



2025



From the **TRUSTEES**

DEAR FRIENDS,

The 2025 year affirmed something we have long believed at Bee Vradenburg Foundation: The arts are not only a mirror of who we are as a community, but a rehearsal space for who we might become. The arts help us make sense of ourselves, our times, and our shared future.

Across the Pikes Peak Region this year, artists and cultural organizations invited neighbors into spaces of remembrance, celebration, healing, and imagination. They gathered people who do not always see themselves reflected in public life, making room for their stories, leadership, and creative agency. Our role, as a place-based arts funder, was to listen closely, invest with care, and walk alongside that work with humility.

This annual report highlights moments when that approach mattered. You will read about artists collaborating across sectors, organizations rethinking long-held assumptions about who belongs, and community members encountering the arts not as spectators, but as active participants. You will also see us naming what remains unfinished – within our own institution and within the systems that shape access, visibility, and sustainability in the arts.

Progress, we have learned, is rarely linear. It is built through relationships, trust, and the courage to keep learning, which are recursive and mutually reinforcing processes. We invite you to spend time with these stories and consider how the arts – when resourced equitably – can continue to strengthen connection, dignity, and belonging throughout our region.

FOR THE ARTS,



GEORGE VRADENBURG III
Board Chair



PHILLIP A. KENDALL
Board President



A year of **LISTENING, PARTNERSHIP, & PRESENCE**

In 2025, Bee Vradenburg Foundation continued to deepen its commitment to being a visible, engaged partner in the cultural life of the Pikes Peak Region. Rather than measuring impact solely through dollars awarded, we paid close attention to how and where the work was unfolding: showing up at events, listening to artists, and supporting projects that responded directly to lived experience.

By the end of the year, Foundation trustees and staff had attended 126 grantee events, spanning youth arts programs, gallery exhibitions, cultural festivals, performances, film screenings, and community-based workshops. This was still just a fraction of the 475 public events presented by BVF grantees in 2025! If you feel like you missed out, subscribe to our monthly newsletter featuring our grantees' work – it's always a great time to engage with the arts.

At the same time, our grantees' work showed up in over 100 media features. Part of this reflects concerted work by the Foundation with local partners to pitch stories and develop relationships with local and statewide reporters, but the real story is the arts' central role in the life of the community, bringing people together and inspiring them to take positive action in uncertain times.

This momentum matters. It signals that artists' work is valued and worthy of sustained attention – not just as an indicator of vibrancy or economic activity, but as a fundamental element of community thriving. It also sharpens our understanding of how creativity functions as connective tissue across sectors such as education, health, civic engagement, and community development. Many of these gatherings centered voices and traditions that historically have been excluded from mainstream arts institutions, including Black, brown, rural, LGBTQIA+, and veteran communities. Together, they compose a portrait of a community whose future is brighter because it embraces the power of the arts to break down silos, make the most of limited resources, care for each other and mobilize the strength that lies in diversity.



Stories of INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN ACTION

REVIVING HISTORY, RECENTERING COMMUNITY IN PALMER LAKE

In the shadow of some of El Paso County's most affluent communities, Palmer Lake has long been overlooked. In 2024-25, **Palmer Lake Arts Council** began to change perceptions – and possibilities – by reviving a tradition the town itself originated in the Pikes Peak Region: the Chautauqua, first held locally in 1886. The annual weeklong festival of lectures, music, poetry, nature walks, and shared learning drew visitors from across the Front Range. By reclaiming that history and reanimating it for contemporary audiences, PLAC is making the case that rural communities have deep cultural roots worth tending, and that access to arts programming is not a luxury reserved for wealthier neighbors to the north and south.



