

CREATIVE CURRENT GRANTS FY26

Black Theatre Troupe

Location: Tempe Center for the Arts

Date: October 17–November 2, 2025

Description: This fall, Black Theatre Troupe will return to Tempe Center for the Arts (TCA) with *Caroline, or Change*, a musically rich production by Tony Kushner and Jeanine Tesori. As the only Black theatre company in the Southwest and one of the longest-running in the nation, Black Theatre Troupe will bring its legacy of powerful storytelling to TCA's intimate Studio Theatre from October 13 through November 2, 2025. Accompanied by a 15-piece orchestra, the sung-through musical explores race, class and transformation in 1963 Louisiana. Through support from Tempe's Community Arts funding, this project will continue Black Theatre Troupe's vital mission to illuminate Black history and culture, while expanding access to professional theatre and fostering meaningful cross-cultural engagement in Tempe.

Website: blacktheatretroupe.org

CaZo Dance Theatre

Location: Tempe Center for the Arts

Date: November 7–8, 2025, April 24–25, 2026

Description: CaZo Dance Theatre, a Tempe-based company known for its story-driven productions, will present two performances at Tempe Center for the Arts during the 2025–2026 season. *Coven: An Origin Story*, running November 7–8, 2025, conjures a cinematic, bewitched fusion of modern, aerial, and theatrical dance, as well as live illusions by local magician Bryce Kuhlman. *You Are Not Alone*, running April 24–25, 2026, aims to explore youth identity, mental health, and resilience. Tempe Community Arts grant funding will support CaZo's commitment to making professional dance more accessible and inclusive for Tempe audiences. In addition to public performances, the company will offer a free student matinee, post-show talkbacks to promote the arts as a tool for dialogue and healing.

Website: cazodance.com

Central Arizona Flute Ensemble

Location: Inspirations of Tempe, Contempo Tempe and Sage Point Mobile Home Park

Date: October 2025–June 2026

Description: Central Arizona Flute Ensemble (CAFE Flutes) will present a series of nine interactive concerts across three Tempe senior living communities: Inspirations of Tempe, Contempo Tempe and Sage Point Mobile Home Park. With three performances at each location between October 2025 through June 2026, this project will bring live music directly into familiar, accessible spaces for over 850 older adults. Designed to foster connection, joy and well-being, the concerts invite audience participation and respond to resident preferences through collaborative programming. With support from grant funds, this project continues CAFE Flutes' vital role in enhancing the quality of life for seniors while advancing Tempe's vision of continuing accessible, inclusive, citywide arts engagement.

Website: cafeflutes.com

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Childsplay

Location: Childsplay's Sybil B. Harrington Campus for Imagination and Wonder

Date: April 18th, 2026

Description: For nearly 50 years, Childsplay Theatre has been a cornerstone of arts-based education in Tempe, igniting imaginations and nurturing a love of learning through professional theatre for young audiences. On Saturday, April 18th, 2026, Childsplay will present two free public performances of *The Imaginators* at their Campus of Imagination and Wonder, with the hope to give back to the community that has supported them for decades. This joyful, family-friendly event will include live performances, hands-on drama workshops and free food, with all elements designed to celebrate creativity, foster connection and ensure that every Tempe child has access to meaningful, high-quality arts experiences.

Website: childsplayaz.org

Desert Dance Theatre

Location: Tempe Center for the Arts

Date: September 18–20, 2025

Description: Desert Dance Theatre's 26th Annual Arizona Dance Festival, held at Tempe Center for the Arts, will feature three days of live performances and artist showcases from September 18 through 20, 2025. These performances will highlight up to 40 local and regional dance artists and filmmakers, offering a platform for both emerging and established voices in Arizona's dance community. Desert Dance Theatre will aim to foster artistic exchange, cultural representation and public access to professional dance through the support of Tempe Community Arts funding. By drawing artists and audiences from across the Valley and beyond, the festival will continue to strengthen Tempe's identity as a hub for diverse, high-quality performing arts.

Website: desertdancetheatre.org

Desert Overture Live Cultural Entertainment

Location: Tempe Center for the Arts

Date: September 14 & December 14, 2025 and March 22 & June 14, 2026

Description: Desert Overture Live Cultural Entertainment (DOLCE) is an LGBTQIA+ organization dedicated to entertain, enrich, educate and support the community through music. Comprised of the Desert Overture Wind Symphony and Desert City Jazz, DOLCE's two ensembles will engage over 80 musicians to perform quarterly, seasonal concerts at the Tempe Center for the Arts. With this grant, DOLCE will offer unique, themed programming—from a celebration of favorite tunes and Latin rhythms to a winter collaboration and a tribute to female composers. The organization continues to create bridges of understanding between the LGBTQIA+ community and Tempe's diverse populations, as their concerts offer educational and entertaining experiences while fostering inclusion. DOLCE continues to enhance Tempe's cultural landscape through a commitment to accessible, community-centered performances.

