



Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

BIANNUAL REPORT

January-June 2025



DEAR FRIENDS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The past six months have been very busy for the Arts Council.

With guidance from strategic consultants, we've updated our business model and developed a five-year capitalization plan grounded in clear financial projections. We've added new tools to our communications, including several high-impact newsletters, and have been hard at work developing new platforms that will expand our access to meaningful data and help evolve how we serve members of our ecosystem.

At the same time, we've prioritized something equally vital: relationships. Whether through one-on-one service, deeper conversations with funders and elected officials, or showing up at some of our favorite artistic events, we've prioritized our time and capacity with our stakeholders in mind.

I'm proud of the work we've done, and excited about what's ahead. Thank you for standing with us, investing in our mission, and believing in the power of the arts to connect, transform, and challenge power structures.

Best regards,



Patrick Fisher
CEO, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

Pictured on the right: Son Rompe Pera performs a Secret Planet PGH show at Spirit in Lawrenceville // Photo by Patrick Fisher

Pictured on the cover, clockwise from top left, photographed by Patrick Fisher:

Clarise Liu, Kelly Strayhorn Theater • Artist Wren Howison • Horses & Foxes performs in Studio A at Pittsburgh's WQED • Zuly Inirio performs La Voz que Soy • Artwork by Atticus Adams at The Frick Pittsburgh's Greenhouse • Jasiri X from 1Hood performs at Pittonkatonk





Flamenco Pittsburgh performs at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Photo by Patrick Fisher

OUR MISSION

The Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council builds a more resourced and connected arts sector, empowering artists and arts organizations throughout Southwestern PA.

By sharing resources, fostering significant relationships, leading advocacy initiatives, and increasing public awareness of arts and culture, the Arts Council cultivates a thriving, vibrant arts community for the Greater Pittsburgh region.

BIANNUAL REPORT

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INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE ARTS

We're thrilled to have more ways to amplify the work of our region's artistic community. In June, we launched [Artsburgh](#), an email newsletter bringing art events and creative highlights to more than **5,000 readers** a week. From January to June, we **featured over 1,300 arts and culture events** in our weekly blogs and **received over 1 million social media impressions**. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Hillman Foundation, our Spring Marketing Initiative provided paid promotions to 15 organizations, prioritizing those led by or serving LGBTQIA and Global Majority communities.



*Janet Watkins
sells at the
'Mother of All
Pottery Sales' at
Union Project,
Photo by Patrick
Fisher*

COMMUNITY MARKETING INITIATIVE: STORIES OF IMPACT

This spring, the Fiberart International returned to Pittsburgh, showcasing innovative works in contemporary fiber art across two venues, Brew House Arts and Contemporary Craft. We were proud to promote the exhibition through our Spring Community Marketing Initiative with paid advertisements on WESA, Pittsburgh's NPR station, and in our new Artsburgh email newsletter. This season, we were also proud to support six LGBTQ-led events with paid promotions during Pride month, including Pride Millvale, an annual celebration organized entirely by volunteers.

“

As a small organization, we have to rely on our community partners for support. The marketing support through the Arts Council **allowed us to promote our events in ways that we would not be able to on our own.** They are easy to work with and have been a great organization to partner with.

— **Brew House Arts**
Fiberart International

“

The Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council was a great support for our event. They took on the task and all we needed to supply was a few graphics and some written copy. **This made it easier as organizers to know that our event was being professionally marketed while we could focus on more finite details.**

— **Pride Millvale**

*Artwork by Carolyn Carson, part of Fiberart International
at Contemporary Craft, Photo by Patrick Fisher*



ARTS BLOG: SHARING YOUR STORIES

Artists and creatives around Pittsburgh are doing incredible things. Here are a few of their stories we’ve loved sharing.



The Powerful and Playful Work of DJ, Printmaker Mary Tremonte

Mary Tremonte's artwork was featured in one of our advocacy blog posts that called for community action in the wake of devastating arts and culture funding cuts by the Trump administration. Her illustration played an important role in not only capturing the spirit of the call but visually commanding the attention needed for this communal action. Whether she's DJing at a queer dance party, selling screen-printed bandanas covered in raccoons at a craft show, or producing work for social justice organizations like JustSeeds, Mary's work is bold, inviting, and ever ready to remake the world.

[Read more](#)



Writer Michael E. Sawyer Releases New Biography of “Motorsports’ Greatest Driver”

Arts Council Board Member Michael E. Sawyer is an acclaimed writer, University of Pittsburgh professor, and director of Graduate Studies in the Department of English. A lifelong Formula 1 fan, Sawyer explores the life and impact of racing legend Lewis Hamilton in his new biography, *Sir Lewis*, examining how the record-breaking driver became a global icon and outspoken advocate for racial equity in motorsports.

[Read more](#)

WHAT'S NEXT?

Since welcoming our new Communications Coordinator Kyrie Bushaw in March, **we’ve been spotlighting our artistic community more than ever.** We’re excited to continue growing our communications initiatives, including a new Pittsburgh Arts Hub in partnership with EcoMap Technologies. Launching soon, the website includes an arts-centered events calendar and an artist directory to help more folks discover and connect with what’s happening across the region.

Top: Mary Tremonte, Photo by Mary Tremonte
Bottom: Michael E. Sawyer, Photo by Tyler Normane



ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Pictured Left: Artist Gillian Preston of Broken Plates talks to elected officials and funders during the trolley tour, Photo by Patrick Fisher

From Information to Action: Making Advocacy a Core Part of Our Mission

At a time when the federal government is targeting our most vulnerable communities, protecting the arts is more urgent than ever. **Advocacy is central to our work** as we find ways to connect decision-makers, funders, and public officials with the creative community.

This March, **we hosted an advocacy trolley tour** that brought elected officials and funders face-to-face with local artists and arts organizations. As the trolley stopped at Pittsburgh Glass Center, Union Project,

Contemporary Craft, and Radiant Hall, artists shared their stories, showing why strong financial support is critical to the region's vitality.

