



PERKINS
CENTER
FOR THE
ARTS

2025-2026 Impact Report



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Welcome To Perkins



On behalf of the Perkins Board of Trustees, I am proud to recognize the extraordinary work of our staff and the enduring impact of Perkins Center for the Arts. This past year, we strengthened our organization through expansion, investments in our buildings and staff, and continued advocacy at every level of government.

Our message remains clear: The arts are not a luxury; they are essential to the fabric of our community. They fuel our economy, create jobs, foster belonging, and nurture creativity across generations.

Thanks to the dedication of our staff and Board of Trustees, and the support of our community and funders, Perkins continues to thrive as a vital resource for all.

-Bruce Smith, President, Board of Trustees



For nearly five decades, Perkins Center for the Arts has been essential to the infrastructure of healthy, inclusive communities in Moorestown, Collingswood, and the region. Since 1977, Perkins has been a place where children build confidence through creative expression; where strangers connect and develop relationships that support their well-being; where neighbors gather across generations and backgrounds; and where the simple act of making something together strengthens our civic fabric.

Our impact extends even further, annually stimulating local economic activity through a \$1.9 million budget, supporting more than 1,500 creatives, and reaching over 75,000 people. In FY26, Perkins' Arts In Health programming extended the naturally therapeutic benefit of the arts into senior centers, healthcare settings, schools, and underserved communities across Burlington, Camden, and Gloucester Counties. The arts are fundamental to healthy communities as a proven social determinant of health, and arts access should never be subject to privilege.

I am deeply grateful to our Board of Trustees for their vision, and to the passionate professionals of Perkins who carry this belief into practice every day, ensuring that the arts remain accessible to everyone.

-Kahra Buss, Executive Director, Perkins Center for the Arts



CONSERVATORY

6,520 1:1 Lessons

245 Students

46 Concerts

EXHIBITIONS

11,306 Attendees

246 Exhibiting Artists

26 Exhibitions

EDUCATION

315 Classes & Workshops

3,167 Student Enrollments

20 Financial Aid Recipients

FOLKLIFE

2,856 People Reached

151 Folk Artists Engaged

1 Statewide Exhibition

THE PERKINS COMMUNITY

1,075 Members

124 Volunteers

1,555 Artist Participants

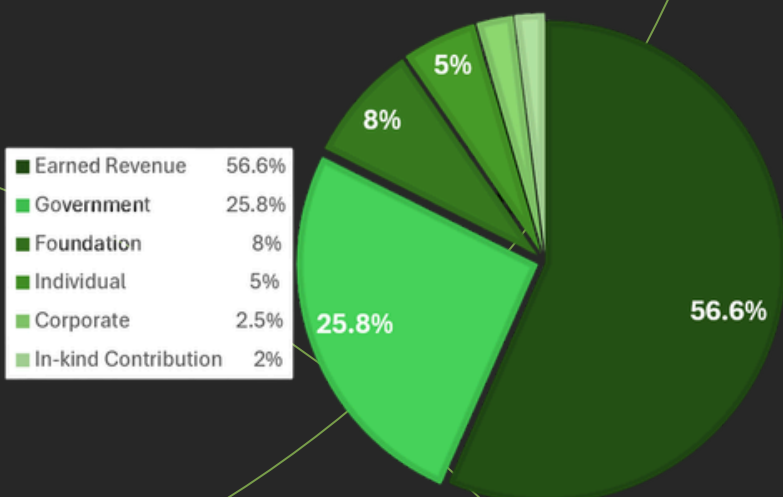
OUTREACH

103 Free Community Programs

109 Veterans/NJFF Free Memberships

55 Outreach Programs

How we fund our work



75,411 Total Audience

Perkins Strategic Plan: FY25-FY27



FY26 was the year Perkins' Strategic Plan stopped being aspirational and started being measurable. Program growth, rising attendance, and infrastructure investments are tangibly improving access, and all point to one conclusion: **our community-centered, community-guided approach is working.** Every decision we made in FY26, and every program we delivered, was guided by and tested against the same three goals, each one shaped by the people and communities we serve:

1. Community
2. Access & Belonging
3. Sustainability



Community

Provide accessible arts programming that supports, enriches, sustains, and strengthens individuals and communities.

