2023 State Cultural Agenda: Inspire WA Priorities

The Cultural Sector in Washington is a big tent. Therefore, the number of requests (spanning policy and budget requests) that have both indirect and direct impact on science, heritage, and arts programming is broad. It’s our job to share all of these opportunities with you and to help you be strategic with your advocacy.

This page shares the opportunities that Inspire WA believes will have the biggest impact on the broad sector AND needs the push from our whole coalition to achieve.

You want more funding to sustain your program and expand access within your community. And, that funding should be sustainable and multi-year. You want places to create, perform and learn; to gather community and to share stories. These are the top priorities that will deliver, if approved by the legislature.

BROAD CULTURAL SECTOR

- **Cultural Sector Support (Inspire WA):** $25 million of state investment in FY24 for the Cultural Sector will grow and secure cultural employment, ensure public safety, expand cultural access, and address student learning loss through cultural experiences and programs across WA.
  
  *The ask: Please provide $25 million for cultural sector support to sustain and strengthen cultural businesses and provide programming.*

- **HB 1575/SB 5612 Providing Councilmanic Authority to the Cultural Access Program (Rep. Reed & Sen. Lovelett):** Currently, the program is authorized by a vote of the people. Amending the statute will expand authorizing options, allowing Councils and Commissions to authorize a program through majority Council/Commission vote.
  
  *The ask: Please support HB 1575 and SB 5612, providing councilmanic authority for the Cultural Access Program.*

CULTURAL FACILITIES

- **Building for the Arts (Commerce):** The program awards grants to performing arts, art museums, and cultural organizations for as much as a 33% state match of eligible project costs for acquisition, construction, and/or major renovation of capital facilities. Projects funded have been reviewed and approved by a panel of experts. The governor’s proposed budget included only part of the approved projects.
  
  *The ask: Please provide $18 million for the Building for the Arts Program and include all 32 recommended projects.*

- **Heritage Capital Projects (WA State Historical Society):** Heritage Capital Projects provide public access to history and support the capital needs of facilities and organizations that preserve and interpret Washington’s history and heritage.
  
  *The ask: From the Governor’s FY 23 Budget, please provide the full $10 million for Heritage Capital to include all recommended projects.*
FIELD SPECIFIC REQUESTS

The state legislature will weigh many more specific policy and budget requests specific to the science, heritage, and arts fields. They may also be of intersectional interest to our sector, like education, workforce development, and affordable housing, to name just a few. How do you decide what to talk about when you have limited time with your lawmaker or their legislative aide? You will need to decide what matters most to your community and your cultural work. **We do not expect anyone to advocate for everything.** We’ve grouped the opportunities in various ways to help direct your decision-making.

Each request has a specific proponent (like Inspire Washington, ArtsWA, WA State Historical Society, etc.) They are your advocacy partners and information specialists. Go to [InnovationLeague.org/advocacy-resources](https://InnovationLeague.org/advocacy-resources) for one-sheets on each bill or budget request.

**Requests from ArtsWA**

- **Creative Districts (ArtsWA):** This funding will implement small-scale capital projects and keep matched dollars.  
  *The ask:* From the Capital Budget, please provide $416,000 to support the Certified Creative Districts of Washington State.

- **Tribal Cultural Affairs Program (ArtsWA):** TCAP will work with Washington State Tribal Governments, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), and Tribal-led organizations to support the creative economy and the unique role of Indigenous arts, artists, and culture. TCAP will offer technical assistance and grant support.  
  *The ask:* From the Governor’s Operational FY 23 Budget, please provide $2.7 million for the Tribal Cultural Affairs Program to support Indigenous artists.

- **Amplify Arts in Education (ArtsWA):** This program would increase the allotment for Arts in Education grants, sustain research to track arts learning access, and expand access to arts and cultural career pathways. ArtsWA requested $1.8 million, but it was included at $174,000 in the Governor’s budget.  
  *The ask:* Please provide ArtsWA’s requested funding of $1.8 million for Arts in Education programs.

**Requests from Humanities WA**

- **Speakers Bureau Civic Engagement Program:** This program provides important access to our state’s history and diverse cultural heritage and include such topic areas as state and national history, racial/ethnic history and culture, civil and human rights, and democracy and politics. Funds are used to provide speakers with a modest stipend and to help cover some travel costs.  
  *The ask:* Please provide Humanities WA with $275,000 to provide ongoing funding to maintain and make equity and access updates to its Speakers Bureau program.

- **Prime Time Family Reading Program:** Prime Time Family Reading is a free family reading program for ages 6-10 delivered by Humanities WA in partnership with public libraries and local elementary schools.  
  *The ask:* Please provide $1,000,000 to maintain and build the program to include 100 free programs statewide.
Requests from Washington Trust

- **Mainstreet Program Funding (DAHP):** to continue expanded operation levels for the Washington Mainstreet Program. This funding will ensure the agency can continue to offer the same level of services to the current 69 program participants, as well as manage new applications.  
  *The ask: From the Governor’s FY 23 Budget, please provide $700,000 to expand the Mainstreet Program to serve more communities.*

- **Historic Capital Grant programs (DAHP):** The courthouse ($4,761 mill), barn ($1 mill), cemetery ($515,000) and theater ($515,000) programs support economic development and preservation of important historic buildings, focusing on resources located primarily in rural areas and historic downtown commercial cores.  
  *The ask: From the Governor’s FY 23 Budget, please retain $6,791,000 to provide necessary maintenance for Washington’s historical places.*

**Spotlight on Creative Therapy and Climate Change**

- **Creative Therapies for Weather Trauma (Rep. Rule & Rep. Maycumber):** Establish a program at ArtsWA to support creative therapies, training, arts programing and other arts services for weather related trauma in youth and children.  
  *The ask: Please provide $3 million for Creative Therapies for Weather Trauma to support the mental health of youth affected by natural disasters.*

**Spotlight on Rural Museums and Preserving WA Legacies**

- **SB 5000 Recognizing contributions of Americans of Chinese descent (Sen. Wagoner):** January of each year will be known as Americans of Chinese descent history month to commemorate the contributions of Americans of Chinese descent to the history and heritage of Washington state and the United States.  
  *The ask: Please support SB 5000 to establish Americans of Chinese descent month.*

- **HB 1629/SB 5436 (Reps. Wylie, Senn & Orcutt and Sen. Wilson, J):** Concerning transfers of firearms to museums and historical societies: The requirements for a sale or transfer of a firearm where neither party is a licensed dealer do not apply to the temporary transfer of a firearm to a museum or historical society, or return of the firearm to its owner from a museum or historical society, and museum personnel while acting in the scope of their official duties.  
  *The ask: Please support SB 5436 so that firearms may be transferred to museums or returned to owners under standard museum practices.*

- **Museum Connects Program (WAMA):** to continue the working of the state-wide inventory of rural, volunteer, and multidiscipline museums and place-based arts, cultural, heritage and science groups  
  *The ask: Please provide $200,000 to continue the Museum Connects program.*

Are there other opportunities? Yes! We were strategic. We are monitoring an even larger list of issues and opportunities that would overwhelm you. Many of them have no political future while some are a guaranteed win. We are guiding you to the issues that need most attention. But the team of Inspire WA is always happy to talk about cultural policy. So, reach out to Manny if you have a specific issue to discuss.

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