



House Bill 96: FY 2026-2027 Biennial Operating Budget

House Workforce and Higher Education Committee

Representative Tom Young, Chair

March 2025

Testimony submitted by Jane D'Angelo, Executive Director, OhioDance

Good afternoon, Chair Young, Vice Chair Ritter; Ranking Member Brown Piccolantonio, and members of the committee. My name is Jane D'Angelo, and I am the executive director of OhioDance.

On behalf of the OhioDance Chair Rodney Veal, board, staff, partners and artists across the state I sincerely thank Governor DeWine and past and present General Assembly members for 60 years of consistent and strategic investment in Ohio's arts ecosystem!

OhioDance is a statewide service organization. Our mission is to secure the foothold of dance in Ohio through increasing visibility, firming viability, and elevating the position of dance in Ohio. OhioDance presents the arts to the community through festivals, performance opportunities, educational resources, professional networking, a comprehensive website, and a groundbreaking Virtual Dance Collection. The OhioDance Virtual Dance Collection collects and archives, celebrates and makes public the vast array of dance practices, practitioners and institutions that have shaped the history of dance in Ohio. OhioDance received a grant from America 250-Ohio, the state's Semiquincentennial Commission, for this program.

All the opportunities I've mentioned build audiences for all the many dance organizations in Ohio, provide educational opportunities for individuals and organizations in the field of dance, and make sharing resources a possibility, especially among smaller organizations. In addition to creating an active network of dance professionals and opportunities, OhioDance is strongly committed to supporting dance education in Ohio. OhioDance assists in the economic development of dance artists through job placement, referrals of artists and dance education opportunities.

I'm here today because we want you to know the value of the Ohio Arts Council to our organization and the entire state, serving all 88 counties. We are fortunate in Ohio to have an agency that is an exemplary steward of state and federal tax dollars. We appreciate that the Ohio Arts Council is the conduit for all state arts funding, so that as constituents we know the integrity of the agency through its processes and fairness in distribution. We value the Ohio Arts Council as much as you do.

Ohio's creative sector, which includes non-profits for-profit, businesses and the creative workforce, appreciate your on-going recognition and support. More than ever, Ohio needs to invest in the creative sector which is an important part of the state and local economies. The arts sector creates jobs and supports other industries like restaurants, print shops, and trade organizations.

The Ohio Arts Council must continue its extraordinary level of commitment to the arts sector across Ohio. OhioDance respectfully requests that the Workforce and Higher Education Committee increase funding from the executive budget proposal for the Ohio Arts Council by \$8.5 million for State Program Subsidies (grants) and \$500,000 for Operating Expenses, for a total increase of \$9 million over the biennium.

The proposed increase from General Revenue funds will allow the Ohio Arts Council to further its mission of enriching Ohio's communities culturally, educationally, and economically across all counties. In the past two years, the Council has awarded Sustainability grants to 446 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, with an additional 190 organizations becoming eligible to apply in the upcoming biennium. Our request to increase the Ohio Arts Council's budget will ensure support for new applicants while maintaining funding for current grantees.

Investing in the arts through the Ohio Arts Council yields significant economic benefits for Ohioans statewide. The arts sector sustains more than 292,000 jobs, contributes more than \$63.3 billion to the state's economy, and generates approximately \$6.5 billion in annual tax revenue at local, state, and federal levels.

The National Dance Education Organization reported that research and anecdotal evidence indicate that dance education contributes to students' creativity and responsible decision-making. Through dance, children develop better focus and critical thinking skills needed in a professional career.

According to American for the Arts, Students with high arts participation and low socioeconomic status have a 4 percent dropout rate—five times lower than their low socioeconomic status peers. Low-income students highly engaged in the arts are twice as likely to graduate college as their peers with no arts education.

In the most recent information (2022) from the Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA), which is produced jointly by the National Endowment for the Arts' Office of Research & Analysis and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Commerce Department. Nearly 37 percent of Ohio's adults attended live music, theater, or dance performances, while **20 percent** attended art exhibits, according to the 2022 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, conducted in partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau.

In the fall of 2023, the Ohio Arts Council (OAC) reached out to the public with thousands of everyday Ohioans responding. The OAC asked survey participants to share their views about a range of topics surrounding the arts in Ohio. **Ohioans want their tax dollars to support the arts.** An overwhelming majority of respondents (94%) believe public funds (tax dollars) should be invested in the arts to encourage and promote artistic expression and access to the arts for all Ohioans.

OhioDance along with our partners we are deeply grateful for the ongoing support of Ohio's vibrant arts sector through Governor DeWine's budget recommendation. As the Ohio Arts Council marks 60 years of public arts funding this year, OhioDance views this milestone as a key opportunity to further invest in Ohio's future. In honor of six decades of dedication to the arts, OhioDance respectfully requests increasing the Ohio Arts Council's General Revenue Fund budget to a historic \$60 million (adding \$8.5 million for State Program Subsidies (grants) and \$500,000 for operating expenses) for FY 2026-2027.

Thank you for considering our request and joining us in celebrating the arts in Ohio.