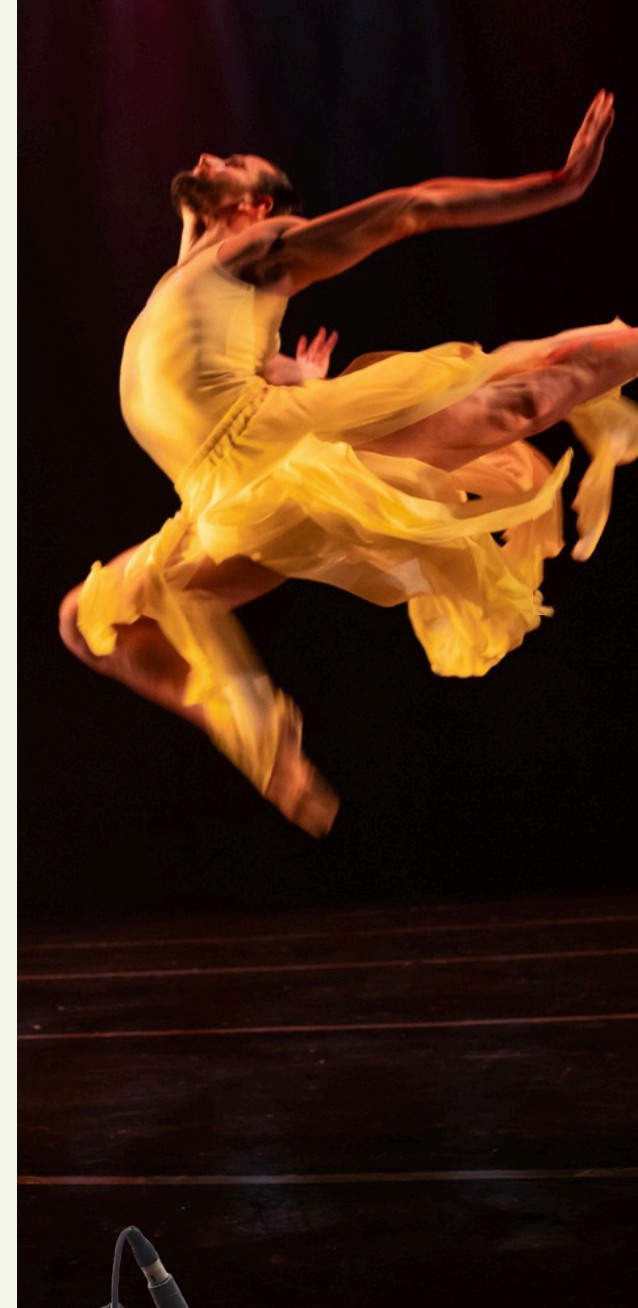




Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

BIANNUAL REPORT

July-December 2024



DEAR FRIENDS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Welcome to the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council's first bi-annual report

As we continue to evolve and grow, this report represents our renewed commitment to transparency, accountability, and connection with you—our community.

We hope this reads a little differently than the traditional nonprofit annual report. Rather than simply sharing numbers, we aim to tell a story—one that captures the work we've done, the challenges we've faced, and the impact we're making alongside the artists and arts organizations of Greater Pittsburgh. This is a story about a community growing together, and it's a story we're proud to tell.

As you read through these pages, **I hope you'll find inspiration in the work we're doing**—and, more importantly, in the individuals and organizations we have the privilege of serving. Thank you for being part of this journey and for supporting a vibrant, thriving arts community in Greater Pittsburgh

Here's to the work ahead and the stories yet to be told.

Best Regards,



Patrick Fisher
CEO, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

Pictured on the right: Dick Esterle, *Space Chips Die Cut – Spinning Out* exhibition, Assemble, Photo by Patrick Fisher

Pictured on the cover from left to right & top to bottom:
Hanna Dausch, *Han Studio*, *Alba Vase* hand-carved from walnut
• *Dancer*, Henry Steele Dillon, *Texture Contemporary Ballet*,
Spark of Radiance, Photo by Rachel Nicole Harman • *Sarika*
Goulatia, Photo by Patrick Fisher • *Scene from Amm(i)gone*,
created and performed by Adil Mansoor, Photo by Curtis Brown
• *Flotsam River Circus*, *RiverLife*, Photo by Patrick Fisher • *Kate*
Marchand, *Stone + Sparrow*, speckled k-grip mug





Chilean songstress
Pascuala Ilabaca at City of
Asylum's Alphabet City,
Photo by Patrick Fisher

OUR MISSION

The Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council builds a more resourced, connected, and informed 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

Increasing Public Awareness of the Arts, 3-5

Advocating for Change, 6-7

Learning from Our Community, 8-9

Creating New Connections, 10-13

Providing Creative Resources, 14-17

Financials, 18

Staff & Board, 19

Get Involved, 20

INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE ARTS

Our region is overflowing with incredible arts and culture events. From July through December, we highlighted **1,700 happenings in our weekly events blogs**, showcasing the creativity of Southwestern PA artists and cultural institutions. Thanks to support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Hillman Foundation, we also provided **paid promotions for over 40 regional organizations during our Fall Community Marketing Initiative**, driving increased attendance at performances, exhibitions, and participatory events.