CULTURAL BELONGING IN ACADEMIC & CIVIC SPACES

2025 saw the genesis of transformational coalition-building among local colleges, cultural institutions and small business owners aimed at visibility, solidarity and pride for Hispanic heritage in the Pikes Peak Region. For the first time **Fiestas Patrias**, the regional Hispanic heritage festival, coordinated with **Pikes Peak State College** and the **Fine Arts Center at Colorado College** on programming and promotion for Hispanic Heritage Month activities across all three organizations. The resulting exhibitions, performances and events demonstrated how institutional spaces can become sites of cultural affirmation when programming is developed with, not just for, community. By elevating contemporary creative voices as well as Hispanic, Latino/a, and Chicano histories, this coalition challenges institutions across sectors to move beyond symbolic celebration toward sustained engagement with cultural knowledge holders, artists, and audiences.

Stories of INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN ACTION

CREATIVITY AS CARE AND COLLECTIVE HEALING

Other grantee projects in 2025 continued to demonstrate the important connections among art, health, and community wellbeing. From **Emerging Arts Leader Kai Gaynor's** immersive warehouse exhibit celebrating traditional wisdom and healing practices among Black communities, to **Unity Project's** participatory concerts paired with shared meals, artists offered spaces where people could slow down, connect, and be witnessed.

Supported by the Foundation, the work of these artists and cultural organizations demonstrates the power of cultural events to reshape public space and affirm community identity at scale.



LEVERAGING RELATIONSHIPS, NOT JUST RESOURCES

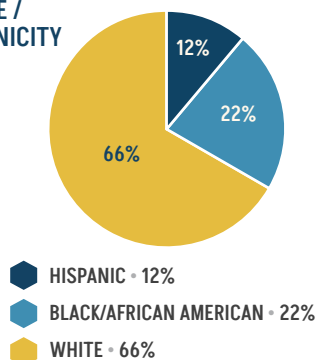
Bee Vradenburg Foundation's impact in 2025 extended well beyond direct grantmaking. Through active partnership with peer funders, civic leaders, and cultural intermediaries, Foundation staff helped grantees access nearly \$800,000 in additional support, amplifying the reach of local arts initiatives through shared learning and coordination.

Equally important were the informal conversations: office hours with applicants, strategic introductions, and grantee check-ins that replaced traditional reporting requirements. These exchanges surfaced candid feedback about what is working, what feels burdensome, and where funders must continue to adapt.

