



Contact: Ryan Strand  
Vice President, Marketing & Communications  
513.632.0148; [ryan.strand@artswave.org](mailto:ryan.strand@artswave.org)

## **ArtsWave Raises Over \$12 Million for the Region's Arts Ahead of Landmark Centennial Year**

CINCINNATI (May 19, 2026) — ArtsWave announced the community has given \$12,112,026 million for the region's arts during its 2026 Community Campaign, demonstrating continued momentum and community-wide support as the organization approaches its 100th anniversary next year.

2026 Campaign Chair James Zimmerman shared the results with arts organizations, donors, volunteers and civic and business leaders Tuesday evening during a campaign finale event at the newly renovated Emery Theater in OTR.

The result comes during a time when many organizations and families across the Cincinnati region continue navigating economic uncertainty, changing workplace dynamics and shifting funding realities.

"Once again, more than 20,000 people across this community stepped up for the arts," said Zimmerman. "That says a lot about how deeply people value the role the arts play in making the region vibrant, connected and competitive. The arts are part of what attracts people here, keeps them here and helps Cincinnati stand out."

ArtsWave saw continued growth in its Executive Leaders for the Arts initiative for business and civic leaders who personally give \$5,000 or more to the campaign. A lead matching gift from Western & Southern challenged the community to grow this support and helped increase participation in the initiative to 214 Executive Leaders this year.

This year's campaign also saw the expansion of several key regional initiatives:

More Arts More Kids reached full program capacity, providing no-cost arts field trips for nearly 20,000 students across schools and districts throughout the Cincinnati region, adding Hamilton City Schools and the Fitton Center as partners this year. The initiative is also now sending every first through sixth-grade Cincinnati Public Schools student on an arts field trip each year. A fundraising push for next year's program is still underway through ArtsWave's "\$20 Sends a Student" campaign, supported by lead and

matching gifts from Lauren Hannan Schafer, Cintas Cares Foundation and Leigh and Julia Fox.

ArtsWave expanded its creative placemaking work in Northern Kentucky over the past year through a growing partnership with meetNKY and the Northern Kentucky Port Authority. ArtsWave launched the OneNKY Center Gallery, Fueled by ArtsWave, which includes a rotating artist-in-residence program and a permanent staff presence in NKY. It also unveiled a new mural at The Gruff and supported Covington's first Pride-themed mural.

The ArtsWave App surpassed 22,000 downloads since launch and averaged 450 daily users while significantly increasing engagement with regional arts organizations. ArtsWave also reported a more than 300% increase in ArtsWave Pass and last-minute ticket redemptions through the platform, driving more than \$200,000 in revenue directly to arts partners across the region.

Funds raised through the 2026 ArtsWave Campaign support more than 150 organizations, projects and artists, resulting in thousands of performances, exhibitions, public art projects, arts education programs and festivals throughout the region. ArtsWave's investments also advance the sector's shared Blueprint for Collective Action strategy to strengthen neighborhoods, deepen roots, bridge divides, fuel creativity and learning, and elevate the Cincinnati region's national reputation through the arts.

During the event, ArtsWave President & CEO Alecia Kintner announced that Tim Spence, Chairman, Chief Executive Officer & President of Fifth Third Bank, will chair ArtsWave's 2027 centennial campaign.

"As we approach our 100th anniversary, this campaign shows the Cincinnati region continues to believe in the importance of investing in the arts," said Kintner. "That support strengthens the organizations and experiences that make this region vibrant and connected, while building momentum for an ambitious centennial year ahead."

Kintner also previewed several initiatives tied to the centennial celebration and Second Century Campaign. The centennial will unofficially kick off with the return of BLINK, illuminated by ArtsWave, in October 2026, including a projection-mapping installation that tells the story of ArtsWave and the region's arts history. The community giving campaign will begin in early February alongside the signature anniversary initiative, "100 Days of Arts," a regionwide series of performances, exhibitions and community events spanning 100 consecutive days. The centennial year will culminate in a large-scale, festival-style event celebrating the impact and future of Cincinnati's arts.

As is the case each year, the announced campaign total includes both contributions already received and expected workplace campaign pledges continuing through the summer. Donations to the 2026 campaign can still be made at [artswave.org](https://artswave.org).

Kintner added, "For those businesses and individuals who are still finishing their campaigns, please know that your gifts are essential. In an uncertain environment, stable, reliable funding is more important than ever to the programs that continue to transform our community."

###

### **About ArtsWave**

ArtsWave fuels the Cincinnati region's arts, supporting 150+ organizations, projects and artists each year. Since 1927, it has been the primary way the region funds the arts, raising millions annually from tens of thousands of individuals, businesses and foundations to drive a more vibrant economy and connected community. Through the Blueprint for Collective Action, ArtsWave strategically makes investments that maximize the arts' impact across the region. To learn more and give to the 2026 community campaign, visit [artswave.org](https://artswave.org).