Sylvia Settles performs in Stomping Grounds street dance festival, presented by Level Up Studios, Photo by Patrick Fisher

COMMUNITY MARKETING INITIATIVE: STORIES OF IMPACT

In November, MuseumLab's Artist in Residence Kaila Carter presented *Now You (don't) See Me*: a one-of-a-kind event featuring an artist's talk, dance performances, and a writing workshop at the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh's cutting-edge campus. This fall, we were also proud to support the work of The Future is Black Art Series, which exhibited the work of 35 artists from three diasporic communities, representing 11 ethnicities, at The Brew House.



The Community Marketing Initiative really helped to take my event to the next level. A challenge many emerging artists face is being able to advertise their events to new audiences and **this initiative made it possible** for me to do just that. As a result, my event had an amazing turnout and I was able to share my work with new people.

— **Kaila Carter**,
MuseumLab Artist in Residence



With the support of the Arts Council's community marketing initiative, the Oat Milk + HXNY Art Exhibition Opening attracted an impressive 228 attendees. **This success was in part due to the initiative's efforts in amplifying the messaging and outreach** surrounding the exhibit, ensuring it reached a broad and engaged audience.

— **Tacumba Turner**,
The Future is Black Art Series



Kaila Carter's "Now You (don't) See Me" event at the Museum Lab as a part of the Experience Art Residency, Photo courtesy of Kaila Carter

ARTS BLOG: SHARING YOUR STORIES

Artists and creatives across our region continued to inspire. Here are some of their stories, highlighted on our Arts Blog.

Dormont Concert Venue Unites Community from a Backyard Parking Pad

The Parking Pad, located in the backyard of Amy Kline and Stefan Flower's Dormont home, is one of the region's most intimate venues. At the front of the house, guests can peruse a Little Music Library—"a little free library, but for vinyl and CDs," according to Amy—on their way to the show. As bands set up on concrete slabs out back, community members prepare to listen to the music while spreading out on blankets and assorted random furniture, not unlike those often left out to save treasured street parking spots.

[Read more](#)

Dr. Amber Epps on Humanism and HollyHood

Dr. Amber Epps is a multidisciplinary artist: a hop-hop musician, visual artist, writer, member of the #notwhite collective, and the newly appointed Executive Director of Write Pittsburgh. She's also equally humble and a total joy. Reflecting on a milestone after installing artwork at the airport, she recalls with a laugh, "I was like, 'I'm fucking famous! I have art in the airport! Like, I am an artist. I got art in the airport. I'm doing the thing.'"

[Read more](#)



WHAT'S NEXT?

With the addition of a new Communications Coordinator, we'll have the opportunity to share even more of your stories in 2025. More of your events will be highlighted this spring during the second leg of our Community Marketing Initiative. And a partnership with EcoMap Technologies will bring our region an AI-powered events calendar, creating a more seamless and inclusive way to promote arts and cultural activities.

Dr. Amber Epps, Photo by Dayna Delgado



ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Pictured Left: Learning and Leadership Committee Member Sharnay Hearn Davis discusses the Racial Equity and Arts Funding research report during a Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania panel at Emerald City, Photo by Patrick Fisher

The distribution of arts and culture funding in Greater Pittsburgh continues to lag racially equitable benchmarks.

It's not the kind of news we're ever excited to report, but our Racial Equity and Arts Funding research showed that despite marginal improvements, **significant gaps remain**. These findings were shared both locally to grantmakers in Pittsburgh, thanks to the support of Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania, and nationally at a conference for philanthropic professions in Chicago.

When Lisa Smith, host of KDKA's Intersections community affairs program, invited the Arts Council on television to discuss the report,

Kilolo Luckett, Executive Director of ALMA | LEWIS, who served on the report's advisory committee, called for all of us to enact change.

"As a greater community that is very diverse in so many different ways, **band together in a collective care of philanthropy** so we all win **instead of a them-versus-us mentality** that plays out time and time again."

[Read the report](#)

ADVOCATING FOR ARTS-CENTRIC POLICIES IS A KEY FOCUS OF OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

This year, we began important work with the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County representatives to integrate cultural planning into their strategies. Productive discussions with County Executive Sara Innamorato, Lauren Connelly from Economic Development, and the Department of City Planning are ongoing and have **unveiled an openness to embracing culture and exploring deeper cultural planning.**

Our staff is also advocating for social prescribing, positioning arts experiences as treatment options for social and behavioral health conditions. By collaborating with Art Pharmacy, a national leader whose social prescribing solution **“is built around the understanding that traditional mental health services often leave gaps in care,”** we envision a future where our community can engage with the arts as treatment options to support their health and well-being.