Website: desertoverture.org

Downtown Tempe Foundation

Location: Downtown Tempe

Date: January 24–25, 2026

Description: With the support of Tempe Community Arts grant funding, Downtown Tempe Authority will present Tempe Blooms, a free two-day celebration that transforms the heart of Tempe into a walkable floral art experience. Taking place the last weekend of January 2026, the event will feature 20+ large-scale live flower installations, 10 live mural paintings, 50+ musical performances and a botanical-themed market with interactive demonstrations. Produced in collaboration with Arizona Flower Market and dozens of local artists, makers and volunteers, Tempe Blooms will merge nature, art and commerce in unexpected ways. With the intention to draw over 30,000 attendees, the event reinforces Tempe's identity as a vibrant, inclusive and creatively activated city.

Website: downtowntempe.com

FABRIC Tempe

Location: FABRIC Tempe

Date: September 2025–June 2026, last Thursday of each month

Description: FABRIC Tempe empowers Arizona's fashion designers and entrepreneurs by offering essential resources, education, and support to create sustainable businesses. Their monthly event series, Behind the Seams, runs from September 2025 to June 2026 and features industry experts who share their journeys and insights. These free events provide interactive Q&A sessions, networking opportunities and post-event resources, ensuring inclusivity for all community members. This grant will support the event series, enabling FABRIC to continue offering high-quality, relevant programming that connects with over 500 Tempe community members. By supporting local artists and fostering a vibrant fashion community, FABRIC continues to contribute to the cultural development of Tempe.

Website: fabricincubator.com

Grey Box Collective

Location: The Empty Space

Date: October 10–11, 2025

Description: Grey Box Collective will present *Finger Painting [for grown-ups]*, a performance that explores how busy culture robs adults of creativity, joy, and play. This two-night run, supported by a Tempe Community Arts grant, will engage approximately 200 individuals at The Empty Space in Tempe on October 10 and 11, 2025. The multidisciplinary production brings together seven creatives, including the original cast and crew, to reimagine the work that sparked Grey Box's founding 10 years ago. Developed through a trauma-informed and collaborative process, the performance will blend childlike wonder with experimental expression and post-show dialogues to foster connection and care. By revisiting a formative piece with professional resources and deep community roots, this anniversary project enriches Tempe's creative identity through inclusive and impactful performances.

Website: greyboxcollective.com

Heartsy

Location: Pathway to Work

Date: November 2025–June 2026

Description: Heartsy is dedicated to bringing fine art and arts entrepreneurship programming to underserved populations. Grant funding for Heartsy will support eight art sessions at Pathway to Work from November 2025 to June 2026. This cycle also introduces two pop-up art sale training events, where students will sell their work publicly, gaining confidence, real-world experience and community recognition. This project fosters economic independence for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities by providing creative skills and business training, enriching their lives and contributing to Tempe’s continuous cultural and economic growth.

Website: beheartsy.com

Higher Octave Healing

Location: The Centers for Habilitation and Marina Heights Lawn

Dates: December 11, 2025, February 19 & April 2, 2026

Description: Higher Octave Healing’s HOH Rocks concert series will bring three free public performances in Tempe, spotlighting twelve inclusive bands made up of 60 individuals with developmental disabilities. Rehearsing weekly at HOH’s Tempe clinic, each band will build musical, social and life skills supported by trained music therapists. Concerts will take place at The Centers for Habilitation and Marina Heights, in collaboration with community partners including State Farm and GiGi’s Playhouse Phoenix. These accessible, welcoming events offer performers the chance to express themselves artistically, gain confidence and connect with their community. Supported by a Tempe Community Arts grant, the series amplifies diverse voices and fosters a more inclusive arts culture in Tempe.

Website: higheroctavehealing.org

Lights Camera Discover

Location: Lights Camera Discover

Date: August 2025–May 2026

Description:

Lights Camera Discover’s annual Tempe Animation Program will offer free, hands-on workshops every second Saturday from August 2025 through May 2026 for underserved youth ages 8–18. Supported by grant funding, the program serves up to 25 participants per session, focusing on traditional and digital animation skills such as 2D animation, stop motion, character design, storyboarding and voiceover. Prioritizing inclusivity and access for youth from low-income and BIPOC backgrounds, the program addresses a critical community need in Tempe. Partnering with local schools and community organizations, and led by professional teaching artists, Lights Camera Discover equips young people with creative, technical, and collaborative skills to inspire future success in STEAM careers. The program culminates in a public student showcase celebrating original animated projects and diverse youth voices.