The advocacy tour made it clear that the arts are essential to Pittsburgh's future. To sustain and strengthen our cultural sector, **we need bold, strategic action from public officials, philanthropic leaders, and the community at large.**

Our Call to Action

SPREADING AWARENESS THROUGH NEW COMMUNICATIONS INITIATIVES

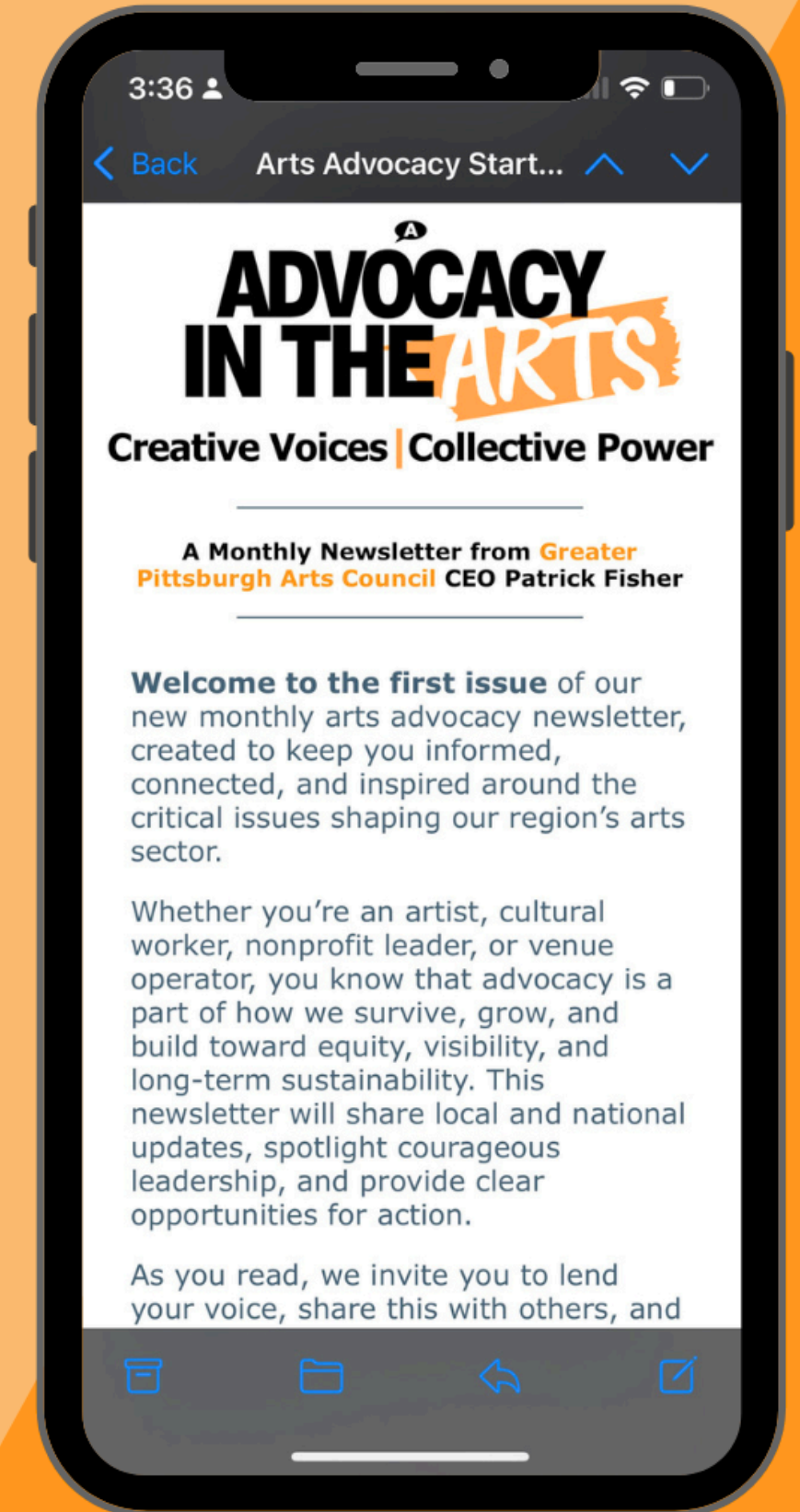
In June, we launched [Advocacy in the Arts, a monthly newsletter](#) designed to keep our community informed on the critical issues shaping Pittsburgh's arts sector. Covering topics like federal funding challenges and state-level arts investment, this newsletter from CEO Patrick Fisher tracks developments, spotlights advocates, and rallies support for policies that strengthen the arts.

Since January, the Arts Council has been tracking how the new federal administration is impacting arts and culture organizations, both locally and nationally. By providing updates on the ongoing threats to arts and humanities, our [Trump's Impact on the Arts: A Running List of Updates](#) blog reached over 12,800 views through June.

In May, the Arts Council spearheaded a letter-writing campaign to local federal elected officials, calling for immediate action to protect public investments in the arts and humanities. We are grateful to the 300 Southwestern PA constituents who added their signatures. In June, we were thrilled to see that two of the lawmakers we contacted, U.S. Representatives Summer Lee and Chris Deluzio, urged the federal government to reinstate cultural funding pulled from local institutions.

"The Arts Council's Advocacy in the Arts newsletter is so vital and informative. I appreciate the work their team is doing for the arts community."

— **Janis Burley**, President and CEO,
August Wilson African American Cultural Center



ENGAGING WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS



We were honored to assist the City of Pittsburgh in **shaping a new grant-funded position for a Creative Strategist**. Our insights helped define this role, aimed at integrating cultural strategy into city planning initiatives. This May, cultural strategist Lisa Yancey highlighted the importance of this work in a compelling keynote, co-presented by the Arts Council, at Kelly Strayhorn Theater. Thanks to support from the Opportunity Fund, her presentation challenged us to rethink how we define, invest in, and activate culture as a driving force for building equitable communities.

[Watch Lisa's full keynote](#)

Before the primary election, the Arts Council **urged both Democratic and Republican mayoral candidates** to speak on the importance of supporting local arts. After Corey O'Connor secured the Democratic nomination, he invited the Arts Council to formalize an arts stakeholder group, which has been created to engage directly on sector issues and municipal support opportunities. As part of this work, the group is gathering community input on its priorities to present to the candidates ahead of the November election.

[Our mayoral candidate Q&A](#)



WHAT'S NEXT?