“In the past year, I have continued to grow more impressed with the Arts Council's team. They truly value advocacy, and Patrick has specifically taken the time to develop a rich understanding of the work that we do at Contemporary Craft, in a way that he and the rest of his team are able to share our stories and make integral connections for our organization.”

— **Rachel Saul Rearick**, Executive Director, Contemporary Craft

WHAT'S NEXT?

We're moving from information to action, making advocacy a core part of our future. This May, stay tuned for a special keynote address from Lisa Yancey, president and founder of Yancey Consulting, on the role, value, and impact of culture, thanks to our partnership with the Kelly Strayhorn Theater and the Opportunity Fund. With the changing political landscape, we've also paused hiring a new Director of Advocacy and External Affairs until later in 2025.

Pictured Left: The Arts Council joined Grantmakers of Western Pennsylvania at Emerald City for a panel discussing the Racial Equity & Arts Funding research report, Photo by Patrick Fisher

LEARNING FROM OUR COMMUNITY

After nearly 15 years in Downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District, the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council **switched to a remote working environment** in July 2024, allowing team members to more frequently meet the arts community where they live and work. CEO Patrick Fisher alone conducted 25 studio visits over the course of six months, demonstrating his commitment to being present with the arts community. **These visits allow Patrick to deeply understand artists' aspirations and challenges, ensuring the Arts Council's advocacy and resources align with their needs and amplify their impact.**



Artist Saihou Njie at work inside his studio at the Morgan-Lee Arts Centre, Photo by Patrick Fisher

MEASURING OUR ENGAGEMENT

410 People Reached through Direct Community Outreach
19 Meetings with Organizations
36 Meetings with Individual Artists

HOW ARE ARTISTS REALLY DOING?

Our 2024 Artist Community Survey Report also asked this question, offering a comprehensive look at the challenges, accomplishments, and aspirations of artists living and working in the region. The research report captured the voice of hundreds of local artists, revealing persistent barriers—from affordable housing and income stability to equitable access to professional development—that challenge our artists’ ability to thrive.



The Artist Community Survey Report is more than data; it's a rallying cry. We must recognize that artists are central to a thriving arts community.

[Read the Report](#)



WHAT'S NEXT?

We’re not only listening, we’re acting on what we learn. Using feedback from our community, we’re working on **building a new membership program** with a newly hired Membership Director in order to find better, more impactful means of support.

Pictured Left: Artist Annesley Bug greets visitors to their solo exhibition, “Snug as a Bug,” at Assemble during Unblurred First Fridays Art Crawl, Photo by Maranie Rae



CREATING NEW CONNECTIONS

Since kicking off in January 2024, our free monthly networking series, Creative Hive, has provided a space for Pittsburgh's artistic community to connect and collaborate. By rotating venues each month, **Creative Hive events have facilitated connections and spotlighted incredible organizations** like Protohaven, which offered a behind-the-scenes tour of their makerspace, and Alumni Theater Company, which supports talented Black youth through year-round programming. **We've been thrilled to welcome everyone from new Pittsburghers eager to find their place to seasoned professionals sharing their programs and ideas.**

From July through December, Creative Hive meetups sparked over 5,000 unique connections

The Arts Council's Creative Hive networking event at Pittsburgh Community Broadcasting, home to WYEP and WESA, Photo by Patrick Fisher



The Arts Council's Creative Hive networking event at Pittsburgh Community Broadcasting, home to WYEP and WESA, Photo by Patrick Fisher

CREATIVE HIVE: STORIES OF IMPACT

Evelyn Francis of Fig Creative Consulting

"I moved to Pittsburgh just a few days prior to my first Creative Hive event. As a theatre artist and arts consultant, **I wasn't sure this would be the right room for me professionally. I was pleasantly surprised.** I was welcomed into the space by the Arts Council's staff and had exhilarating conversations with other attendees about art, the Pittsburgh art scene, and the many resources available to me here.

“ I have found my people and my artistic home.

Since that first event, I have reconnected with folks I met that night, including a fellow consultant and a local funder who have both shown interest and enthusiasm for my work. **I feel grateful to the Arts Council for making this space for us to gather and for newcomers to find their community.** I have found my people and my artistic home."

Ella Mizera of Glass Fox Productions

"The Creative Hive is a great meeting place for all kinds of creatives, and I really appreciated meeting folks outside of the audio/music format get excited about our audio storytelling company. I've made so many great connections through Creative Hive, and I don't know how I would've met them otherwise!"



Artists tour Protohaven's community makerspace at the Creative Hive, Photo by Lisa Cunningham

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.