Website: lightscameradiscover.org

Movement Source Dance Company

Location: Tempe Center for the Arts

Date: March 20, 2026

Description: Movement Source Dance Company, a nonprofit multi-media contemporary dance organization with over 36 years of experience, will present *Movement Mosaic*, an evening of dance, live music and visual art on Friday, March 20, 2026 at Tempe Center for the Arts. This season finale explores the theme of quilting and dance, highlighting the connections between fabric patterns, movement patterns and human relationships. Featuring approximately 20 dancers, six choreographers, quilters and musicians including violinist Megyn Neff accompanied by a cellist, the event integrates diverse artistic disciplines into an immersive community experience. With the help of grant funding, the project emphasizes inclusivity with ASL interpretation and outreach to local communities, fostering connection through workshops and collaborative events throughout the season.

Website: movementsourcedancecompany.org

MusicaNova Orchestra

Location: Tempe Center for the Arts

Date: February 7 & May 9, 2026

Description: MusicaNova Orchestra will present two concerts at the Tempe Center for the Arts on February 7 and May 9, 2026, featuring a dynamic mix of new, forgotten and familiar classical pieces. The concerts will highlight pianist Greg Kostraba and saxophonist Christopher Creviston performing “My Cross” by Pulitzer Prize finalist Carter Pann, along with works by female and minority composers to promote diversity in classical music. With over 60 musicians, MusicaNova offers engaging performances paired with educational outreach in Tempe schools, fostering access to high-quality classical music and inspiring community participation. Supported by the Tempe Community Arts grant funds, these concerts bring unique musical experiences to local audiences while strengthening connections between professional musicians and the community, contributing to Tempe’s vibrant arts ecosystem and engagement.

Website: musicanovaaz.org

Musician Enrichment Foundation

Location: Corona del Sol High School and Tempe Center for the Arts

Date: June 9-13, 2026

Description: The 10th Annual Musician Enrichment Foundation (MEF) Band Camp will be held June 9–13, 2026, at Corona del Sol High School with a culminating concert at the Tempe Center for the Arts for nearly 600 attendees. This camp caters to students in grades 7-12 while focusing on developing both musical and life skills through its week-long timeframe. Over 20 Tempe students will benefit from the Tempe Resident Financial Assistance Tuition Rate, attending the camp for only \$50. Supported by Tempe Community Arts grant funds, MEF strengthens Tempe’s community by nurturing young musicians, providing meaningful volunteer and leadership opportunities and creating employment for local professional musicians. The free culminating concert engages families and community members, fostering local pride and enriching Tempe’s culture through high-quality arts education and performances.

Website: musicianenrichmentfoundation.org

Phoenix Gay Men's Chorus

Location: Tempe Center for the Arts

Date: June 26–28, 2026

Description: The Phoenix Gay Men's Chorus (PHXGMC) will return to Tempe Center for the Arts in June 2026 with a high-energy concert blending choral music, dance and theatrical storytelling to promote LGBTQ+ acceptance and foster community connection. Focused on themes of empathy, inclusion, and self-expression, this performance offers audiences a powerful arts experience that challenges discrimination and celebrates diversity. Backed by Tempe Community Arts grant funding, the event also provides free arts access to underserved groups, supports local artists and contributes to a more vibrant, welcoming city. Through music and message, PHXGMC creates space for dialogue, healing and shared joy across Tempe's communities.

Website: phxgmc.org

Phoenix Screenwriters Association

Location: Tempe Public Library, Westside Multigenerational Center

Date: October 2025–May 2026

Description: The Phoenix Screenwriters Association (PSA) will launch *NEXT LEVEL*, a hybrid professional development series for aspiring screenwriters in Tempe. Hosted at the Tempe Public Library and Westside Multigeneration Center, the program will include expert-led instruction, mentorship and hands-on opportunities such as outline and pitch workshops, as well as a representative pitching session. With support from the Tempe Community Arts funds, *NEXT LEVEL* removes financial and geographic barriers to career-building resources and is expected to serve more than 130 community members. Through training by industry professionals and access to real-world feedback, this program strengthens Tempe's creative ecosystem by empowering screenwriters to grow their skills, pursue industry representation and contribute to Arizona's expanding film community.

Website: phoenixscreenwriters.org

Tempe Artists Guild

Location: Hackett House, Clark Park Community Center

Date: January 30-February 1, 2026 and June 2026

Description: The Tempe Artists Guild (TAG) will present *The Art of Us*, a juried visual art exhibition and interdisciplinary program hosted at Hackett House on January 30-February 1, 2026. This multi-phase project will include a public exhibition and awards celebration, a live music and art event in collaboration with Central Arizona Flute Ensemble. Additionally, a mentorship program offering one-on-one consultations with professional artists in June at the Clark Park Community Center. Grant funding will enable TAG's initiative to expand creative opportunities for more than 200 local artists and connect Tempe audiences with free, high-quality programming that blends artistic excellence and inclusive community engagement. The project further encourages intergenerational and cross-cultural connection by bringing people together to share and celebrate creative expression.