CEO Patrick Fisher is among four leaders nationwide selected for the **Center for Artistic Activism's** highly selective Innovation for Impact Leadership Intensive. Through the Fall 2025 cohort, Patrick will gain access to tools, one-on-one coaching sessions, and up to \$2,000 in funding to help develop an advocacy campaign and strengthen future initiatives.

Pictured Left: Lisa Yancey gives a keynote note address at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater for 'Owning Our Future: A Symposium on BIPOC Institutional Ownership,' Photo by Patrick Fisher

LEARNING FROM OUR COMMUNITY

As part of our commitment to deepening relationships across the region, André Solomon joined our team as Membership Director in March. Since then, he's been actively connecting with individuals and organizations to ensure our **upcoming membership program** reflects community needs and offers meaningful resources. CEO Patrick Fisher has also been deeply engaged between January and June, conducting 21 studio visits, 5 site visits, and attending 22 events alone. By highlighting these visits through his monthly [Demystifying the Arts](#) blog, Patrick also demonstrates the Arts Council's dedication to being present and responsive to the creative community.

Quilter TaMara Howard at the Morgan-Lee Arts Centre, Photo by Patrick Fisher



MEASURING OUR ENGAGEMENT

277 People Reached through Direct Community Outreach
78 Hours Spent Meeting with Community Members
35 Meetings with Organizations
35 Meetings with Individual Artists

HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE ARTISTS WHO WELCOMED US INTO THEIR SPACES.



Hanna du Plessis
Writer and illustrator

There is something essential to understand about Hanna: she is dying. Since being diagnosed with ALS in 2023, Hanna has written daily, documenting both her inner and outer journey. Her recently published book, [Bedsores & Bliss](#), is a moving collection of these writings. The Arts Council guided Okay Then, a small venture by Hanna’s friend Marc Rettig, in growing a line of paper goods based on Hanna’s writing and art to reach more people.

[Learn more](#)



Alecia Dawn Young
Visual artist and wellness practitioner

Alecia’s art honors Black motherhood by using pattern, color, and line to reflect on personal experiences. Her digital and clay pieces celebrate Black hair care rituals, intimate moments of care, and texture and mark-making. She also founded YOGAMOTIF, a creative wellness studio offering art and yoga classes that foster mindfulness and self-expression.

[Learn more](#)

WHAT’S NEXT?

Building on insights from our community engagement sessions, we’re developing a **new membership program** designed to better support our arts community. We are currently inviting beta testers to join the pilot—an opportunity to test and help shape the program.

[Join the waitlist](#)

Top: Hanna du Plessis, Photo by Patrick Fisher, Bottom: Alecia Dawn Young, Photo by Patrick Fisher



*The Arts Council's Creative Hive networking event
at Art & Soul Cafe, Photo by Patrick Fisher*

CREATING NEW CONNECTIONS

Creative Hive continued into 2025 as a **monthly community-building event** for artists, creatives, and cultural workers to connect, share ideas, and build relationships. We've introduced our community to a remarkable rotation of local venues like Art & Soul Café, a Downtown eatery and gallery showcasing Black art; Tech25 in Mount Oliver, where a surprise storm didn't stop the good vibes thanks to generator-powered music and mood lighting; and Union Project in Highland Park, where attendees experienced a live pottery demonstration.

From January through June, Creative Hive meetups created the space for nearly **9,000 unique connections.**



The Arts Council's Creative Hive community building event at Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Photo by Patrick Fisher

CREATIVE HIVE: STORIES OF IMPACT

"The Creative Hive meetups have given me a valuable opportunity to connect with a broader and more diverse community. As an older creative with over 40 years of experience in business, I find great joy in sharing insights and offering mentorship to younger creatives who are just beginning their journeys. **These gatherings have fostered meaningful intergenerational exchange**, where learning flows both ways and creative energy is renewed through connection."

— **Barb Grossman**, Artist and Fiberarts Guild of Pittsburgh member



Creative Hive at Union Project, Photo by Patrick Fisher



Creative Hive at Tech25, Photo by Patrick Fisher

"At Tech25, we thrive on being a hub for all creative types, which made hosting the Creative Hive feel like a natural extension of our mission to build awareness and opportunity for Pittsburgh's creative industries. **We were thrilled to collaborate with the Arts Council and let attendees know about Tech25's technical and educational resources.** We were amazed at the conversations and connections that were made in our building."

— **RJ Kozain**, Tech25 Digital Marketing Lead / Youth Programs Manager & Educator

FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS: STORIES OF IMPACT

We believe the Arts Council can be most effective when we **embody our role as a connector** for the arts community.



Nick Daniels is a Pittsburgh-based choreographer and performer whose movement-based works explore themes of race, sexuality, and identity. As the founder and Artistic Director of Dancers Against Normal Actions (D.A.N.A.) Movement, Nick has long been a leader in the dance community. After the Arts Council introduced Nick to FEED Media Art Center in Erie, the connection led to new collaborations: FEED livestreamed his performance during the Pittsburgh Fringe Festival and welcomed him for a weekend residency, where he created work that explored new visual territory.

“

I am showing work in Erie because of the Arts Council and their feedback helped me see greater success when applying for grants. I appreciate everything they've done and are doing to help me grow as an artist. — **Nick Daniels**

Nick Daniels, Photo by Patrick Fisher



Michkyela (Kye) Brewer is a Pittsburgh-based communications designer, educator, and photographer. Soon after moving to Pittsburgh, Kye expressed interest in serving as a photo assistant while developing her own practice. The Arts Council connected her with Pittsburgh-based celebrity photographer George Lange, leading to an ongoing professional relationship that has even taken her overseas. Kye credits George with helping her grow and find her own voice.

“

The Arts Council was the best resource I never knew I needed! Their team introduced me to so many incredible photographers and studios throughout Pittsburgh. I’m forever grateful. — **Kye Brewer**

Michkyela (Kye) Brewer and George Lange, Photo courtesy of the artists



WHAT'S NEXT?

