities.**



Arts field trips can create significant **increases in empathy and tolerance.**



**ArtsWave** is building culturally curious audiences through **Flow Pass** – a 5-event subscription series celebrating Black artistry.



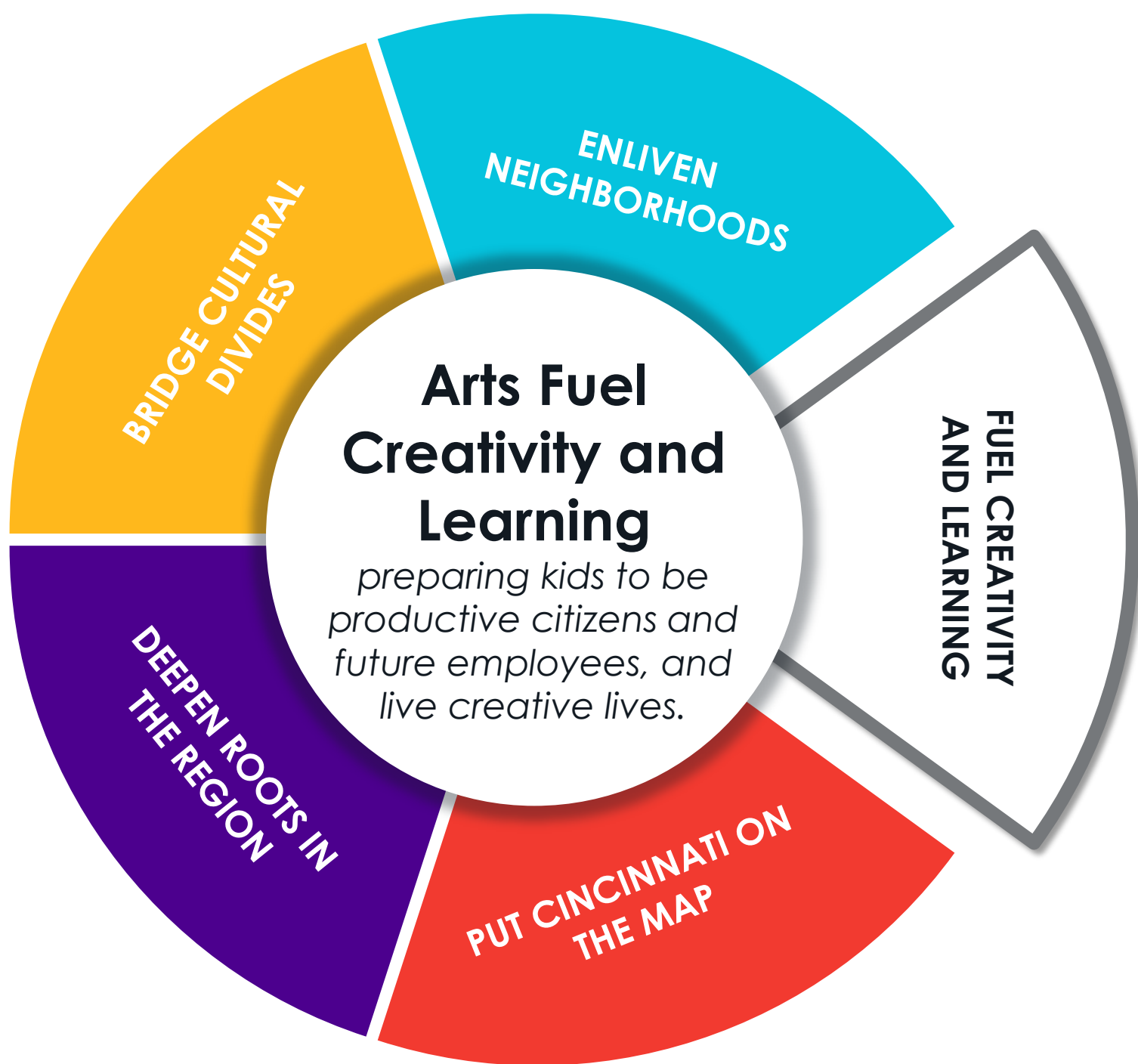
**40% feel more positive about their community** after participating in arts.



