


# Memorandum



**Date:** June 23, 2026

**To:** All Members  
Cultural Affairs Council

**From:** Ashlee K. Thomas, Interim Director 

**Subject:** FY 2026-2027 Michael Spring Major Cultural Institutions Grants Program  
Recommendations – Comprehensive Review

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council approve the funding of eighteen (18) grants for the FY 2026-2027 Michael Spring Major Cultural Institutions (MCI) Grants Program.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Michael Spring Major Cultural Institutions (MCI) Program Panel, chaired by Council Member Brian E. May, convened on Thursday, May 28, 2026, to review 17 applications. The Panel recommended funding all 17 applications. It is further recommended that the Council appropriate funding from the FY 2026-2027 MCI Program allocation to facilitate the transition of GableStage, Inc. into the Coconut Grove Playhouse as its theater presenter and operator and for programming support.

The MCI Program is designed to provide stable and substantial funding to fully professional institutions with year-round programs and annual fiscal operations in Miami-Dade County specifically that satisfy the eligibility requirements. The objective of this program is to help support the annual operations of and programming provided to the community by Miami-Dade's largest, exemplary cultural organizations. In so doing, the program assures the steady provision of outstanding cultural programming throughout Miami-Dade County and contributes to the overall vitality of Miami-Dade County as a community and as an attractive tourist destination.

The MCI Program operates on a four-year review cycle. A comprehensive application panel review process was conducted for FY 2026-2027. Grant award amounts for FY 2026-2027 establish award levels through 2029-2030 with the interim funding cycles (FY 2027-2028, FY 2028-2029, FY 2029-2030), and are subject to annual adjustments based on organizational budget information. Awards in interim cycles are contingent upon fulfillment of application and reporting requirements provided by the grantee and accepted as satisfactory by the Department of Cultural Affairs.

In FY 2026-2027 it is recommended that the Council continue the designations of three "Emerging" Major Cultural Institutions, including: the M Ensemble Company; the Black Archives, History and Research Foundation of South Florida, Inc.; and the Miami Symphony Orchestra/Orquesta Sinfonica de Miami, Inc. Each of these organizations continue to demonstrate the quality and reach of their programs. Targeted MCI support enables them to continue strengthening their organizational growth and stability through enhanced administrative and fiscal capacity.

All eligible institutions are legally incorporated as non-profit organizations and designated tax-exempt by the United States Internal Revenue Service. Funding recommendations are in support of each institution's Miami-Dade County activities only.

Funding for the Michael Spring Major Cultural Institutions Grant Program is derived from departmental revenues which can include a combination of Tourist Development Tax, Convention Development Tax, and General Fund, where applicable. Final grant awards are contingent upon the availability of funds in the Department's FY 2026-2027 budget, which is subject to the County's Budget as adopted in September 2026.

Attached is a list describing the projects recommended for funding.

**Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs  
 FY 2026-2027 Michael Spring Major Cultural Institutions (MCI) Grants Program  
 Comprehensive Review Cycle**

Recommended FY 2026-2027 Grant Award	Organization / Summary of Mission
1	<p><b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b></p> <p><b>Actors' Playhouse Productions, Inc.</b> - The mission of Actors' Playhouse is to enrich the cultural vitality of South Florida with the highest caliber classic and contemporary live theater productions; to provide comprehensive education and outreach programs to multicultural and multigenerational audiences; to provide a supportive and creative work environment for Florida-based theater professionals; to encourage the creation and production of new works for adults and children; and to maintain the cultural identity of its home venue, the historic Art Deco Miracle Theatre in Coral Gables.</p>
2	<p><b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b></p> <p><b>Adrienne Arsht Center Trust, Inc. d/b/a Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County</b> - The mission of the Arsht Center is to enlighten, educate and entertain the audiences of Miami-Dade County and South Florida through transformational arts and cultural experiences. The Center serves as both a showcase and laboratory, providing first-class accessible facilities for smaller, emerging and developing organizations as well as larger resident companies.</p>
3	<p><b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b></p> <p><b>Florida Grand Opera, Inc.</b> - Florida Grand Opera (FGO) presents world-class productions and is dedicated to pushing opera's artistic boundaries, fostering the next generation of talent, and creating unforgettable experiences that inspire and connect diverse communities through the power of music and the human voice. Founded in 1941, FGO is the oldest performing arts organization in Florida and one of the longest-running opera companies in the United States.</p>
4	<p><b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b></p> <p><b>Florida International University Board of Trustees, for the benefit of Jewish Museum of Florida</b> - The mission of the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU (JMOF) is to collect, preserve and interpret the material evidence of the Florida Jewish experience from 1763 to the present. Housed in an Art Deco building that was formerly a historic synagogue, the elements of the Museum include the Collections and Research Center, a core exhibit of Florida Jewish history, temporary exhibits, films, interactive computer stations, American and world Jewish history and public educational programs.</p>
5	<p><b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b></p> <p><b>Florida International University Board of Trustees, for the benefit of The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum</b> - The Frost Art Museum's mission is to enrich and educate local, national and international audiences through the language of art by collecting, preserving, researching, interpreting and exhibiting art from diverse cultures throughout human history. The Museum serves as an exceptional resource for scholarly research and interdisciplinary collaboration and presents free and accessible programs to the broadest possible audiences in Miami-Dade County.</p>
6	<p><b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b></p> <p><b>Florida International University Board of Trustees, for the benefit of The Wolfsonian</b> - The Wolfsonian's mission is to support the collection, preservation, research, exhibition and publication of material arts from 1885 to 1945. The Wolfsonian oversees a collection of 90,000+ North American and European artifacts, including furniture, glass, ceramics, books, paintings, and sculpture, and extensive period archives.</p>