Creative Hive returns this fall at four new venues. Join us in building community:

- 📍 **Sept. 30:** City of Asylum, North Side
- 📍 **Oct. 28:** Ketchup City Creative, Sharpsburg
- 📍 **Nov. 18:** Haven, Oakland
- 📍 **Dec. 16:** Glitterbox, Homestead

The Arts Council's Creative Hive community building event at Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Photo by Patrick Fisher

PROVIDING CREATIVE RESOURCES

In the first half of 2025, the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council **administered more than \$268,000 in grants** to support both small arts organizations and individual creative entrepreneurs. Thanks to funding from the PA Council on the Arts, we awarded 36 organizations with \$5,000 Creative Sector Flex Fund grants to help sustain their artistic programming, followed by \$2,000 grants to 44 creative business owners through the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator.

We were also privileged to support the **Black Artist Empowerment Grant**, a one-time initiative led by former members of the Arts Council's Black Arts Action Committee — Ashanté Josey, Michael Carroll, and Kahlil Darden — which provided \$500 in unrestricted awards to 15 Black artists in Allegheny County, courtesy of The Pittsburgh Foundation.



We're proud to have put \$7,500 directly into the hands of Black artists and are grateful to support the creativity and talent in our community.
— **Ashanté Josey**, Artist

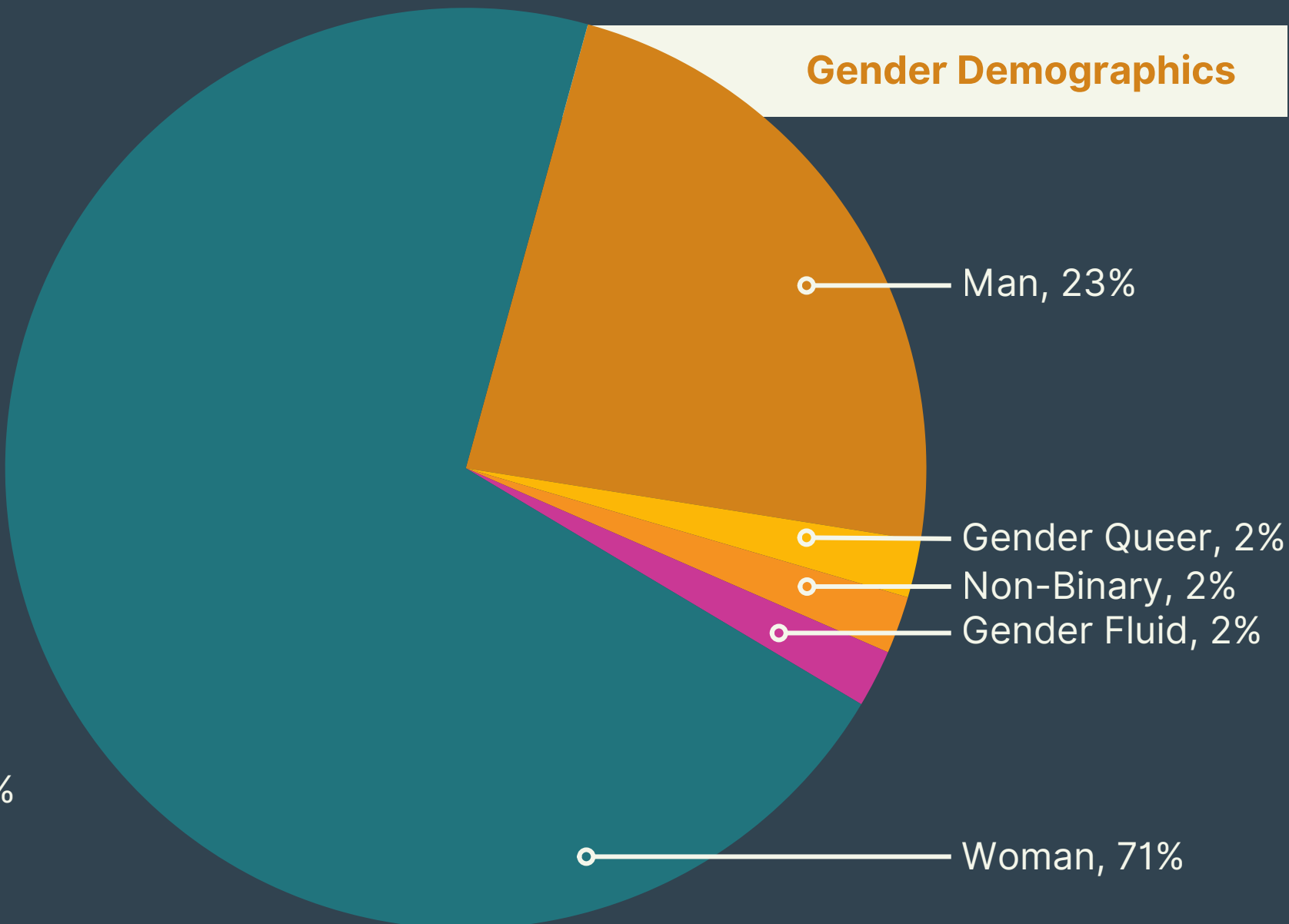
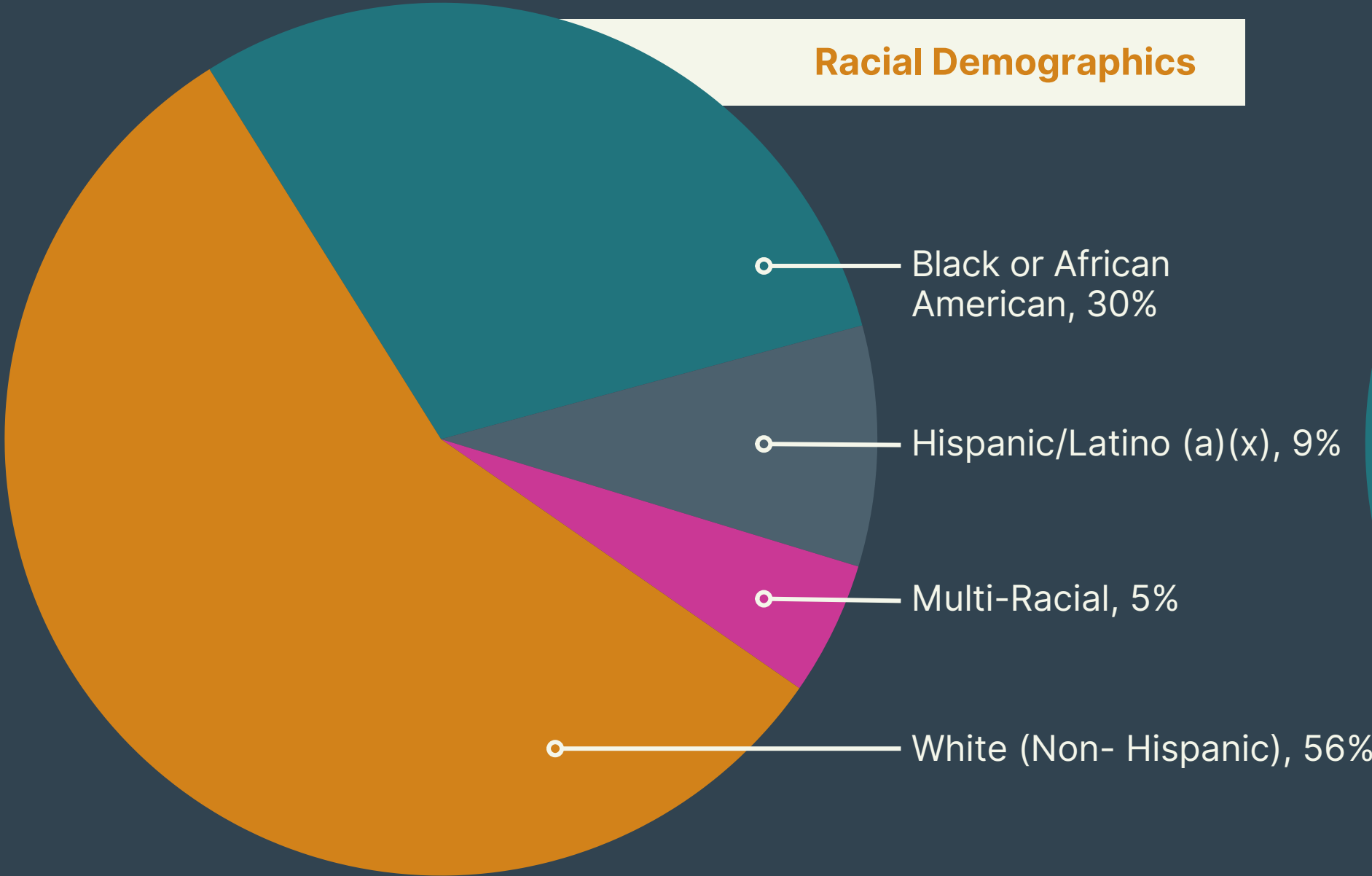