**9 out of 10 arts participants report making new friends** through their arts experiences.



More than 5,600 people joined **ArtsWave** affinity groups, further connecting to each other and the community.



Low-income students who are highly engaged in the arts are **5X less likely to drop out and 2X more likely to graduate college.**



Students with 4 years of art & music score 100 points better on SAT tests than students without arts ed.



**ArtsWave's "More Arts, More Kids" Initiative** will make **50,000 arts field trips possible, reaching all CPS 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade students.**





# GRANTS PROCESS

- Applications open August 11, 2025
- Overview virtual on August 12, recording posted on [artswave.org](https://artswave.org)
- **Grant Writing Workshops virtual:**
  - Writing: Overview: August 14 @ noon
  - Writing Budgets: August 20 @ noon
- **Early Submission for feedback:** Submit by September 3 @ 5:00 pm
- Application Deadline: September 22 @ 5:00 pm
- Staff Review: September 23-25
- Panelists review applications: September 25-October 13
- Panels: Circle (Oct. 14); Pride (Oct. 15); YP (Oct. 16)
- Board Approval: October 22: Annual Meeting
- Final Reports due August 31, 2026



ArtsWave Pride is a group that welcomes and connects LGBTQIA+ individuals and Allies. Members receive invitations to special arts events to celebrate and support the arts together. All are welcome!

**Pride donors gave over \$717,000** in the 2025 ArtsWave Campaign

### ArtsWave Pride Benefits

\$100 + Invitation to ArtsWave Pride Event Series

\$500 Pride Ambassador - In addition to the ArtsWave Pass, the \$150 and \$250 level benefits, Pride Ambassadors receive invitations to select ArtsWave Leadership events and exclusive Ambassador events, and recognition in our community report.

**10% of gift goes toward ArtsWave Pride Grant**



**Nick Wade**  
Manager, Community  
Campaign & Engagement



# PRIDE OVERVIEW

For arts or cultural heritage projects that celebrate the LGBTQIA+ community.

Seed funding to support the development of new programming, as well as short-term operating support for existing programming with a demonstrated impact of inclusivity.

Intended for LGBTQIA+ programming with an arts component that transcends events/projects framed as Pride celebrations or parties.

Funding requests may be made up to \$25,000 and should be an appropriate request in relation to the full project budget being submitted. Projects may be funded partially or in full.

A total of \$72,000 is available.

Supports projects between September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026 (and cannot be completed at time of award notification)





ArtsWave Young Professionals connects donors between 21 and 40 years of age. Our members are committed to creating an engaged YP community and making a positive impact in the Cincinnati area.

**YP donors giving over \$467,000 in the 2025 ArtsWave Campaign**

### **ArtsWave YP Benefits**

Invitation to ArtsWave YP Event Series

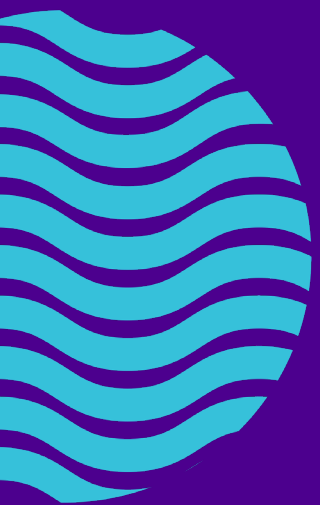
Exclusive YP Extras through ArtsWave Pass (\$100+)

Invitation to select ArtsWave Leadership events and recognition in Annual Report (\$500+)

Portion of gift goes toward ArtsWave YP Grant



**Mahmoud Said**  
Manager, Community  
Campaign & Engagement



# YOUNG PROFESSIONALS OVERVIEW

For arts or cultural heritage projects that engage Young Professional (21-40).

Seed funding to support the development of new programming, as well as short-term operating support for existing programming.

Funding requests may be made up to \$15,000 and should be an appropriate request in relation to the full project budget being submitted. A total of \$47,000 is available.

Projects may be funded partially or in full.

Supports projects between September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026 (and cannot be completed at time of award notification).

New applicants must schedule a pre-application meeting before applying.



