

**MURAL ARTS PHILADELPHIA  
FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET TESTIMONY  
APRIL 22, 2025**

**INTRODUCTION**

Good afternoon, President Johnson and Members of City Council. I am Jane Golden, Executive Director of Mural Arts Philadelphia. Joining me today are Lisa Murch, Chief Operating Officer, and Don Veon, Senior Director of Finance. I am pleased to provide testimony on Mural Arts Philadelphia's Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget.

**DEPARTMENT MISSION & PLANS**

**Mission:** Through participatory public art, Mural Arts Philadelphia inspires change in people, places, and practice, creating opportunity for a more just and equitable Philadelphia. Mural Arts responds to Philadelphia's priorities outlined by the Mayor's goal to improve the quality of life in all Philadelphia neighborhoods through safer, cleaner, and greener Philadelphia initiatives. Mural Arts Philadelphia envisions a world where all people have a say in the future of their lives and communities, where art and creative practice are respected as critical to sense of self and place, and where cultural vibrancy reflects and honors all human identities and experiences.

**Plans for Fiscal Year 2026:**

Mural Arts generates impact among individuals, communities, and systems through participatory public art projects that intersect the following areas: youth development, criminal justice reform, wellness, and environmental sustainability. Project decisions respond to needs and opportunities articulated by civic leaders or identified in neighborhood plans; project applications from community leaders; and topics relevant to youth and adults enrolled in Art Education, Restorative Justice, and mental health and wellness through the Porch Light programs.

**FY26 Strategic Goals**

- Continue to utilize community murals/public art as a tool of blight elimination and neighborhood empowerment
- Partner with City Departments to address the graffiti crisis and restore murals and revitalize public spaces, such as Rec Centers citywide
- Create training, capacity building, and continued economic growth opportunities for artists, program participants, and those in the creative sector citywide

**FY26-30 Strategic Initiatives**

- Mural Arts will deepen its commitment to advancing clean, green, equity, and economic opportunities for residents in all of its areas of work. Mural Arts is intentionally working in historically underserved neighborhoods; building co-creation models that include impacted individuals as decision-makers; focusing on underrepresented issues, themes, and communities; offering free programming and compensating program participants; and employing trauma-informed practices in all of its work.

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- Mural Arts plans to continue working with City departments to address the graffiti crisis by cleaning murals and creating new projects in gateways across the city.
- Mural Arts plans to support the unhoused population through the continued growth of Color Me Back.
- Mural Arts plans to continue its focus on developing economic pathways for youth, artists of marginalized identities, formerly incarcerated residents, and individuals experiencing housing and/or economic instability.
- Mural Arts is committed to growing its programs in both the state and county prison systems. Mural Arts has decades of experience working with justice-impacted individuals and sees a growth opportunity for similar art-based programs in the county jail.

Good morning President Johnson and Members of City Council. I am Jane Golden, Executive Director of Mural Arts Philadelphia. I am pleased to provide testimony on Mural Arts's Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget. We are asking for \$3,707,368.

I want to start out by thanking all of you for your support and the opportunity to testify. This is such an important time in our city.

Every year, over 100 community groups, arts nonprofits, and social service agencies partner with us on programs and projects of all sizes across the city. We work with over 250 artists annually, contributing over \$2.4 million directly into the creative economy. Because of your support, we serve over 25,000 constituents through our many departments, including Art Education, the Porch Light program, Restorative Justice, Community Murals, Restorations, Special Projects, and our Mural Arts Institute.

Let's start with Restorative Justice, where programs like the Rec Crew create pathways for people who have been affected by the criminal legal system so they can reintegrate back into the community and prepare for the road ahead. The recidivism rate among participants in our programs is less than a third of the average in the city.

Our Porch Light program uses art to help people who are struggling with mental health, substance use, and trauma. Porch Light has permanent storefront locations in the southeast, the northeast, Suburban Station, and Kensington, bringing vital support and resources to people where it's needed most. Our Color Me Back initiative is a same-day work and pay program that provides people facing housing insecurity with opportunities to earn money and access services. Since 2019, Color Me Back has employed 1,421 people to make Suburban Station and Kensington more beautiful.

Our Art Education department served over 2,655 young people last year, ranging in age between 11 and 18 years old. Through programs after school, during the school day, and during the summer, Mural Arts is able to provide safe spaces with highly trained teaching artists where students have a wonderful opportunity to learn, grow, and express themselves.

Art can bring life to corridors across our city, and we see this at work where empty storefronts are transformed into thriving community centers. A perfect example of this is our Tacony LAB – which continues to grow and thrive after eight years. Miles from an anchor arts institution, this wonderful space offers a wide range of programs and artists' residencies, enlivening the northeast with activations and engagements.