Paul Rosenblatt is a Pittsburgh-based architect and visual artist whose abstract paintings, prints, and collages explore the balance between structure and improvisation. During a meeting with the Arts Council, Paul shared that one of the many challenges artists face is finding a gallery to represent and sell their work, especially if the artist wants to expand into markets outside of their own locale. Following introductions we facilitated between Paul and potential galleries, he was invited to present his work in person at a gallery that now represents his artworks to a large audience outside of Pittsburgh.

“

Thanks to the Pittsburgh Arts Council, I will be able to grow my audience and have a more regular source of sales revenue. — **Paul Rosenblatt**

Paul Rosenblatt, Photo by Patrick Fisher



Anisha Baid is an artist and writer from Kolkata, India. Her practice considers the history of computer interfaces through the critical lenses of gender, labor, and evolving digital cultures, and involves an investigation of pervasive technologies through an examination of their design, diversity of use, and their relationship with ideas from science fiction. After viewing her solo exhibition at Pittsburgh Cultural Trust’s 820 Gallery, the Arts Council introduced Anisha to the FEED Media Art Center in Erie, Pennsylvania, which then chose to feature her work.

“

It was so fortunate to have the Arts Council come to my show in Pittsburgh and then take the care to connect me with another synergetic community of media artists in Erie. — **Anisha Baid**

Anisha Baid, Photo by Patrick Fisher



WHAT'S NEXT?



After a successful first year, the Creative Hive is continuing in 2025 with a new roster of exciting arts and culture venues. Thanks to valuable feedback we received during our inaugural year, the events have also moved to a new time—the last Tuesday of every month—to provide more folks with the opportunity to gather and connect.

*The Arts Council's Creative Hive networking event at TLC Libations,
Photo by Patrick Fisher*

PROVIDING CREATIVE RESOURCES

Artists and arts workers were—and remain—among the segment of the nation’s workforce most severely affected by the pandemic. In November, we were honored to **award \$354,000 in Artist Income Recovery (AIR) grants** to Southwestern PA artists and arts workers to help ease some of their ongoing financial challenges. Thanks to the support of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Commonwealth Financing Authority, and the Department of Community and Economic Development, **we awarded \$3,000 unrestricted grants to 118 artists and arts workers**, empowering them to continue their creative work and reinforcing their essential contributions to the region’s cultural landscape.