Website: www.tempeartistsguild.org

Tempe Winds

Location: Tempe Center for the Arts, McClintock High School

Date: December 8, 2025, February 2 & March 29, 2026

Description: As the Tempe Winds celebrates its 37th season, the ensemble will present three dynamic concerts that invite community members of all ages to experience the joy of live music. With performances ranging from a holiday concert for seniors in December at Tempe Center for the Arts, to educational programming and hands-on experiences for youth and their families in February and March of next year, each concert is designed to strengthen community ties through musical storytelling and collaboration. Featuring professional-level, volunteer musicians, Tempe Winds will continue its long-standing mission of delivering high-quality, low-cost arts programming across Tempe. Supported by Tempe Community Arts grant funds, this project will provide inclusive arts experiences that enrich the lives of more than 1,000 Tempe residents.

Website: tempewinds.org

Tetra String Quartet

Location: Tempe History Museum

Date: September 20, December 13, February 28, and May 2.

Description: Tetra String Quartet will use this grant to present Azure Family Concerts at the Tempe History Museum on September 20 and December 13 of 2025, as well as February 28 and May 2 of 2026. In addition, they will perform at Arizona Autism Academy and ACES Academy in Spring 2026. These chamber music performances are tailored to individuals on the autism spectrum or with sensory processing challenges, providing a welcoming environment where all behaviors are accepted, aiming to create an engaging experience for every attendee. These free events feature multi-sensory elements such as "fun fidgets," an instrument "petting zoo" and interactive music-making opportunities. Admission to Azure concerts is free for all audience members. Each concert session contributes to building community bonds within Tempe by celebrating and embracing neurodiversity in artistic expression.

Website: tetraquartet.org

The Bridge Initiative

Location: Tempe Center for the Arts

Date: March 6–15, 2026

Description: The Bridge Initiative (TBI) will present *Stop Kiss* by Diana Son and *I'll Eat You Last: A Chat with Sue Mengers* by John Logan at Tempe Center for the Arts, with five fully staged performances of each play. These two female-centered productions reflect TBI's commitment to inclusive storytelling, showcasing local talent and addressing themes of LGBTQ+ identity, gender equity and representation. The project will employ over 20 Arizona-based theatre artists and crew, providing paid opportunities that uplift women and historically underrepresented creatives while drawing a majority-female audience. Engaging post-show talkbacks and community partnerships will deepen public dialogue across communities. Backed by Tempe Community Arts grant funding, this project will strengthen Tempe's creative ecosystem by bringing high-quality theatre to local audiences and offering a platform for bold, relevant storytelling.

Website: bridgeinit.org

Third Space Dance Project

Location: ASU's Nelson Fine Arts Center Studio, Escalante Multigenerational Center

Date: Sept 26-28, Oct 25, Nov 14-15 & Dec 5-7, 2025 and Jan 23-25 & April 5-6, 2026

Description: With the support of grant funds, Third Space Dance Project (TSDP) will launch the second season of Training, Research, and Dance Enquiry (TRADE) Labs, a series of six professional movement workshops serving intermediate to professional adult dancers across Tempe and the Phoenix Valley. Each 1–3 day lab will feature nationally and internationally recognized teaching artists in Western Contemporary and African/Afro-Diasporic dance forms, offering dancers access to world-class training outside of academic institutions. These workshops will expand upon a successful 2024–2025 pilot season and directly respond to a community-identified need for accessible, high-quality and affordable advanced training. TRADE Labs will strengthen Tempe's dance ecosystem by fostering artistic growth, offering career development resources and building bridges between artists of different backgrounds, ages and stages.

Website: thirdspacedanceproject.org

Yes And Productions

Location: Tempe History Museum

Date: May 2026

Description: Yes And Productions will present *Kenny Con* in May 2026, an immersive performance staged inside the Tempe History Museum, where their signature comedic duo, The Ladies, host a fictional fan convention in honor of smooth jazz legend Kenny G. Audiences will interact with eccentric characters, live music and playful convention-style activities as the story unfolds throughout the museum. Created in collaboration with museum staff and featuring a cast of Arizona-based artists, *Kenny Con* will transform a beloved civic space into a joyful, participatory performance venue. Backed by Tempe Community Arts grant funding, the project strengthens community bonds through humor, interactivity and creative storytelling while spotlighting the museum as a vibrant gathering place for Tempe's art communities.

Website: yesandproductions.org