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October 28, 2025

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Salt Lake County Council Approves Distribution of \$3.4 Million to Arts & Cultural Nonprofit Organizations through the Zoo, Arts & Parks (ZAP) Program

SALT LAKE COUNTY, UT— The Salt Lake County Council approved \$3.4 million in Zoo, Arts & Parks (ZAP) grant funding to be distributed to 218 arts and culture nonprofits in 2026.

These grant funds support a wide array of community-focused programs that span every Council district of Salt Lake County, providing residents and visitors with a blend of cultural events, performances, and educational programs. Funding amounts are recommended by the volunteer ZAP Tier II Advisory Board.

"The ZAP program is one of Salt Lake County's greatest success stories—a model of what public investment can achieve when guided by community values," said **Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson**. "For more than three decades, ZAP has strengthened our county by supporting the artists and organizations that make the county a vibrant and creative place to live. The list of excellent ZAP recipients continues the strong legacy of this commitment."

Salt Lake County Council Chair Dea Theodore added, "As stewards of taxpayer dollars, we're proud to see ZAP funding deliver real value—supporting local organizations that uplift, educate, and inspire. These grants strengthen our cultural landscape while honoring the voices that make Salt Lake County extraordinary."

Organizations apply annually for general operating and project-based funding. Eligible applicants within ZAP disciplines include cultural festivals, municipal local arts agencies, theater and dance companies, music performance groups, arts education programs, botanical gardens and natural history museums, among others.

"In 2024 alone, ZAP Tier II funded organizations held more than 17,180 events and welcomed nearly three million attendees, with nearly half attending free of charge."

Samantha Thermos, ZAP program director noted. "ZAP-funded events serve residents and visitors throughout the county, making arts and culture offerings accessible in all geographic district and at all income levels."

ZAP funding makes all the difference for a wide range of community-based organizations.

"Thanks to ZAP support, Lyrical Opera Theater has been able to touch lives through the power of live opera—bringing unforgettable performances to our community, inspiring young students, and making the arts accessible to audiences of all ages," said **Lynette Owens, executive director of Lyrical Opera**.

Robert Burch, executive director of the Sema Hadithi Foundation, added that because of ZAP, "more families, schools, and community members are discovering the stories of African American history in Utah and the Mountain West."

For **Seven Canyons Trust executive director Ronnie Pessetto** said that "funding allows them to provide opportunities where young people can connect with their environment, learn about the challenges our waterways face, and feel empowered to take action."

The Tier II ZAP Advisory Board spent an estimated 500 cumulative volunteer hours reviewing and scoring applications and recommending funding amounts for each organization. Scores reflect the organization's artistic contributions, benefits to the public, and sound organizational management.

Funding recommendations for Tier I & Zoological organizations are still in review and will be recommended to the Council at a future date.

For more information regarding the Tier II fund distribution or to apply for future funds, contact Cody Goetz, ZAP Grants and Communications Coordinator at cgoetz@saltlakecounty.gov or 385.468.7058.

For grantee photos and logos to use, please view our press kit on our website: www.saltlakecounty.gov/zap/grantee-tools--resources/

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Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts & Parks program facilitates community-supported arts and cultural grants, and recreation programs. Grants are funded by one cent of every \$10 of sales tax collected in the County. ZAP grants provide partial support for more than 200 county arts and cultural organizations, and 30 parks and recreational facilities. The ZAP program Initiative has been voted on and renewed by Salt Lake County residents since 1996. For more information, visit our website at saltlakecounty.gov/zap or follow us Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn @slcozap