Above: Black Empowerment Grantees 2025,
Photo by Patrick Fisher

Below: CEA Grantees 2025,
Photo by Patrick Fisher

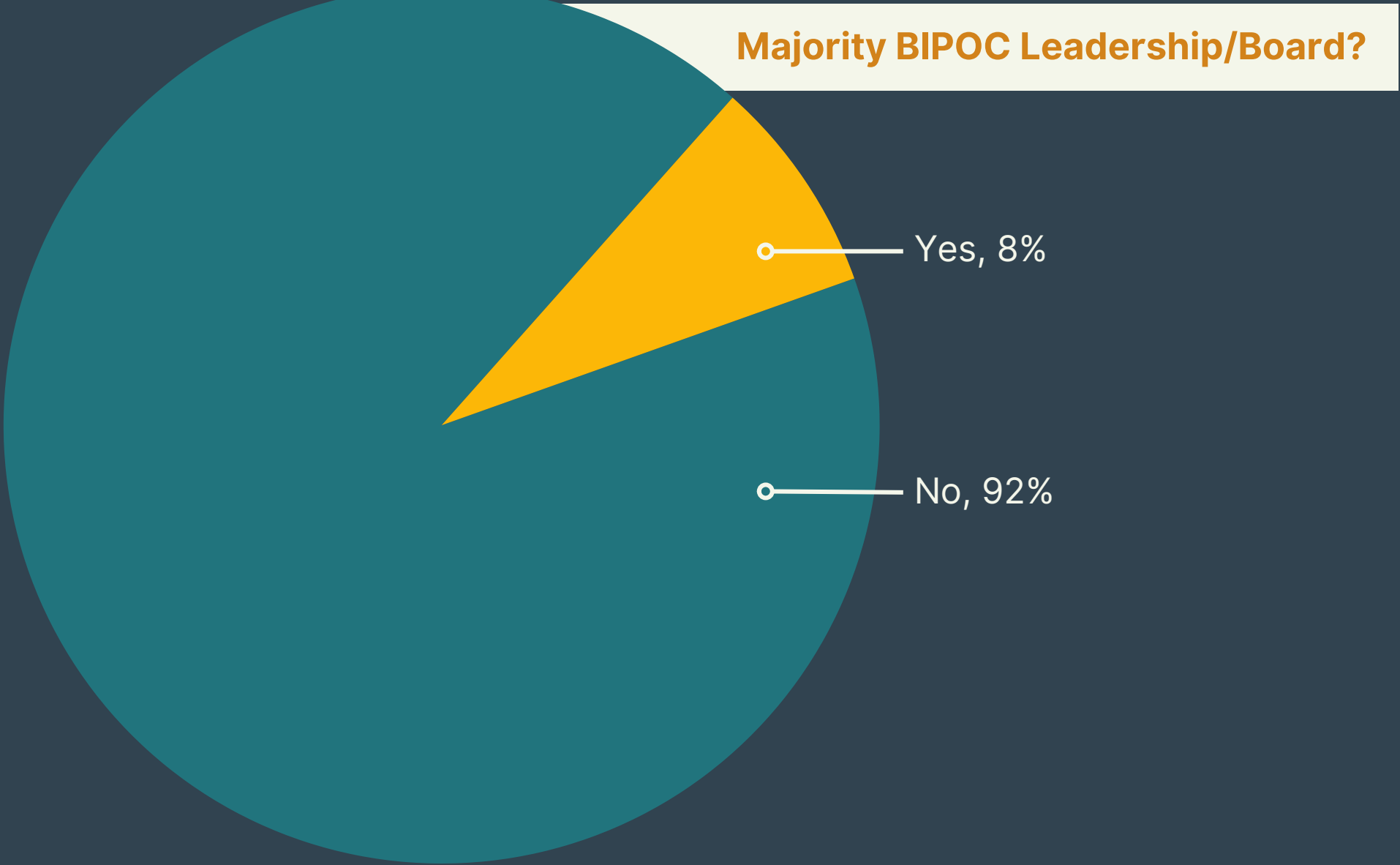
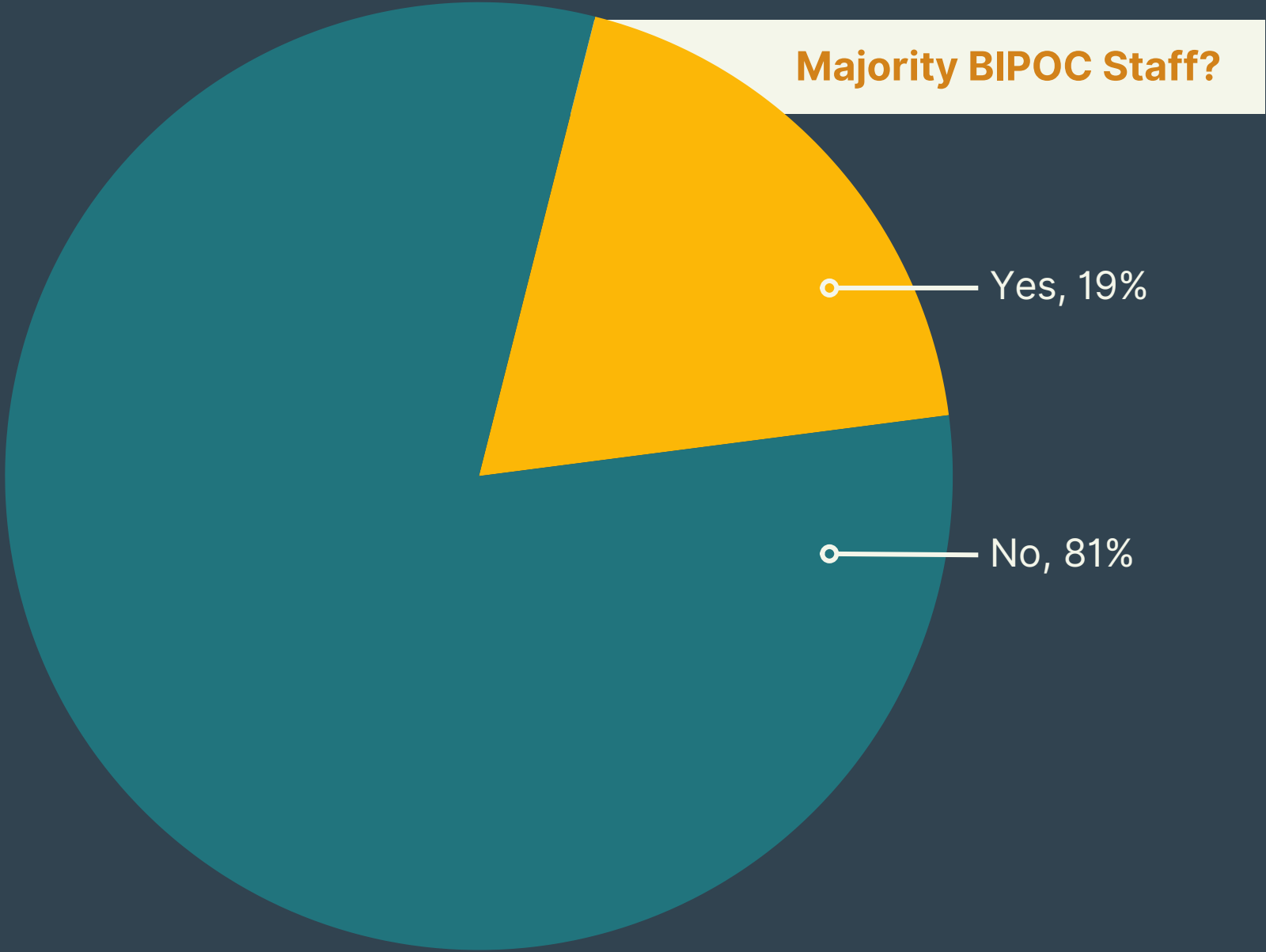
WHO RECEIVED GRANT FUNDS?

Demographic data for individuals who received a Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator Grant from January-June 2025



WHO RECEIVED GRANT FUNDS?

Demographic data for organizations who received a Creative Sector Flex Fund Grant from January-June 2025*



*Creative Sector Flex Fund grants were distributed in both December 2024 and January 2025

WE'RE MEETING THE ARTS COMMUNITY'S NEEDS BY OFFERING NEW KINDS OF SUPPORT

In January, the Arts Council partnered with Faith Collins, Community Capacity Coordinator at the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission, to feature her insightful guest blog offering **practical tips for arts organizations navigating federal and state funding**. We also co-hosted a webinar where Faith shared success stories and best practices, helping our community better prepare grant applications and connect with key funders.

