

4Culture 2026–2031

PROGRAM OF WORK

Introduction

The 2026–2031 4Culture Program of Work includes all Doors Open programming as approved by the King County Council. It also maintains our Lodging Tax and 1% for Art programs and showcases the evolution of 4Culture’s ability to continue offering funding initiatives and strategic engagement that will help our cultural sector thrive countywide.

Program and Services

The 2026–2031 Program of Work includes programs and services in the following areas broken out by funding source:

➤ **DOORS OPEN**

- One-Time Operating Support
- One-Time Capital Facilities
- Public School Cultural Access
- Launch
- Building For Equity
- Public Free Access
- Countywide Initiatives
- Sustained Support
- Expanding Capacity Outside Established Cultural Centers

➤ **LODGING TAX**

- Sustained Support for Arts
- Sustained Support for Heritage and Historic Preservation
- Special Projects
- Cultural Facilities
- Cultural Education

➤ **1% FOR ART**

- Public Art

From Surviving to Thriving

With continued gratitude to King County Councilmembers for passing Doors Open, 4Culture is now positioned to support this region's cultural sector at an unprecedented scale. In the first round of grants supported by Doors Open revenue, more than 600 cultural organizations in King County were awarded general operating and facility grants, with more than 25% of allocations awarded to organizations and projects outside the city of Seattle. The passage and implementation of Doors Open could not have come at a better time, given the widespread termination of federal cultural funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Institute of Museum and Library Services. At the same time, the sector has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels of consumption and engagement. Doors Open provides stability and resources to support King County's cultural organizations to move from surviving to thriving.

To support this transformative opportunity, 4Culture is expanding operationally. Outreach and engagement efforts have increased to ensure funding opportunities are widely recognized and accessed by those who have not previously received 4Culture funds. We continue to expand pathways for providing technical assistance to grantseekers and awardees, and have operationalized the translation of 4Culture grant materials into the top local languages to better support immigrant-led and serving organizations. The Network of Support provides critical capacity building, coaching and mentoring to emerging and growing organizations.

The 2026–2027 biennium will see 4Culture administering Lodging Tax revenues alongside Doors Open revenues, and the 1% for Art public art program. This period represents grant cycles that will allocate more than **\$200 million dollars** into the cultural eco-system, focused on equitable

investments within Communities of Opportunity, and public benefits outside of established cultural centers.

4Culture will document, measure, and share the impact of these programs through and briefings, the Doors Open Assessment Report, and our annual report.

Doors Open: One-Time Operating Support

Per the Doors Open ordinance, in 2024, 4Culture administered two large scale, one-time funding initiatives utilizing Doors Open tax revenue to drive investment in the specific areas of Operating Support and Capital Facilities.

Operating Support grants fund the day-to-day operational costs that allow cultural organizations to serve and enrich the lives of King County visitors and residents through public benefits. A total of \$33,103,603 in awards were contracted to 594 organizations, with payments disbursed by June 30, 2025. With the addition of Science to the funding portfolio, Doors Open has expanded the impact of these funds to communities and public benefit experiences for the benefit of King County residents.

The award recipient pool grew significantly; 201 organizations receiving grants are new to the program, didn't apply in the last application cycle, or haven't been funded in decades. Returning awardees received awards at least three times larger than what they received previously. One significant adjustment relates to lengthening the grant cycle to provide more stable and predictable revenue forecasting, these organizations will receive this funding over a three-year period instead of two years.

Doors Open: One-Time Operating Support Program	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	10.9	33,103,603	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Inflation Rate		N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A

Doors Open: One-Time Capital Facilities Program

Doors Open Capital Facilities program provided funding for building, remodeling, and acquiring space that houses cultural work throughout King County. The fund prioritized projects that demonstrated the ability to begin construction or acquisition within two years of being awarded funds (by December 31, 2026) for a variety of project size categories.