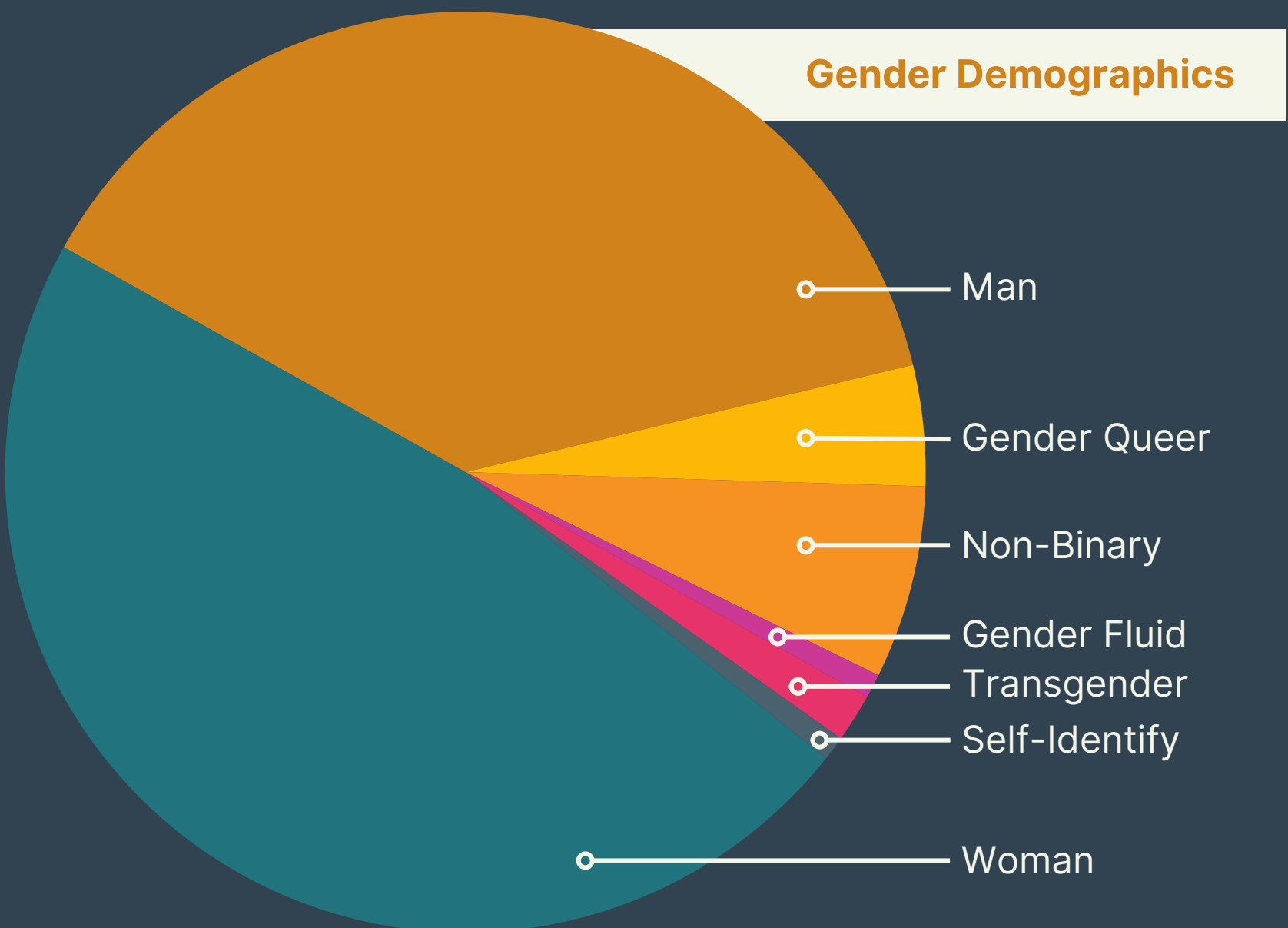
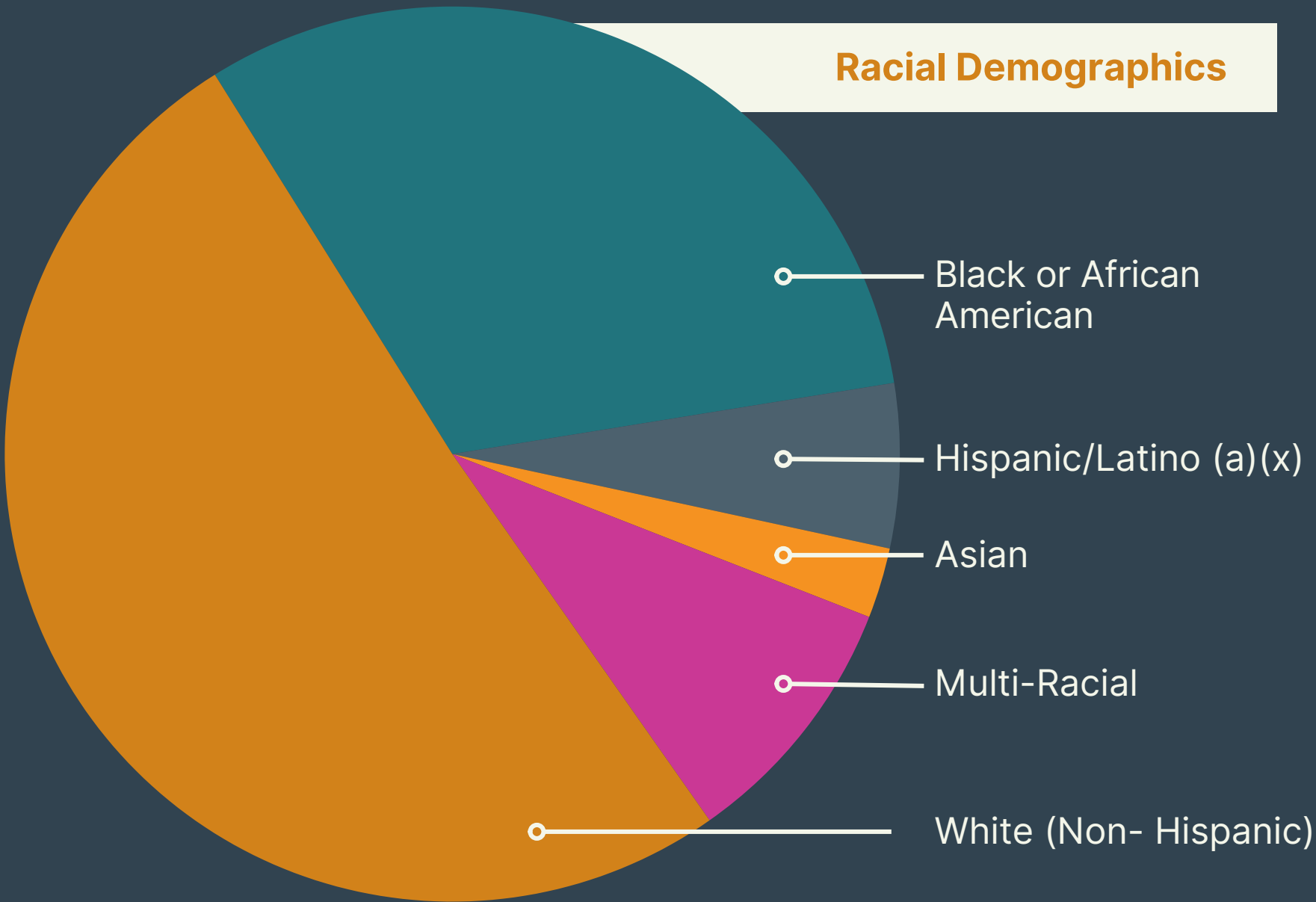
Mars Jackson, Photo
by George Lange