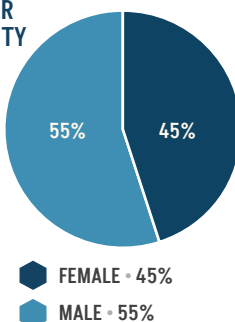
REFLECTING ON OUR OWN WORK

2025 BOARD & STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS*

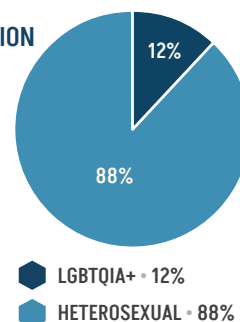
RACE / ETHNICITY



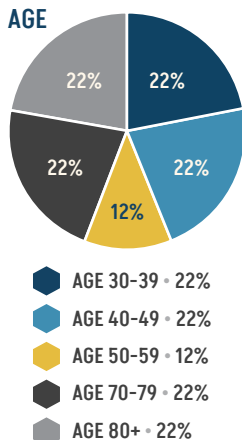
GENDER IDENTITY



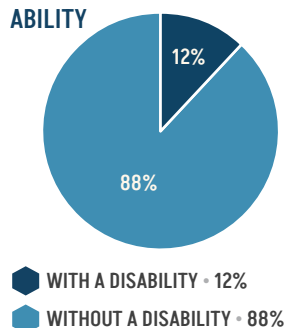
SEXUAL ORIENTATION



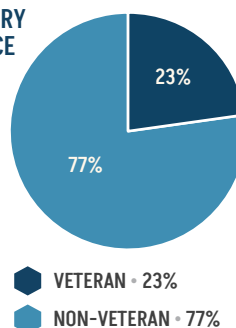
AGE



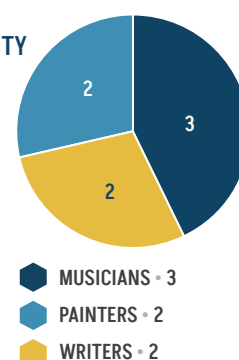
ABILITY



MILITARY SERVICE



ARTS AFFINITY



*self-reported

As we support others in pursuing equity and inclusion, we also remain accountable for how those values are reflected internally. In 2025, the Foundation continued to track progress toward more representative leadership, while acknowledging the limits of numerical indicators alone.

True inclusion requires ongoing learning, discomfort, and structural change. It requires attention to who holds decision-making power, whose expertise is recognized, and how institutional habits can reinforce barriers.

We are committed to approaching this work transparently, naming both progress and gaps, and inviting feedback from the communities we serve. On deck for 2026, we'll more closely examine several internal practices, including:

COMMUNITY OUTREACH STRATEGIES, particularly how we build relationships beyond existing networks

APPLICATION CLARITY, with attention to language, accessibility, and unspoken assumptions

OUR APPROACH TO SERVICE IN HISPANIC, LATINO/A, AND CHICANO COMMUNITIES, including how trust is built over time and how cultural knowledge is respected within funding processes

This reflection is ongoing. We recognize that good intentions do not eliminate structural barriers, and that learning requires openness to critique as well as change. We share this work transparently because accountability – to peers, partners, and the communities we serve – is central to our mission.

LOOKING AHEAD



The projects highlighted in this report are not isolated successes. They are signals of what becomes possible when artists are resourced to lead with lived experience, when institutions are willing to listen, and when funders commit to relationship-centered practice.

Bee Vradenburg Foundation remains committed to supporting an arts ecosystem in which people across the Pikes Peak Region can experience belonging, connection, and creative agency. We are grateful to the artists, organizations, funders, and community partners who continue to challenge us, teach us, and imagine alongside us.



GRANTMAKING

TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED IN 2025:

\$119,924



- PROGRAM/PROJECT
- GENERAL OPERATING
- INTERNSHIP
- CAPITAL

¹ Grant Awarded by Bee an Arts Champion honoree

² BVF Internship Host Organization

BEE VRADENBURG FOUNDATION GOALS

- 1 Advocate for arts and arts education as a vital part of the region's economy and quality of life.
- 2 Support emerging and diverse artists, art forms, audiences, and artistic endeavors.
- 3 Foster growth and resilience for arts organizations that are part of the cultural fabric of the region.
- 4 Build organizational capacity of arts groups.
- 5 Cultivate partnerships with businesses and funders to leverage new financial resources for the arts.

ELIGIBILITY

Organizations may apply for funding once per year. All organizations applying to the Foundation must:

- Be a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization; or be an arts-oriented project or organization under the fiscal sponsorship of a 501(c)(3) organization.
- Be based in and serve the Pikes Peak Region, defined as El Paso County and the Ute Pass corridor of Teller County to include Woodland Park.
- Have an active employment nondiscrimination policy signed by the board that is inclusive of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status and marital status.

INELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

The following activities or organizations are ineligible for funding from the Foundation:

- Individual artists or art students.
- Organizations that are not 501(c)(3) nonprofits or under the fiscal sponsorship of a nonprofit.
- Performances or arts events designed primarily as fundraisers for non-arts organizations.

Funding PROCESS

GRANT SIZES

Grants are based on the size of an organization's budget.

Organizations with prior-year or current-year revenues of \$50,000 or less may request

UP TO
\$2,500
PER YEAR

UP TO
\$15,000
PER YEAR

may be requested by organizations with prior-year or current-year revenues of more than \$50,000.

Organizations applying for capital support should contact the Foundation before submitting a request.