This grant builds from 4Culture and King County's Building for Equity Initiative to support cultural building projects and create a pathway to racial equity in cultural facilities funding. To achieve this, applicants must show an ongoing commitment to racial equity and equitable development, and applicants with project budgets over \$10M will be required to meet a Cultural Space Contribution Requirement, where they provide space or technical assistance as part of their public benefit.

A total of \$32,860,112 was awarded to 83 organizations throughout King County for renovation, new construction, preservation, and property acquisition. Of these, 22 organizations are receiving capital funding from us for the first time.

One-Time Capital Facilities Program	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	0.0	32,860,112	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Inflation Rate		N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A

Doors Open: Public School Cultural Access Program

The Doors Open Public School Cultural Access program, now known as Curiosity Pass, creates access to cultural education experience for public school students in three ways.

Beginning in Fall 2025, an online roster of arts, heritage, historic preservation and science cultural education offerings will launch, featuring information about on- and off-site programs, for in- and out-of-school-day experiences. The audience for this tool is public and tribal school teachers in King County's 19 school districts, for coordinating and planning expanded educational opportunities. A funding program will directly support cultural organization's education programs, including underwriting existing operations and expanding the depth and breadth of offerings. Finally, a transportation reimbursement program will allow districts with a 40% or higher free and reduced lunch rate and individual Seattle District schools with a 40% or higher free and reduced lunch rate to invoice 4Culture for off-site programming.

The goal of Curiosity Pass is to improve outcomes for public school students across the county through cultural education.

Doors Open Public School Cultural Access Program	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	3.6	10,098,592	3.6	22,192,196	3.6	23,331,036	3.6	15,276,900
Inflation Rate		N/A		9.2%		5.1%		(34.5%)

Doors Open: Launch

The Launch program supports new and emerging cultural and science organizations in King County, expanding geographic access to cultural experiences. Launch will provide grants for start-up costs and multi-year operating support to new and emerging organizations, also offering culturally appropriate capacity building and technical assistance. New organizations will have a pathway to receiving Sustained Support, which is only available to organizations with a several-year operating history. Emerging organizations that have a longer operating history but are fiscally sponsored or have had 501c3 status for less than three years, and are hiring paid staff for the first time, are eligible for operating support as well.

Increasing access to cultural space, especially for organizations that have historically faced barriers, is a priority of this Doors Open initiative. Launch will leverage 4Culture's existing capital programs, including Building for Equity Facilities and the Preservation Action Fund, to increase access to cultural space for emerging organizations. Launch will prioritize organizations based outside of Seattle, or in a [Community of Opportunity](#) (COO), or meeting other equity criteria.

Launch	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	1.7	2,019,718	1.7	4,438,439	1.7	4,666,207	1.7	3,055,380
Inflation Rate		N/A		9.2%		5.1%		(34.5%)

Doors Open: Building for Equity

The Doors Open allocation for Building for Equity encompasses 4Culture’s interdisciplinary facilities funding programs including Project Development, Facilities, Native Cultural Facilities, Anchoring Community, Equipment and Emergency & Unforeseen grants. As a multifaceted program, Building for Equity centers communities that have historically faced barriers to purchasing and stewarding cultural space, and provides a combination of funding, tailored support, and strategic partnerships. Doors Open enables 4Culture’s existing Building for Equity programs to expand impact and broaden project opportunities. In 2025, Building for Equity is launching two new capital grant programs: Native Cultural Facilities, supporting land acquisition, development, renovations, and new construction that advance the preservation and vitality of Native cultures; and Anchoring Community, funding and fostering equitable development for facility projects with budgets over \$10m. Anchoring Community awardees will participate in a three-year cohort during this budget cycle.

Access to affordable and accessible cultural space is one of the most significant ongoing needs in the sector and for King County. Doors Open Building for Equity funding creates a variety of pipelines to address this challenge in an especially expensive market.