It’s a blessing to live in a city that values and uplifts creatives, giving us the tools to make our visions a reality. The AIR grant is helping me share my story through music and art. Here’s to keeping the arts alive and thriving in Pittsburgh! — **Mars Jackson**, Musician

WHO RECEIVED GRANT FUNDS?

Demographic data for individuals who received a grant July-December 2024



OUR ROLE AS A CONNECTOR FOR THE ARTS COMMUNITY EXTENDS BEYOND GRANTMAKING

Pittsburgh's Cultural Treasures Awardee, Darrin Milliner, leads audiences through his studio space at Red Fishbowl Gallery, Photo courtesy of the artist.

Program to Aid Citizen Enterprise (PACE)

This fall, the Arts Council supported the Program to Aid Citizen Enterprise (PACE) in administering a capacity-building program for Pittsburgh's Cultural Treasures Initiative, which champions Black artists, artist collectives, and arts organizations. Along with providing guidance to this important grantmaking program, the Arts Council is serving as a fiscal sponsor for 31 artist grantees, helping PACE with the distribution of \$155,000 in total funding.

Neighborhood Assistance Program

In October, the Arts Council connected arts organizations with Johnna A. Pro of the PA Department of Community & Economic Development in a free virtual info session. Johnna shared how the state's Neighborhood Assistance Program can help arts nonprofits, highlighting the importance of community participation and partnerships.



Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts Program

The 19 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 10 organizations, providing a more inclusive and accessible arts and culture experience for 25 days' worth of events.



Prime Stage Theatre is grateful for the opportunity to provide audio description equipment at each of our productions. Alongside the invaluable support of our Audio Describer Nathan Ruggles, **this important service allows us to make our performances accessible** to an average of eight patrons per production who are blind, have low vision, or vision loss.

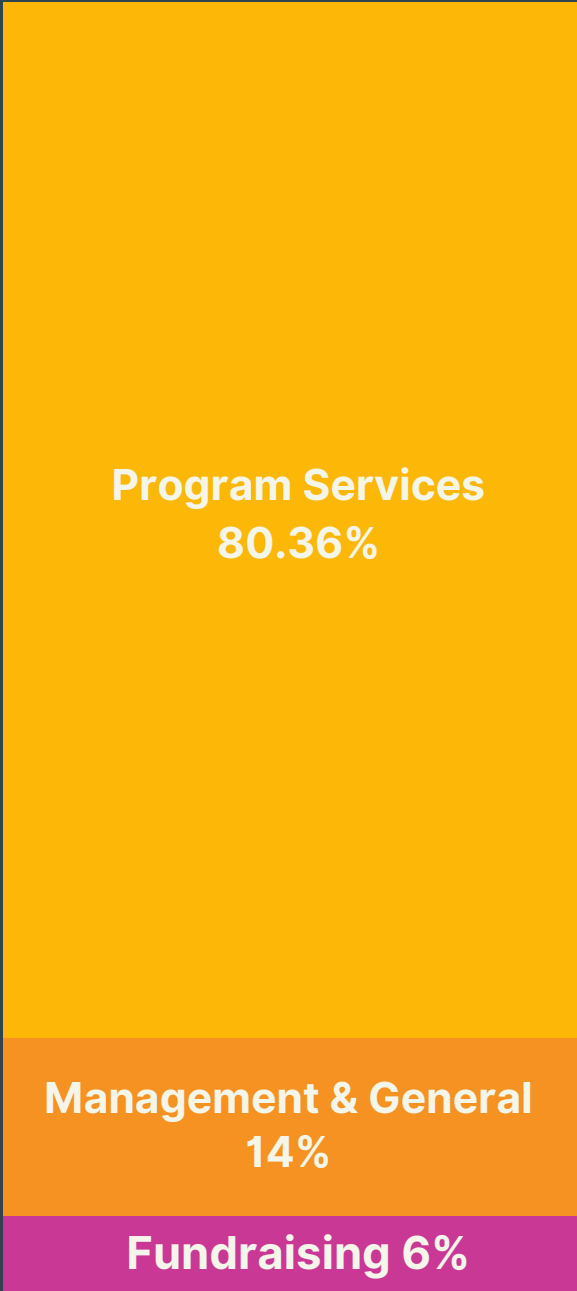
— **Connie Brinda**, General Manager of Prime Stage Theatre

WHAT'S NEXT?

