



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2026

CONTACT

Samantha Thermos, Program Director

Sthermos@saltlakecounty.gov | 385.468.7057

Cody Goetz, Grants & Communications Coordinator

cgoetz@saltlakecounty.gov | 385.468.7058

Salt Lake County Council Approves 2027 ZAP Funding for 239 Arts, Botanical, Cultural and Zoological Organizations

SALT LAKE COUNTY, Utah — Each year, Salt Lake County invests in local arts, botanical, cultural and zoological organizations and municipalities through the Zoo, Arts & Parks (ZAP) program. Since grant funding began in 1997, ZAP has grown alongside the organizations and communities it supports, with Salt Lake County voters renewing the program three times—most recently in 2024 with more than 79% voter approval.

239 organizations and municipalities are being awarded a total of \$27.3 million, including 21 organizations receiving ZAP funding for the first time. Recipients represent communities throughout Salt Lake County and range from volunteer-run organizations to major cultural and zoological institutions.

As ZAP approaches 30 years of distributing grant funding to local arts and cultural nonprofits, the program reflects a longstanding commitment to Salt Lake County's cultural community. In the last decade alone, ZAP has invested more than \$239 million in 344 local organizations, helping strengthen Salt Lake County's cultural landscape that continues to serve millions of residents and visitors each year.

This year's grants continue that investment, helping enhance the experiences of Salt Lake County residents and visitors through artistic, botanical, cultural, and zoological offerings. Annually, ZAP funding supports a wide range of community-focused organizations and programs, including cultural festivals, local arts agencies, theater and dance companies, music organizations, arts education programs, botanical gardens, and zoological organizations, among others.

Funding recommendations are developed by ZAP's volunteer advisory boards following an extensive annual review process. Together, board members contributed an estimated 1,000 volunteer hours reviewing and scoring applications, conducting site visits, and preparing funding recommendations. Applications are evaluated based on factors including artistic, botanical, cultural, or zoological

purpose; community engagement and public benefit; organizational stability; and financial accountability.

The reach of ZAP-supported organizations extends throughout Salt Lake County. Last year, grantees offered more than 95,000 activities, nearly 66% of which, due in part to ZAP support, were free or discounted, generating more than 10.5 million visits from Salt Lake County residents and visitors. These organizations are also supported by a workforce of more than 60,000 people, nearly 64% of whom are volunteers, while approximately 22,000 people receive employment or contract work through ZAP grantee organizations and municipalities.

"ZAP is proof of what public investment can achieve when it reflects the values of the community it serves," said **Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson**. "By supporting the organizations that bring our communities together, ZAP fuels the creativity, culture, and connection that make Salt Lake County a vibrant place to visit and call home."

For the organizations receiving funding, ZAP support helps sustain programs, expand access, and connect more residents with cultural experiences throughout Salt Lake County.

Artes de México en Utah shared, "ZAP funds allow us to provide arts, cultural, and educational programs that serve thousands of Salt Lake County residents each year. ZAP Tier II funds allow us to cultivate professional artists and a strong community that believes in AMU's work. As a small organization, ZAP support is critical to sustaining and expanding this impact throughout our community."

Ballet West noted, "ZAP support expanded our capacity to deliver the nation's largest ballet-based arts education and community outreach program, removing financial barriers to bring high-quality movement instruction and therapeutic programming to tens of thousands of local public-school students, senior citizens, and families free of charge."

For grantee photos and logos, please visit the ZAP press kit:

<https://www.saltlakecounty.gov/zap/grantee-tools--resources/>

###

About Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts & Parks (ZAP)

Funded by one cent of every \$10 in sales tax collected within Salt Lake County, ZAP facilitates community-supported arts and cultural grants and recreational operations. For more information, visit the ZAP website or follow @SLCoZAP on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.