ArtsWave believes that arts and cultural expression creates a more vibrant and dynamic region. ArtsWave also believes that only an inclusive collection of organizations, artists, art forms and projects can celebrate our community

**Circle donors giving over \$465,000** in the 2025 ArtsWave Campaign

### **ArtsWave Circle Benefits**

Invitation to ArtsWave Circle Event Series

Exclusive Circle Extras through ArtsWave Pass (\$100+)

Invitation to select ArtsWave Leadership events and recognition in Annual Report (\$500+)

Portion of gift goes toward ArtsWave Circle Grant



**Richard Mead**  
Manager, Community  
Campaign & Engagement



# CIRCLE OVERVIEW

For arts or cultural heritage projects that celebrate African American arts.

Seed funding to support the development of new programming, as well as short-term operating support for existing programming.

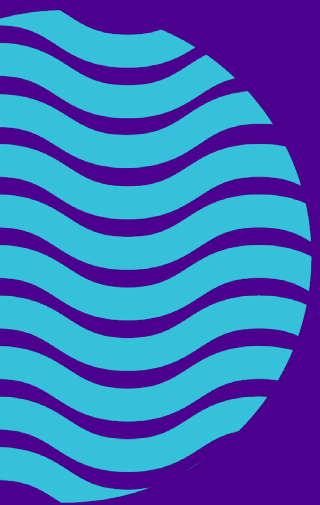
Funding requests may be made up to \$10,000 and should be an appropriate request in relation to the full project budget being submitted. A total of \$46,500 is available.

Projects may be funded partially or in full.

Supports projects between September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2026 (and cannot be completed at time of award notification).

New applicants must schedule a pre-application meeting before applying.





# WHO MAY APPLY

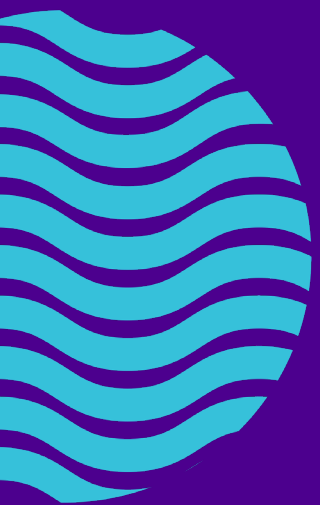
Eligible for all three grants

Have a 501 (c)3 tax status or non-profit in nature with an established fiscal agent.

Be based in the Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN MSA.

Have a primary mission to provide programs or activities in areas directly concerned with arts or cultural heritage for the general public.

Does not currently have an active Pride/Young Professionals/Circle Grant with ArtsWave and has successfully completed all previous grant requirements.



# ELIGIBLE REQUESTS

To be eligible, the proposed programming should:

Be well designed, participatory and social

Align with ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action

Engage and celebrate community intended

Have not received funding through another ArtsWave program for same project

**Proposed programming must occur between September 1, 2025-August 31, 2026, but not be completed at time of grant award notification.**



# THE APPLICATION

## I. Organizational Information

*Contact info, Org and Audience Description*

## I. Project Details

*Description, Blueprint Goals, Timeline,  
Anticipated numbers, Work Sample*

## I. Financials and Budget Form

*Requested amount, Annual budget, 990,  
Partial or full, how funds will be spent*

# BUDGET FORM

PROGRAM REVENUE/SUPPORT	Budgeted*
ArtsWave (Should equal requested grant amount.)	
Contributed Revenue (Corporate, Foundation, Government, Individual)	
Earned Revenue (Admissions, Memberships, Contract, Special Events)	
Other Revenue/Support (In-kind, Volunteer labor, or Donated goods/services, for example)	
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM REVENUE/SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>	
DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS	Budgeted*
Artist or production fees	
Staff salary support	
Consultants	
Training and professional development	
Materials and supplies	
Advertising	
Digital tools and technology	
Cultural facilities	
Other	
General & Administrative	
<b>Total Direct Program Costs</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>INDIRECT SALARIES &amp; BENEFITS: NO MORE THAN 10%</b>	<b>Budgeted*</b>
Administrative Costs	
Operating Costs	
<b>Total Indirect Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
* The Budgeted column should reflect what was submitted in your original application.	