Doors Open Building For Equity	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	4.0	6,732,395	4.0	14,794,797	4.0	15,554,024	4.0	10,184,600
Inflation Rate		N/A		9.2%		5.1%		(34.5%)

Doors Open: Sustained Support

Sustained Support provides multi-year grants for operating funds to cultural organizations throughout King County. These awards provide unrestricted funds to organizations that have a track record of delivering programs and services for public benefit. Through a competitive process, 4Culture will provide Sustained Support grants to more than 500 Doors Open-eligible organizations working in the discipline areas of Arts, Heritage, Historic Preservation, and Science and Technology.

As the largest ongoing Doors Open program, Sustained Support is modeled after 4Culture's longstanding Lodging Tax version of the program and will operate on a three-year cycle. The program's main objective is providing reliable, multi-year funding assistance for general operations, including rent, utilities, payroll, program expenditures and other basic annual expenses. Allowing organizations to apply investments to their self-identified most significant needs supports long-term sustainability efforts. Additionally, receiving Sustained Support makes an organization eligible to apply for the Public Free Access program, whereby they provide a limited, select set of data to be eligible for additional funds, expanding the depth of impact. The Lodging Tax version of this program, historically 4Culture's signature funding initiative, remains in existence, maintaining a focus on supporting non-Doors Open eligible applicants.

Sustained Support	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	0.0	0	10.9	70,427,267	10.9	75,423,759	10.9	80,442,362
Inflation Rate		N/A		N/A		7.1%		6.7%

Doors Open: Public Free Access

The Public Free Access program reduces the significant barrier that ticket fees pose to many King County residents and visitors, particularly underserved communities, in accessing quality cultural and science experiences. Grant funds support cultural organizations' cost of providing free and reduced cost programming throughout the year.

In early 2025, Public Free Access awarded \$10m to 286 cultural and science producers throughout the county. Continuing 4Culture's practice of investing in local communities' capacity, applicants located outside of Seattle, located within and a Community of Opportunity, with the smallest operating budgets, and/or other indicators correlated with limited access to cultural and science funding receive an equity investment increasing the grant amount over and above what would have been awarded otherwise.

Public Free Access	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	3.1	10,098,592	3.1	22,192,196	3.1	23,331,036	3.1	15,276,900
Inflation Rate		N/A		9.2%		5.1%		(34.5%)

Doors Open: Countywide Initiatives

Countywide Initiatives funding supports the cultural workforce and career development for King County’s cultural practitioners through funding cultural organizations that provide cultural support services. Cultural support services are investments in people, without whom the cultural sector would not exist. A healthy workforce strengthens the arts, culture, and science ecosystem and, in turn, improves the cultural experience available to the residents and visitors of King County and revitalize communities. Countywide Initiatives supports local cultural practitioners through field services, the constellation of programs, resources, and networks that support capacity building for cultural organizations and cultural practitioners in King County.

Countywide Initiatives will provide funding to cultural support service providers who work with and support the cultural workforce throughout the county.

Countywide Initiatives	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	1.8	4,712,676	1.8	10,356,358	1.8	10,887,817	1.8	7,129,220
Inflation Rate		N/A		9.2%		5.1%		(34.5%)

Doors Open: Expanding Capacity Outside Established Cultural Centers

A minimum of 25% of Doors Open funding supports organizations outside of established cultural centers, and a minimum of 10% is allocated towards organizations in Communities of Opportunity or who serve vulnerable populations.

The funding dedicated to expand capacity outside of established cultural centers is allocated to each of the Doors Open programs in proportion to the percentage outlined in the Doors Open ordinance. Subsequently, each of those grant programs has established procedures to ensure that a minimum of 25% of awards are distributed to organizations outside the City of Seattle, and 10% are distributed to organizations in Communities of Opportunity.

To continue to expand connections with organizations outside Seattle, 4Culture has expanded communications and outreach capacity, re-introducing Hello 4Culture, a program designed for increased outreach throughout King County. Language access and translation services for supporting immigrant-led and North, South and East King County organizations are in operation, and we're exploring hiring Language Navigators to support in-language grant applications.