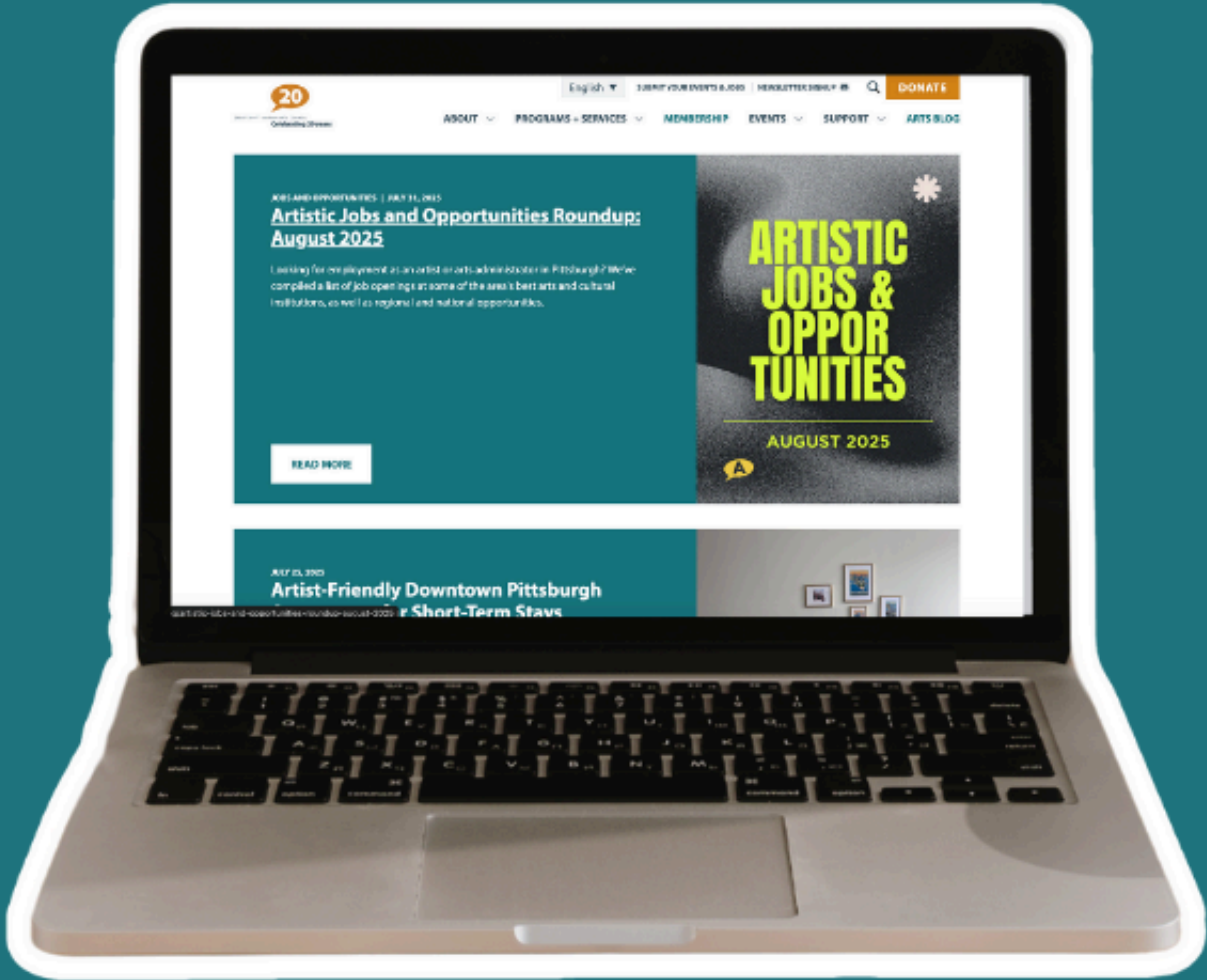
Funding tips

Engaged by Hullett Properties to **assess demand for affordable artist housing** in Downtown Pittsburgh, the Arts Council posted a blog inviting local artists to gauge interest, which confirmed strong community need. As a result, Hullett Properties is proceeding with acquiring and developing 800 Penn Avenue in the Cultural District as affordable, artist-preferred housing, an exciting step toward strengthening Pittsburgh's creative ecosystem.

Learn more

*Sculpture by Thaddeus
Mosley installed
Downtown, Photo by
Patrick Fisher*





Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts Program

The **24 artists and arts organizations** who took advantage of our free Volunteers for the Arts program were connected to legal experts who provided advice so they had more time to dedicate to their creative practice.

Shared Accessibility Equipment

Thanks to funding from the Allegheny Regional Asset District, we provided shared accessibility equipment at no cost to **4 organizations**, providing a more inclusive and accessible arts and culture experience for **63** days' worth of events.

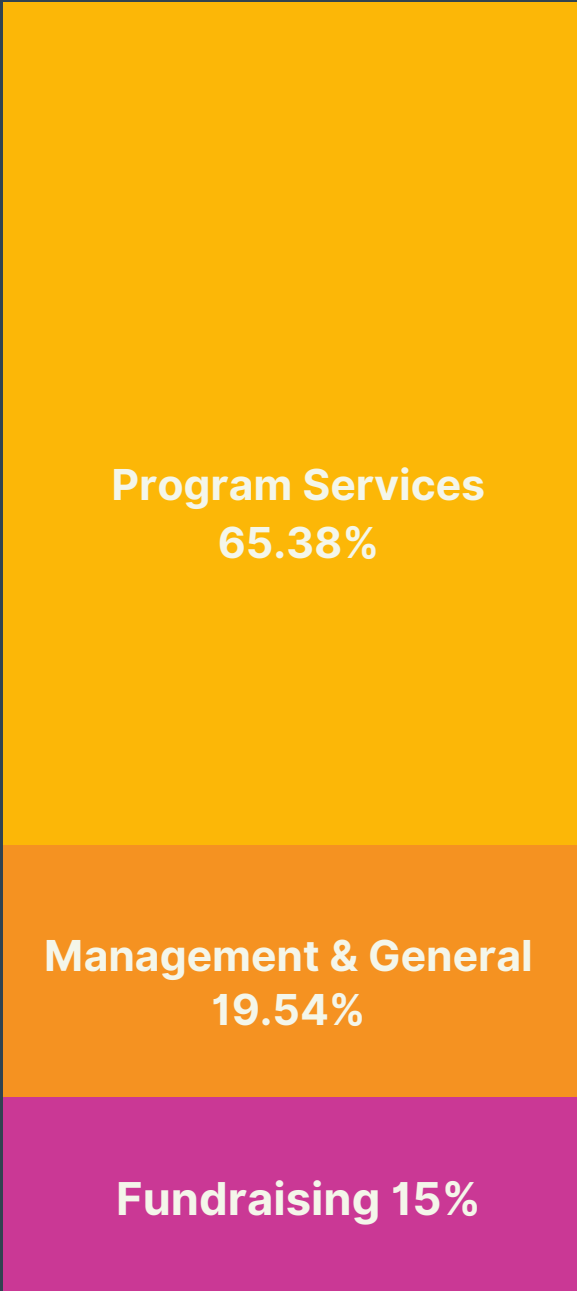
Artistic Jobs and Opportunities Roundups

From January through June, we shared **over 500 artistic jobs and opportunities** through our monthly blog roundups.

WHAT'S NEXT?