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So thank you. Your investment makes all of this work possible, and – just as important – your support helps us leverage every dollar that you provide to inspire individuals, foundations, and corporations to multiply the power of that investment. Your investment in us is an investment in our city – the way it looks, the way it feels, the way we dream. As we always say at Mural Arts - Art Ignites Change. Thank you!

**PROPOSED BUDGET OVERVIEW & OTHER BUDGET DRIVERS**

General Fund Financial Summary by Class						
	FY24 Original Appropriations	FY24 Actual Obligations	FY25 Original Appropriations	FY25 Estimated Obligations	FY26 Proposed Appropriations	Difference: FY26 Proposed-FY25 Estimated
Class 100 - Employee Compensation	\$629,179	\$452,766	\$629,179	\$653,245	\$653,245	\$0
Class 200 - Purchase of Services	\$3,054,141	\$3,054,141	\$3,054,141	\$3,554,141	\$3,054,141	(\$500,000)
	<b>\$3,683,320</b>	<b>\$3,506,907</b>	<b>\$3,683,320</b>	<b>\$4,207,386</b>	<b>\$3,707,386</b>	<b>(\$500,000)</b>

*Mural Arts has no City-funded contracts.*

**Proposed Funding Request:**

The proposed Fiscal Year 2026 General Fund budget totals \$3,707,386, a decrease of \$500,000 from Fiscal Year 2025 estimated obligation levels. This decrease is primarily due to one-time funding in FY25 for gateway beautification related to special events in 2026.

The proposed budget includes:

- \$653,245 in Class 100, level with FY25. This funding will provide cost of living increases.
- \$3,054,141 in Class 200, a \$500,000 decrease from FY25.

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### STAFFING LEVELS

The Department is requesting 10 budgeted positions for FY26, level with FY25.

Employment Levels (as of November 2024)			
	FY25 Budgeted	Filled as of November 2024	FY26 Proposed
Number of Full-Time Positions	10	10	10
Number of Exempt Positions	10	10	10
Number of Executive Positions (deputy level and above)		2	
Average Salary of All Full-Time Positions		\$56,987	
Median Salary of All Full-Time Positions		\$57,521	

### NEW HIRES

*New Hires not applicable.*

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### **PROGRAM BASED BUDGETING:**

**Program Name:** Mural Arts

**Program Number:** 5001

**FY26 Proposed General Fund:** \$3,707,386

**Program Description:** Mural Arts generates impact among individuals, communities, and systems through participatory public art projects that intersect the following five areas: youth development, criminal justice reform, wellness, environmental sustainability, and civil discourse. Project decisions respond to the needs and opportunities articulated by civic leaders, community leaders, or identified in neighborhood plans. Mural Arts' core programs support youth enrolled in Art Education, justice-impacted adults seeking workforce development training through Restorative Justice, and individuals seeking support with mental health and wellness through the Porch Light programs. Mural Arts is part of Creative Philadelphia and partners on cross-collaborative projects that support the Mayor's vision of a safer, cleaner, and greener Philadelphia with economic opportunity for all.

### **FY26 Strategic Goals:**

- In partnership with CLIP, Mural Arts Philadelphia will create a series of exterior murals at highway entryways and underpasses across Philadelphia. Representing an investment of nearly \$2.4 million in FY26-28, these murals will serve to beautify highways, underpasses, and neighborhood gateways.
- Mural Arts will continue to utilize community murals/public art as a tool of blight elimination and neighborhood empowerment.
- Mural Arts will partner with City departments to address the graffiti crisis, restore murals, and revitalize public spaces, such as recreation centers, citywide.
- Mural Arts will create training, capacity building, and continued economic growth opportunities for artists, program participants, and those in the creative sector citywide.

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### FY26 Performance Measures:

Measure	FY24 Actual	FY25 Target	FY26 Target
Number of public art projects dedicated	81	75	65
Number of mid- or large-scale restorations completed	10	12	8
Number of project, tour, and event participants (short-term engagement)	21,771	22,000	22,000
Number of program participants (sustained engagement)	15,060	10,000	10,000
Percent of re-entry participants taken back into custody after one year	6%	8%	8%
Percent of re-entry participants employed six months after program completion	85%	85%	85%
Private funding leveraged (per public dollar)	\$2.54	\$2.50	\$2.50
Press and social media impressions (in millions)	544	600	580
Successful annual audit	Yes	Yes	Yes

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**OTHER BUDGETARY IMPACTS**

**Federal and State (Where Applicable)**

N/A



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**CONTRACTING EXPERIENCE**

*M/W/DSBE Participation on Large Professional Services Contracts and Non-Profit Vendor Demographics not applicable.*