Expanding Capacity Outside of Established Cultural Centers	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	0.0	11,688,185	0.0	50,139,324	0.0	53,192,319	0.0	45,612,973
Inflation Rate		N/A		109.2%		6.1%		(14.3%)

LODGING TAX: Sustained Support for Arts

4Culture will continue to fund the Sustained Support program through Lodging Tax revenue. As a result of many organizations becoming eligible to receive Doors Open revenue, certain arts organizations deemed ineligible for funding via the Doors Open sales tax may be eligible to receive increased awards through Lodging Tax, approximately commensurate with award sizes for organizations receiving Doors Open revenue. This overall increase in available funds for the Sustained Support program aligns with efforts to support the arts sector's sustainability and resiliency.

In alignment with the new Doors Open structure, Lodging Tax Sustained Support for Arts will now offer three-year awards, allowing organizations to plan for the years ahead. This funding supports the financial stability of a vibrant arts sector, inspires creative excellence, and encourages a commitment for providing cultural programming for the benefit of the people who live, work, and visit our region. This is especially true for those who continue to face barriers to accessing cultural experiences due to systemic injustice and/or come from underinvested communities. More than 150 organizations participate in the program and reflect a countywide geographic distribution, organizations of all sizes, and a multitude of artistic disciplines.

Sustained Support	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	0.8	3,787,701	0.8	8,483,805	0.8	8,183,386	0.8	8,609,699
Inflation Rate		7.2%		9.5%		(3.5%)		5.2%

LODGING TAX: Sustained Support for Heritage and Historic Preservation

During the upcoming biennial budget cycle, 4Culture will continue offering general operating support through the Sustained Support grant program for Heritage and Historic Preservation organizations through Lodging Tax revenue. This funding stabilizes and bolsters Heritage and Historic Preservation organizations and entities, with a focus on those not eligible to receive Doors Open funding. 4Culture provides three-year grants to organizations delivering Heritage and Historic Preservation programs and services for the benefit of the public in King County. Preservation Sustained Support also funds municipalities that operate a historic preservation program established by city ordinance or offer historic preservation services through an interlocal agreement with the King County Historic Preservation Program (KCHPP). These funds support financial stability, excellence, and commitment to providing ongoing cultural programmatic events for the benefit of King County residents and visitors, especially those who face barriers in accessing cultural experiences. Organizations that participate in the program reflect a countywide geographic distribution and groups of all budget sizes.

Sustained Support	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	0.1	562,614	0.1	1,303,197	0.1	1,215,698	0.1	1,279,121
Inflation Rate		(61.5%)		13.3%		(6.7%)		5.2%

LODGING TAX: Special Projects

4Culture will continue addressing the needs of mid- and smaller-sized organizations along with individual artists, heritage and historic preservation professionals with our dedicated Special Projects funding.

4Culture is the largest regional funder of individual artists and we provide financial support for creative projects by King County artists working in all disciplines including, dance, theater, music and visual arts. Preservation special projects provide annual funding for research, documentation, planning and advocacy to promote the preservation of historic places. Heritage special projects fund individuals, community groups and public agencies that document, exhibit, create and interpret heritage throughout King County.

During the 2026–2027 biennial budget cycle, 4Culture will continue to partner with local arts agencies, cultural funders and community-based organizations on innovative arts, heritage and historic preservation projects that bolster the cultural and geographic diversity of King County. Continuing our commitment to disrupt institutional bias in our funding programs, equity investments are utilized to provide additional funding to applicants that are in Communities of Opportunity, located outside or Seattle and score highly on our Advancing Equity criteria.