We've partnered with SkillBuilder.io, a Pittsburgh-based AI company launched out of Carnegie Mellon University, to train our first digital concierge to serve as a guide for artists, non-profit arts organizations, and community members. Artzy will allow us to point visitors to valuable resources in real-time, 24/7/365, saving the staff hundreds of hours a year.

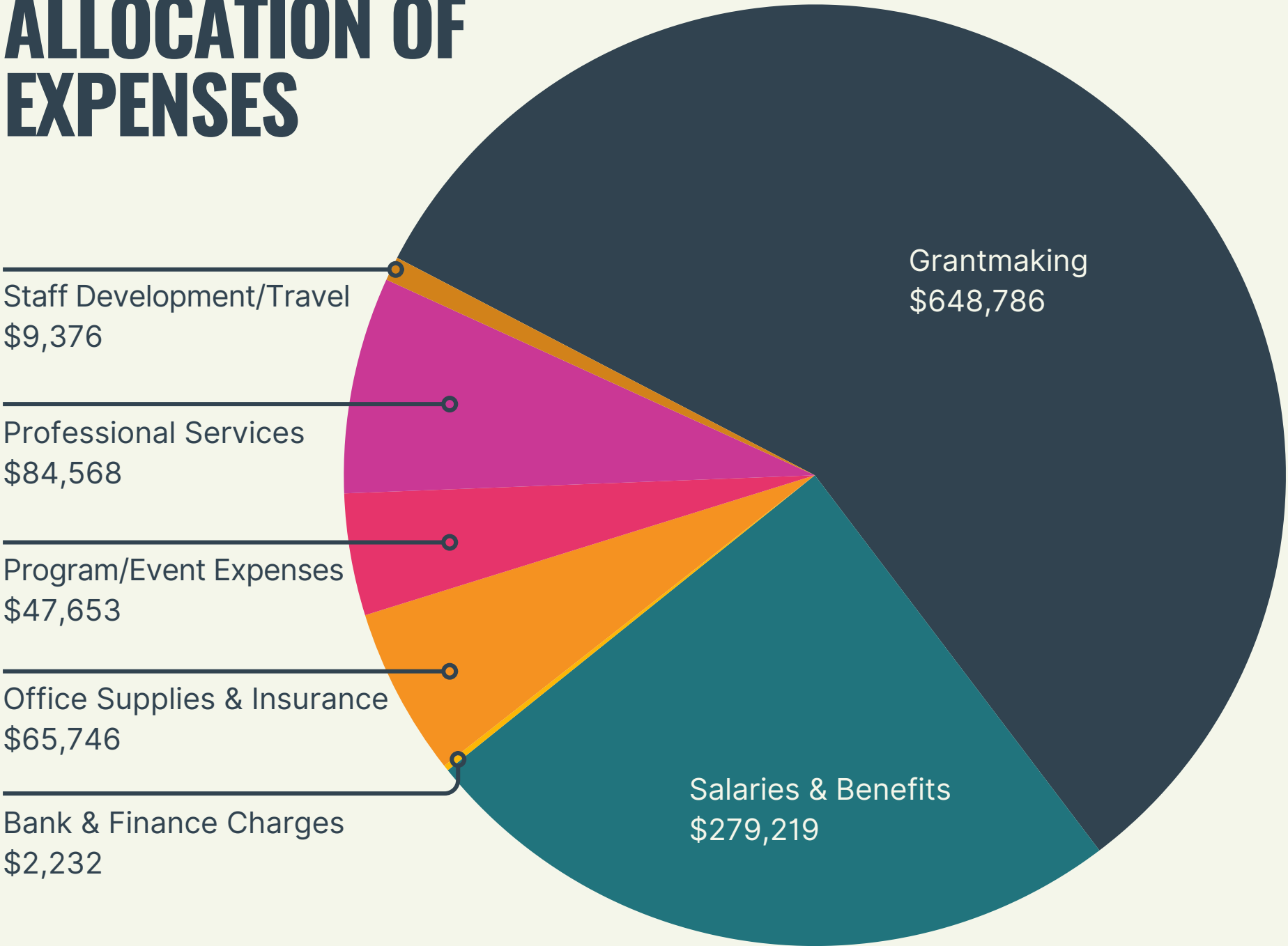
Photo: Matt Henderson & Carina Iannarelli in Prime Stage Theatre's Witness for the Prosecution, Photo by Laura Slovesko

EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



FINANCIALS

ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES



REVENUE

\$1,410,347
Total Revenue
43% of this total revenue is restricted income

\$1,374,672
Grants
47% of amount received in prior years with time/purpose restrictions