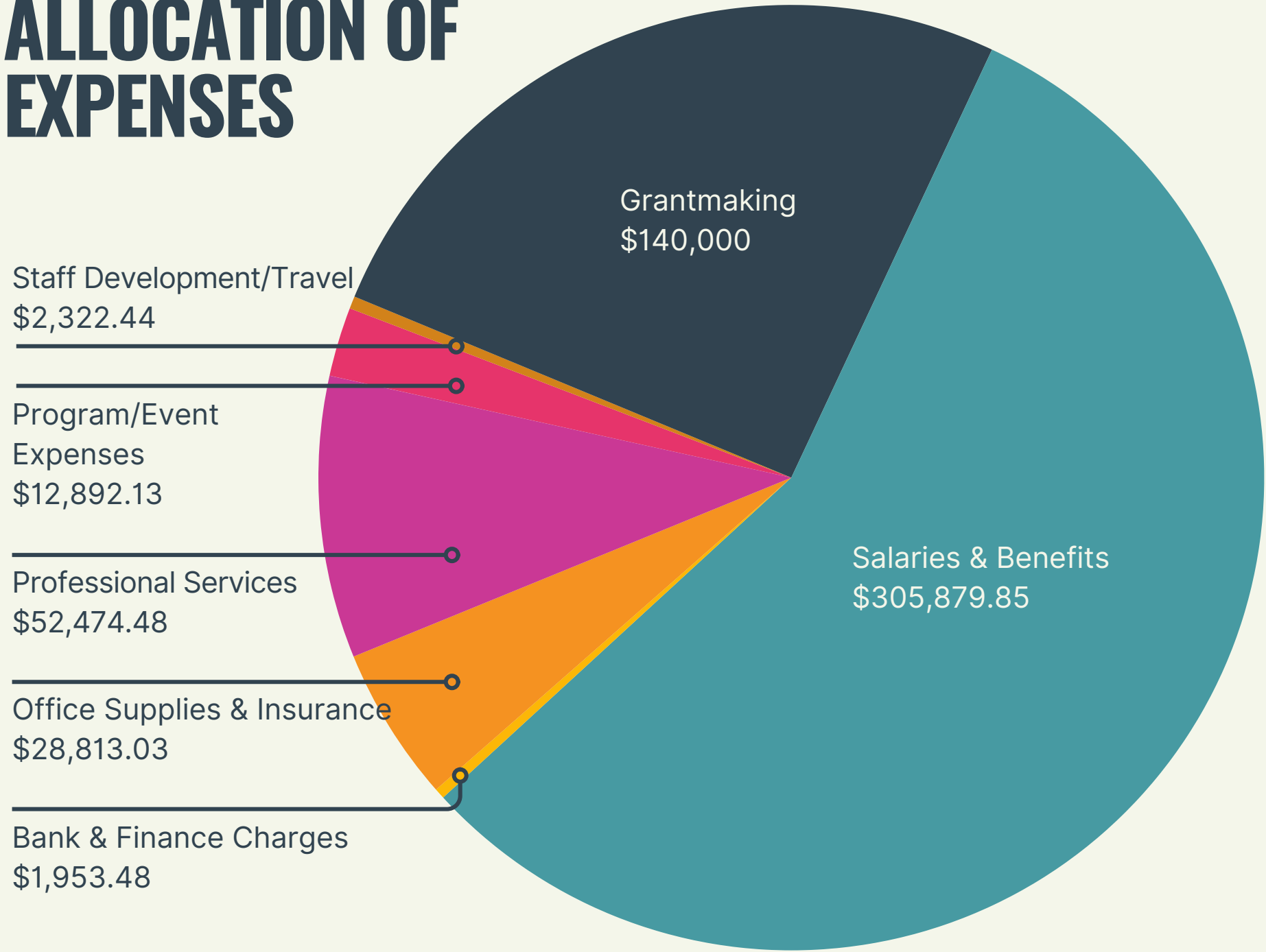
In partnership with EcoMap Technologies, we're developing a **robust artistic resource guide**. This soon-to-launch website will connect folks to everything from stage rentals and studio spaces to fiscal sponsorships, printing services, artist residencies, and more.

EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



FINANCIALS

ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES



REVENUE

\$355,899
Total Revenue
43% of this total revenue is restricted income

\$311,831
Grants

\$24,089
Individual Support

\$19,980
Earned Revenue



“Our team is our greatest strength as an organization. Each team member brings such a unique perspective and skillset, and it’s a joy to share space with them.”

— **Mia Hooper**, COO

Arts Council staff at War Streets Art Salon, Photo by Kyrie Bushaw

STAFF

as of 6/30/25

Kyrie Bushaw,
Communications Coordinator

Lisa Cunningham,
Director of Marketing & Communications

Patrick Fisher,
Chief Executive Officer

Mia Hooper,
Chief Operating Officer

André Solomon
Membership Director

John Watt,
Manager of Development

Mona Wiley
Grantmaking Manager

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Nicholas Ng

Richard Parsakian

Michael E. Sawyer

Ajay Sondhi

SUPPORTERS

GIVING CIRCLES

The Arts Council is excited to celebrate and strengthen our community of supporters through the launch of our new [Giving Circles](#)

THE NETWORK BUILDERS

A place for changemakers who recognize that a vibrant, inclusive arts ecosystem is essential to a thriving region. *Commitment:* \$100 or more annually for three years

[Join now](#)

THE ENCORE CIRCLE

A dedicated giving circle for past Board Directors of the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council who want to continue their legacy of leadership and support. *Commitment:* \$500 or more annually for three years

[Join now](#)

TWENTY FORWARD

An intimate circle of 20 committed donors whose values align with our mission to champion artists, amplify cultural equity, and strengthen the creative community. *Commitment:* \$1,000 or more annually for three years

[Join now](#)

FUNDERS

The Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council is supported in part thanks to funding from the following organizations

THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

HOWARD HEINZ ENDOWMENT • VIRA I. HEINZ ENDOWMENT



GET INVOLVED

Sign Up for Our Newsletters

Attend an Event

Follow Us on Social Media

- Instagram
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Make a Donation

Join us in
building a
stronger,
more
connected
artistic
community.

*The Arts Council's Creative Hive
networking event at the Union Project
// Photo by Patrick Fisher*