GRANTS FOR EQUITY IN THE ARTS

In an era defined by social change, Bee Vradenburg Foundation is eager to contribute to artistic endeavors that respond to, or are inspired by, the lived experience of marginalized communities. Please contact the Foundation to learn more about funding opportunities.

TO APPLY FOR A GRANT

Grant application forms are available at BeeVradenburgFoundation.org. Applicants may submit applications by mail, in person, or via email. For email applications, please combine the entire application in a single PDF attachment.

DEADLINES

Applications are accepted year-round but must be received **Jan. 15, Apr. 15, Jul. 15** or **Oct. 15** to be considered during quarterly trustee meetings. When those dates fall on a holiday or weekend, the first weekday thereafter applies.

BOARD & STAFF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



CHAIR

George A. Vradenburg III
(he/him)



PRESIDENT

Phillip A. Kendall
(he/him)



TREASURER

Libby Rittenberg
(she/her)



SECRETARY

Jonathan Liebert
(he/him)



TRUSTEE

Ben Anderson
(he/him)



TRUSTEE

Susan Edmondson
(she/her)



TRUSTEE

Shameeka Ford
(she/her)



TRUSTEE

David Siegel
(he/him)

TRUSTEE EMERITA
Alissa Vradenburg
(she/her)

TRUSTEE EMERITUS
Tyler Vradenburg
(he/him)

TRUSTEE EMERITA
IN MEMORIAM
Kathleen Fox Collins
(she/her)

STAFF



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Claire Swinford
(she/her)

FINANCIALS

FYE Dec. 31, 2025

Pursuant to IRS disclosure requirements, copies of Bee Vradenburg Foundation's Form 990-PF are available by contacting the office.

\$285,801

**EXPENSES &
DISBURSEMENTS**

\$3,918,017

**FAIR MARKET VALUE
OF INVESTMENTS**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Authored by Debbie Howell (Pawnee/Dakota), used with permission from the Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region.

The Pikes Peak Region is situated on the ancestral homeland of the Ute Peoples, who are the Southern Ute, Ute Mountain Ute, and Northern Ute. Other tribes who lived and hunted on this land include the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, and Apache. Even through forced relocation and land dispossession, the land still holds Ute traditions, language, stories, and history. Today, Indigenous people from many Native nations reside here and continue to make significant contributions to our community.

Bee Vradenburg Foundation ties acknowledgment to action by working toward consistent funding for, and respectful relationships with, Indigenous artists and arts patrons. In 2025 this work was furthered in partnership with the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, RedLine Contemporary Art Center, and Rocky Mountain Women's Film, among others.

IMAGE CREDITS

BVF thanks the following entities for the use of their images:

COVER

House of GOCA

image courtesy UCCS GOCA and Stellar Propeller

Flautist at CC Summer Music Festival

image courtesy CC Summer Music Festival

Singer/performer John Wolfe

image courtesy UCCS GOCA and Stellar Propeller

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Cellists at Colorado Springs Philharmonic

image courtesy Colorado Springs Philharmonic

PAGE 3

Audience enjoying a show at Pikes Peak Center

image courtesy Colorado Springs Philharmonic

PAGE 4

Chautauqua musician performs in Palmer Lake

image courtesy Palmer Lake Arts Council

Folklorico dancers

image courtesy Ballet Folklorico de Barajas

PAGE 5

Artist Kai Gaynor's *Transcendent Femme* project

image courtesy Authentic Culture

Artist gathering at Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum

image courtesy Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum

PAGE 7

Día de Muertos

image courtesy Jamie Cotten

A dancer with the Colorado Springs Chinese Cultural Institute

image courtesy Colorado Springs Chinese Cultural Institute

CONTACT

Bee Vradenburg Foundation is a proud member of the Philanthropy Collective, located at 315 E. Pikes Peak Ave., #120 in Downtown Colorado Springs. Get in touch by calling 719-477-0185 or emailing claire@beevradenburgfoundation.org.