\$14,699
Individual Support

\$20,976
Earned Revenue



STAFF & BOARD

None of the work you’ve viewed in this report would be possible without the dedicated staff of the Arts Council. During what has been a significant season of change, our team has shown honesty, resourcefulness, and an unwavering dedication to serving this region’s creative and culture sector. I’m deeply grateful for their hard work and for the trust they’ve built with artists, organizations, and partners across the region. – **Patrick Fisher**, CEO

*Arts Council Board members and staff at City of Asylum,
Photo by Patrick Fisher*

STAFF

**as of 12/31/2024*

Patrick Fisher,
Chief Executive Officer

Mia Hooper,
Chief Operating Officer

Morgan Kasprowicz,
Director of Research & Cultural Policy

Lisa Cunningham,
Director of Marketing & Communications

John Watt,
Manager of Development

Mona Wiley,
Grantmaking Manager

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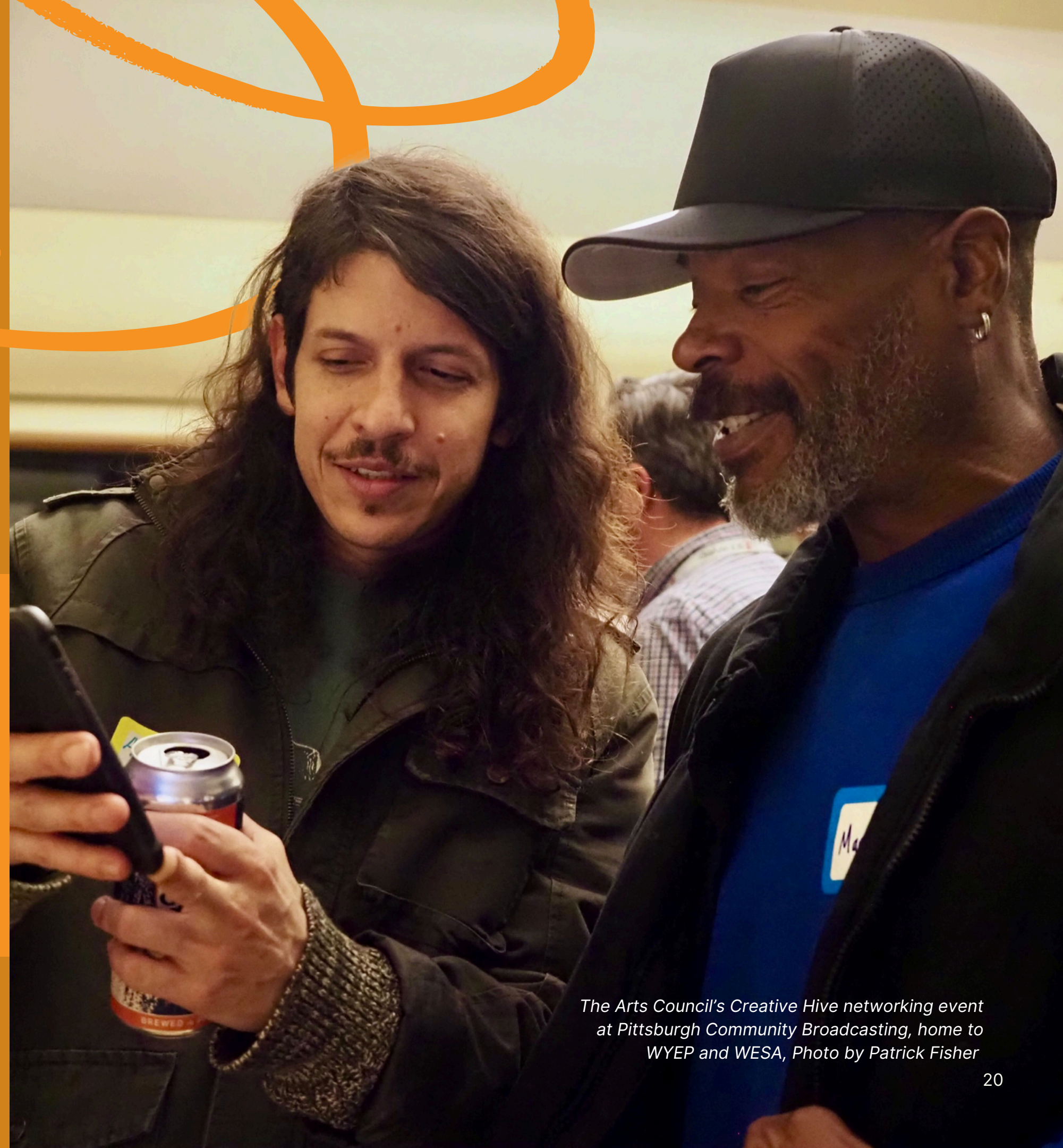
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Join us in
building a
stronger,
more
connected
artistic
community.



*The Arts Council's Creative Hive networking event
at Pittsburgh Community Broadcasting, home to
WYEP and WESA, Photo by Patrick Fisher*