# APPLICATION TIPS

- Using AI in grant writing
- Select the Blueprint that fits best
- Select 1-2 changes your program can make and how you can measure those changes:
  - Avoid increase in numbers, generally
  - Find the social impact
- Project Summary: What would you read on Instagram?
- Take advantage of early submission and grant writing workshops
- Make the grant unique and important
- Pay attention to review criteria by panel  
*(Determination of Grant Award)*



# ***DETERMINATION OF GRANT AWARDS***

- ☐ Project is well-planned with clear outcomes and assessment. (15 pts)
- ☐ Programming aligns with the Blueprint for Collective Action. (15 pts)
- ☐ Programming celebrates the LGBTQIA+ community within our region. (15 pts)
- ☐ Organization demonstrates the capacity to complete the project. (15 pts)
- ☐ Organization has a history of arts programming. (10 pts)
- ☐ Programming can be achieved in the proposed timeline. (15 pts)
- ☐ The proposed grant amount request is appropriate, and the project budget is sufficient to execute the project. (15 pts)

**Requests may be funded in full or in part.**

# HOW TO APPLY: ARTSWAVE.ORG

Contact | Campaign Coordinator Help | [Apply for Funding](#)



[What Is ArtsWave](#) ▾ [Our Impact](#) ▾ [Get Involved](#) ▾ [Resources](#) ▾ [Q](#)

[Give  
Today](#)



## ArtsWave is the primary way Cincy funds its arts.

[Learn More](#) ▶



### What We Fund

Your gifts allow us to **support over 150 organizations, artists and projects each year**, each



### Cincy A&E

Discover local concerts, sports, performances, exhibitions, festivals, family events and more



### Stay In Touch

Stay up to date with arts news, stories of the arts impact, ArtsWave Pass event deals and





# FY2026 Grant Programs and Funding Opportunities

- ➔ Circle Grants
- ➔ Northern Kentucky Creative Placemaking Grant
- ➔ Catalyzing Impact Grants
- ➔ ArtsWave Pride Grants
- ➔ Young Professional Grants
- ➔ Black and Brown Artists Grant Program
- ➔ Working Capital Bridge Loan
- ➔ Sustaining Impact Grants







## ↓ Circle Grants

ArtsWave believes that diversity in arts and cultural expression creates a more vibrant and dynamic region. ArtsWave also believes that only an inclusive collection of diverse organizations, artists, art forms and projects can fully deliver the goals of ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action to advance social impact in our community. In FY26, ArtsWave's Circle Grant Program requests proposals for projects that promote and/or celebrate Black and African American Arts experiences in the Cincinnati region.

With the support of our Circle committee, **ArtsWave will open applications for the 2026 Circle grant on August 11, 2025.**

**To apply, click [HERE](#)**

**Applications will be due on September 22, 2025 at 5 p.m.** Proposed programming development and completion must occur between September 1, 2025, and July 15, 2026 (but not be completed by the time grants are awarded in October).

This affinity group project grant is designed to provide seed funding to support the development of new programming or to enhance existing programs to engage this ever-expanding community in our region through connective and innovation engagement. Grants are made possible by donations to the 2025 ArtsWave Community Campaign specifically designated to engage these communities in the arts.

## FY2026 Circle Grant Guidelines

The overview webinar for this grant program will be held virtually on Tuesday, August 12 from noon to 1 p.m.

[REGISTER FOR THE GRANT OVERVIEW HERE](#)

We will also offer two free Grant Writing Workshops to be held virtually:

**Grant Writing Workshop-General** [Registration](#)

Thursday, August 14

Noon to 1 p.m.

**Grant Writing Workshop-Budgets** [Registration](#)

Wednesday, August 20

Noon to 1 p.m.

For questions, please contact [impact@artswave.org](mailto:impact@artswave.org).

*Note: Beginning with this grant program cycle, applicants must take at least one year off after receiving funding for two consecutive Circle Grants.*

# ARTSWAVE.SUBMITTABLE.COM/SUBMIT



At ArtsWave, we want everyone in Greater Cincinnati to experience the positive benefits of the arts – a more vibrant regional economy and more connected communities. In fall 2015, ArtsWave released the **Blueprint for Collective Action in the Arts** which outlines five community goals, a roadmap for their achievement, and a framework for ArtsWave's community investment strategy and grant programs for the next ten years.