Special Projects	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	2.8	6,975,102	2.8	13,791,981	2.8	11,616,716	2.8	13,687,451
Inflation Rate		99.7%		2.9%		(15.8%)		17.8%

Cultural Facilities

Utilizing Lodging Tax, 4Culture will continue addressing the issues of availability and affordability of cultural space through our flagship equitable development program known as **Building for Equity**. The program offers a combination of technical assistance, funding, technical support, and strategic partnerships, with priority given to communities that have historically faced barriers to purchasing and stewarding cultural space. 4Culture will also continue to support the purchase of fixed assets that will benefit art, heritage and cultural organizations along with preservation and restoration of historic properties through our **Landmarks Capital** program.

Building for Equity is funded by both Doors Open and Lodging Tax revenue streams, and provides annual awards through **Project Development, Anchoring Community, Facilities, and Native Cultural Facilities** grants. Utilizing different eligibility requirements, the Lodging Tax specific funding will continue supporting applicants that are not eligible for Doors Open funding, including municipalities, public agencies, Tribes and organizations that provide unique, dedicated space for cultural programs and services.

Cultural Facilities	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	1.9	7,380,731	1.9	10,678,847	1.9	8,797,597	1.9	9,025,247
Inflation Rate		250.7%		(28.3%)		(17.6%)		2.6%

Cultural Education

Parallel to launching the Curiosity Pass program through Doors Open revenue sources, 4Culture is utilizing Lodging Tax revenue in support of the same goals. Lodging Tax supported the development of the King County Arts Education data dashboard, along with a King County Cultural Education Study, which informed the creation of the Doors Open funding track. Similar to other program areas, Lodging Tax will supplement the Doors Open Curiosity Pass program by funding organizations and entities that are ineligible for Doors Open funds, such as individual teaching artists, tribes, and other entities.

Curiosity Pass's goal is to improve outcomes for public school students across the county through cultural education.

Cultural Education	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	0.2	529,531	0.2	1,062,771	0.2	1,068,066	0.2	1,073,811
Inflation Rate		716.5%		0.2%		0.5%		0.5%

Public Art: 1% FOR ART

4Culture manages the **King County Public Art Collection (KCPAC)** and commissions new public art funded by the **King County 1% for Art Ordinance** through the Public Art program. Public Art also maintains the KCPAC with collection stewardship funds. The goal of 4Culture public art is to integrate the work and thinking of artists into the planning, design and construction of county facilities, buildings, infrastructure and public spaces for our King County partners. 4Culture cares for the KCPAC which includes more than 2,200 portable, permanent, integrated and temporary artworks available in publicly accessible sites throughout King County. More than twenty conservation and collections projects are currently underway. Additionally, Gallery 4Culture and Storefront Media are initiatives funded by Lodging Tax and managed by Public Art, that provide ongoing opportunities for King County artists and cultural practitioners to exhibit their work in a free and accessible space. Storefront Media has a rotating program of work while Gallery 4Culture produces six exhibitions annually.

Public Art	2025 Projected		2026-2027 Projected		2028-2029 Projected		2030-2031 Projected	
	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$	FTE	\$
Program Expenses	8.7	6,309,668	8.7	11,090,989	8.7	11,885,546	8.7	14,983,332
Inflation Rate		148.8%		(10.2%)		7.2%		26.1%

Fund Sources

4Culture is primarily supported by **Doors Open tax revenue**, 37.5 percent of the proceeds from **King County Lodging Tax**, and the **1% for Art Program**, a portion of King County new capital construction projects. 4Culture also utilizes grants and other revenue sources to fund the programs.

Total Program		2025 Projected	2026-2027 Projected	2028-2029 Projected	2030-2031 Projected
Lodging Tax Proceeds		\$ 14,695,910	\$30,738,157	\$ 31,836,545	\$ 33,859,049
Doors Open Sales Tax		93,505,480	205,483,298	216,028,113	141,452,779
1% for Art		5,874,405	16,649,956	3,000,000	3,000,000
King County Art Collection		308,000	670,000	683,217	724,825
Building For Equity Interfund Loan		0	0	0	0
Interest Income		4,059,052	7,867,046	8,131,808	8,011,029
Grants and Other		150,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
King County Relief ARPA		0	0	0	0