

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2027 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers**

April 2, 2026

Question:

What is the affiliate program with art grants? How did this program work previously and why was it discontinued?

Response:

The Arts Affiliate Program was a cost recovery approach developed to support arts organizations using RPCA facilities, primarily at the Durant Center, while aligning with the City's Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery Policy.

When the policy was implemented, arts groups were initially placed on a phased fee structure, starting at 25 percent of standard rental rates and increasing annually to full cost recovery. Many organizations were not able to sustain participation beyond approximately 50 percent of the fee.

In response, RPCA established the Arts Affiliate Program, which operated from 2017 through 2019.

Under this model:

- RPCA subsidized 80 percent of the facility rental fee
- Arts affiliates paid 20 percent of the rental fee
- No staff fees were charged during regular operating hours
- Full staff costs were required for after-hours use

Participation in the program was limited. Only three organizations utilized the program:

- 1st Night Alexandria
- Port City Playhouse
- Royal Scottish Country Dancers

The program was discontinued beginning in FY 2020. While COVID-19 closures eliminated access to recreation facilities, participation was limited due to the remaining 20 percent rental cost, combined with after-hours staffing fees, remained a barrier for many organizations and a significant portion of requests were for rehearsals rather than public-facing programs, which did not align with the program's intent to support broader community access.

As a result, the program saw limited participation and was not continued following facility closures during the pandemic.