

Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 22, 2026

To: Marcelia Nicholson-Bovell, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Guy Smith, Executive Director of Milwaukee County Parks
Aaron Hertzberg, Executive Director of the Department of Administrative Services

Subject: Request to approve funding structure for CAMPAC allocations beginning in 2026

File Type: Action Report

BACKGROUND

- File 21-90: the County approved a funding formula to guide grant making that was supported by the Cultural, Artistic and Musical Programming Advisory Council (CAMPAC). From 2021 through 2024 there was a gradual transition from the prior funding formula to the new formula.
- File 25-552: The County Board and Parks Committee approved a slate of grants made from the County's Fund for the Arts. The County Board amended the Resolution approving these grants to state the following -

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the current distribution model shall be deemed null and void upon completion of the 2025 grant allocations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, DPRC is requested to collaborate with CAMPAC to develop a new funding formula, in consultation with the United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF), and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the new distribution formula shall take into account the track record and performance of each applicant, the size of each arts organization, and its inclusiveness in serving the residents of Milwaukee County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CAMPAC and DPRC are requested to present their recommendations for revised grant criteria to the County Board by the June 2026 meeting cycle for review and approval.”

- On November 6th, 2025 Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors adopted the 2026 Operating Budget, which includes transfer of administration of CAMPAC funds to Milwaukee County’s Office of Economic Development and Real Estate Services, a division within the Department of Administrative Services.
- File 26-282: Parks and CAMPAC reported on the results of a community-wide survey regarding preferences for future funding consideration. The survey was live on Parks’ website and promoted by arts groups from Jan 16-28, 2026.
- At the March 9th, 2026 CAMPAC meeting, Committee members voted unanimously to recommend the following funding strategy for CAMPAC funds beginning in 2026:

Scenario 1 – Funding set aside for large groups, four-tiered structure for support

Total Fund Amount	\$307,825*	# of Awards	Award Amount
Support for Cornerstone organizations	\$100,000	5	\$20,000
Operating Support for Tier 1, 2, and 3 (total)	\$207,825		
Tier 1	\$10,000	10	\$1,000
Tier 2	\$90,000	30	\$3,000
Tier 3	\$100,000	20	\$5,000
Balance/Unallocated	\$7,825		

*The amounts above do not account for the \$10,000 administrative fee. The total amount of dollars to be provided in grants is \$297,825 with an estimated 7 Tier 1 grants (rather than 10) and an \$825 balance unallocated.

Definitions –

Cornerstone organizations - Annual expenses above \$5 million (Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Marcus Performing Arts Center, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Milwaukee Ballet Company, Inc., First Stage Milwaukee, Inc.). Grants support general operations.

Tier 1 grants – Support for new and emerging cultural or performing arts organization operating for less than 5 years and budget of less than \$50,000. Grants support general operations.

Tier 2 grants – Baseline support to all established and qualified organizations that are not receiving Tier 1 grants. Grants support general operations.

Tier 3 grants – Additional support to organizations based on a defined impact. Tier 2 and 3 grants are cumulative. Grants are tied to impact measure (to be

defined – people served, youth served, low-income people served, low-income youth served, etc.)

At this same meeting, CAMPAC members also voted unanimously to include additional criteria related to social cohesion to measure impact and determine tiers. CAMPAC members have not yet finalized the social cohesion metrics to be incorporated into the final grant application.

REQUEST

Members of the CAMPAC board request authorization to implement the above funding strategy for grant funds beginning in 2026.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the strategic plan:

1A: Reflect the full diversity of the County at every level of County government - Sharing results of a community-wide survey that should inform future decisions on how to distribute the Fund for the Arts

1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government

1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses

2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity

2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered

2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions

3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities

3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability

3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

FISCAL EFFECT

Funding for cultural allocations was included in the 2025 adopted budget.

TERMS

None.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

CAMPAC Members

PREPARED BY:

Jim Tarantino, Deputy Director, Milwaukee County Parks

Celia Benton, Director of Economic Development and Real Estate Services (DAS)

APPROVED BY:

Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks

Aaron Hertzberg, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services

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CC:

David Crowley, County Executive

Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office

Sheldon Wasserman, Committee on Parks & Culture Chairperson

Steve Taylor, Committee on Parks & Culture Vice Chairperson

Priscilla Coggs-Jones, Committee on Parks & Culture Member

Jack Eckblad, Committee on Parks & Culture Member

Felesia Martin, Committee on Parks & Culture Member

Juan Miguel Martinez, Committee on Parks & Culture Member

Anne O'Connor, Committee on Parks & Culture Member

Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Mgr, Office of the County Clerk

Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS

Vince Masterson, Fiscal & Strategic Asset Coordinator, DAS

Pamela Bryant, Capital Finance Manager, Comptroller's Office

Justin Rodriguez, Capital Finance Analyst, Comptroller's Office

Allyson R. Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk

Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB

Sandy Saltzstein, Research and Policy Analyst