All applicant organizations are asked to demonstrate how their work aligns to one or more of these five strategic areas. We strongly recommend downloading and reviewing this document to familiarize yourself with this framework before applying for ArtsWave support.

## FY2026 ArtsWave Circle Grant Application

Ends on Mon, Sep 22, 2025 5:00 PM

[Guidelines](#) ▾

[Apply](#)

## FY2026 ArtsWave Pride Grant Application

Ends on Mon, Sep 22, 2025 5:00 PM

[Guidelines](#) ▾

[Apply](#)

## FY2026 ArtsWave Young Professionals Grant Application

Ends on Mon, Sep 22, 2025 5:00 PM

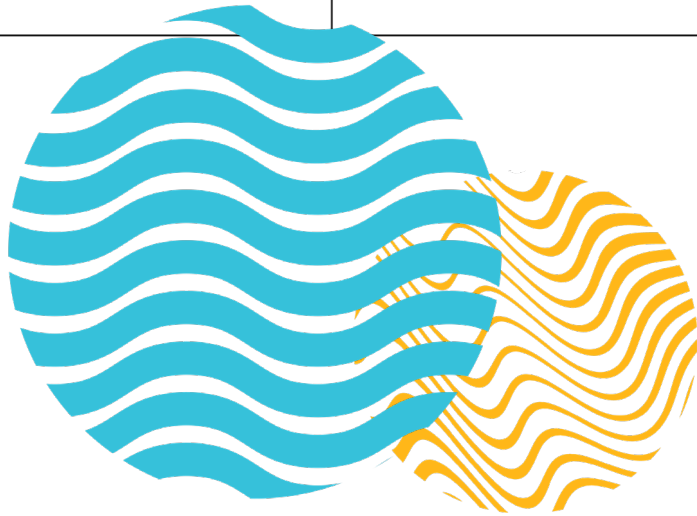
[Guidelines](#) ▾

[Apply](#)



# KEY DATES

Grant Overview Session	Grant Writing Workshops	Early Submission Feedback	Application Deadline	Funding Decision	Final Report Due
August 12, 2025	August 14 & August 20, 2025	September 3, 2025	September 22, 2025 5:00 pm*	October 22, 2025	August 31, 2026



# Contact us: [ArtsWave.org](https://ArtsWave.org)



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[Ray.gargano@artswave.org](mailto:Ray.gargano@artswave.org)



**Lori Burkhardt**  
[Lori.Burkhardt@artswave.org](mailto:Lori.Burkhardt@artswave.org)



**Nick Wade**  
[Nick.Wade@artswave.org](mailto:Nick.Wade@artswave.org)



**Richard Mead**  
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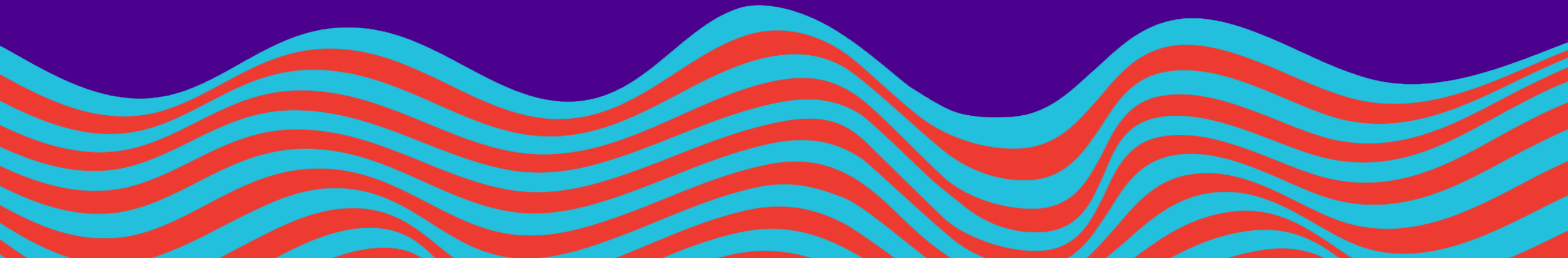


**Mahmoud Said**  
[Mahmoud.Said@artswave.org](mailto:Mahmoud.Said@artswave.org)



# Questions?

Feel free to unmute or type in the chat







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Thank you!

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