7	<b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b>	<p><b>Friends of the Bass Museum, Inc., for the Bass Museum of Art</b> – Founded in 1964 and located in Miami Beach’s historic Art Deco Cultural District, The Bass serves as a cultural hub that connects diverse audiences with innovative artistic experiences. Through dynamic exhibitions, public programs, and arts education initiatives, the Museum inspires critical thinking, creativity, and meaningful dialogue across the community. The Museum’s collection of antiquities, Renaissance and Baroque art anchors its educational programs and activities.</p>
8	<b>Designated award amount as an Emerging Major</b>	<p><b>M Ensemble Company</b> - The mission of The M Ensemble Company is to promote, cultivate and preserve African American culture through the performing arts and to expose, encourage and inspire African American playwrights’ future works. The theater season consists of plays including musicals, contemporary, classical, and new works; theater workshops for children; and special projects designed to enhance the company’s mission.</p>
9	<b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b>	<p><b>Miami City Ballet, Inc.</b> - Miami City Ballet's (MCB) mission is to create dance and arts education programs that reach the highest levels of excellence, spotlighting the cultural fabric of South Florida’s vibrant and diverse region. MCB is dedicated to presenting world-class artistry on stage through beloved masterpieces and innovative new works. Through an expansive education and outreach program, MCB is dedicated to making classical ballet relevant, accessible, and inviting to the widest possible audience.</p>
10	<b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b>	<p><b>Miami New Drama, Inc.</b> - Incorporated in 2016, Miami New Drama is a professional theater company based in Miami Beach and the resident company of the historic Colony Theatre. Founded by playwright and director Michel Hausmann and National Medal of the Arts recipient Moisés Kaufman, the company has earned national recognition through award-winning productions, educational programs, and a commitment to using theater as a catalyst for civic dialogue, cultural connection, and social engagement.</p>
11	<b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b>	<p><b>Museum of Contemporary Art, Inc. (MOCA)</b> - The Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami (MOCA) is dedicated to making contemporary art accessible to diverse audiences, especially underserved populations, through the collection, preservation, and exhibition of the best of contemporary art and its art historical influences.</p>
12	<b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b>	<p><b>New World Symphony, Inc.</b> - The mission of the New World Symphony (NWS) is to prepare highly gifted graduates of distinguished music programs for leadership roles in orchestras and ensemble groups throughout the world. NWS's fellowship program provides highly gifted musicians the opportunity to enhance their musical education with the finest professional training, offering in-depth exposure to both traditional and modern repertoire, with the active involvement of leading guest conductors, soloists, and coaches.</p>
13	<b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b>	<p><b>Oolite Arts, Inc.</b> – The mission of Oolite Arts is to support artists and advance the knowledge and practice of contemporary visual arts in South Florida. Oolite creates opportunities for experimentation and innovation and encourages the exchange of ideas across cultures through residencies, exhibitions, and public programs. Oolite provides studio residencies and exhibition opportunities for outstanding visual artists at all stages of career development, as well as over 165 art studio classes for the community.</p>

14	<b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b>	<p><b>Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science, Inc.</b> - Founded in 1949, Frost Science is dedicated to inspiring curiosity, advancing scientific literacy, and connecting people of all ages to better understand themselves and the world around them through hands-on learning and award-winning educational programs. Located in Downtown Miami's waterfront Maurice A. Ferré Park, the 250,000-square-foot campus opened in May 2017 and features four interconnected buildings—the Planetarium, Aquarium, and North and West Wings—offering immersive exhibits and interactive experiences that explore STEM topics, including space science, marine ecosystems, engineering, physics, and the human body.</p>
15	<b>Designated award amount as an Emerging Major</b>	<p><b>The Black Archives, History and Research Foundation of South Florida, Inc.</b> - The Black Archives Foundation (BAF), founded in 1977, is the repository for the black experience in South Florida from 1896 to the present. BAF's mission is to identify, collect, preserve, educate, inform, and make accessible items of enduring value that document that experience. BAF has actively identified and preserved several historic landmarks throughout Miami-Dade County and is responsible for the successful placement of seven of those landmarks on the National Register of Historic Places.</p>
16	<b>Designated award amount as an Emerging Major</b>	<p><b>The Miami Symphony Orchestra/Orquesta Sinfónica de Miami, Inc.</b> – The Miami Symphony Orchestra's (MISO) mission is to develop a larger and more responsive audience that will appreciate and enjoy symphonic music concerts that feature repertoire from Latin American and Spanish composers alongside American and classical European musical works. MISO is one of only a few Hispanic-operated symphony orchestras in the United States.</p>
17	<b>Award amount to be calculated based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b>	<p><b>University of Miami, Lowe Art Museum</b> – The Museum's mission is to serve the University, the Greater Miami communities, and national/international visitors as a teaching/exhibiting resource through its collections. The Museum: collects original, quality works of art primarily from Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas; exhibits and preserves the permanent collection according to the highest professional standards; researches the permanent collection and publishes the findings in exhibition catalogues and articles; and organizes exhibitions and loans of individual works from the permanent collection.</p>
18	<b>Designated award amount based on FY 26-27 approved budget</b>	<p><b>Gablestage, Inc. / Coconut Grove Playhouse</b> – Major Cultural Institutions grant funding is intended to facilitate GableStage's transition into the Coconut Grove Playhouse as its theater presenter and operator. The funds will be used to address GableStage's strategic organizational capacity building, to support programming that benefits the Coconut Grove community and the community at large, and to re-establish the Coconut Grove Playhouse as a venue that produces professional regional theater.</p>