"Perkins has helped me to meet like-minded people, and to take complex ideas and channel them using a transdisciplinary approach into other areas of my life to identify solutions."

-J.D., Collingswood Community Member

How Perkins Serves Community:

- Free memberships for NJ Families First (NJFF) and Veterans & Active Duty Military
- 80+ free community events, including Coffee & Classics, Lawn Concerts & World Stage, Artist Receptions and more
- Reduced-fee community programs
- Free Veterans classes
- Low-cost field trips for school districts & community groups with gallery tours and hands-on activities
- Weekly, docent-led gallery tours
- 45+ new classes and workshops, 27 new teaching artists, 315 classes and workshops total
- Multigenerational, community-based programs including Power for Good Mural with Mosaic Society of Philadelphia, and "Move The World" with Global Orchestra



Next Steps:

- Introducing the "Baby Dragon" & glassblowing studio in Collingswood
- Arts Prescription pilot programs:
 - Serving patients from Virtua NeuroMusculoskeletal Institute as an Arts Prescription service provider
 - Immersive training provided to Cooper Medical School of Rowan University.
- New locations in Evesham Township with Folk Artists-in-Residence, Veterans programs, Visual and Music Instruction.

Access & Belonging

Support, collaborate, and advocate for the development of a diverse, inclusive, and vibrant arts sector by backing arts practitioners, professionals, and arts workers to create healthy individuals and communities.

"Perkins is such a unique and vital asset to South Jersey, bringing the joy of the arts to people of all ages, abilities, and incomes. At a moment when our society feels increasingly divided and tense, Perkins is an oasis of community, diversity, creativity, and fun for my family and so many others."

-Brent Thompson, Secretary, Board of Trustees



How Perkins Supports Access:

- *Arts Where You Are* offered at the Kroc Center, Camden and The Tender
- Host for *Ritual4Return*, serving formerly incarcerated individuals and their families
- Host organization for NJ3, Congressman Herb Conaway, *Youth Congressional Art Show*
- Community partner & host for Vaisakhi, NJ Muslim Heritage Month, Diwali, Juneteenth, Lunar New Year, CW Pride, NAACP Open Mic and more!
- Arts in Health programming supporting mental and physical well-being



Next Steps:

- ADA-accessible renovations for the Moorestown Carriage House in partnership with the Township of Moorestown and supported by the New Jersey Historic Trust
- Expansion of Veterans programs to include glass and clay
- Improve staff professional development to include Mental Health First Aid certification

Sustainability

Actively strengthen Perkins' infrastructure to improve its ability to thrive while serving arts constituents and the greater community.

Perkins' Moorestown and Collingswood facilities are charming, historic pillars of their South Jersey towns, but their age also demands enormous care to ensure they keep serving the arts communities Perkins opens its doors to each day, and will for decades to come. One of the Board's most important responsibilities, and the one I've most enjoyed learning about in my first year of service, is to live out Perkins' vital sustainability mission.

-Patricia Kipnis, Member of the Board of Trustees



How Perkins Creates Sustainability:

- Repair and restoration of Moorestown Carriage House roof
- Deploy new technologies to expand program access to underserved communities through streaming
- Renovation of Collingswood ground-floor workshop and studio spaces to improve and increase programming

"My decision to serve on the Board of Trustees was an easy one. I have watched this organization grow and flourish over the past 50 years to become not only a vibrant arts center, but also a vital and essential force for artistic creativity, personal expression, wellness, and vast inclusiveness. I understand how fragile and delicate are the systems and structures needed to ensure the organization's financial strength into the future. There are no easy solutions to this and I wanted to bring my personal experiences to this challenge."

-Joseph Gandolfo, Member of the Board of Trustees



Next Steps:

- Expansion of ADA work in Moorestown
- Pilot partnership with Evesham Township FY27
- New Perkins Volunteer opportunities
- Improve structural investments in Collingswood
- Secure new financial partners to support Perkins' stability and growth

In Appreciation



FY26 Board of Trustees:

Bruce Smith President
Jessica Sant Vice President
Brent Thompson Secretary
Lisa Stelling Treasurer

Claudia Mastrobuono
Katy Resch
Patricia Kipnis
Jackie Caridad

Kit Wong
Joseph Gandolfo
Kevin McCauley

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Allison Seibel

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