



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Ginene Delcioppo, Arts Center Manger
Jessica Carpenter, Director of Community Experiences

Date: February 24, 2026

Reference: Follow Up Discussion and Direction for Coppell Arts Center Operations and Service Areas

2040: Sustainable Government

Introduction:

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide City Council with a follow-up discussion on the Coppell Arts Center's operations and key performance data from FY25 (the 2024–2025 season). This session will highlight the Center's three primary service areas and invite Council recommendations on the future direction of the Center, specifically focusing on programming, community impact, and long-term financial sustainability.

Background:

The Coppell Arts Center exists to provide a welcoming space where the community can gather, engage with the arts, and enjoy accessible programming. To fulfill this mission, the Arts Center delivers services across three primary areas:

- Presented Programming – City-curated touring shows, concerts, art exhibits, and classes/workshops led by professional instructors.
- Local Resident Arts Groups – Programming by Theatre Coppell, Coppell Chorale, Coppell Orchestra, Ballet Ensemble of Texas, Coppell Arts Council, and Coppell Arts Foundation, including performances, exhibits, classes, and camps.
- Third-Party Rentals – Private, corporate, and promoter-led rentals of Arts Center facilities.

A review of FY25 data, including total events hosted, attendance, ticket sales, revenue benchmarks, and budget allocations, illustrates how each of the three service areas contributes to overall operations, community engagement, and the long-term sustainability of the Arts Center.

In FY25 the Coppell Arts Center hosted 303 events, sold 16,057 tickets and has an estimated total attendance of 35,652 visitors across three areas of service.

Research from the DeVos Institute and SMU DataArts indicates that a small to mid-sized general performing arts center typically operates with a standard revenue mix of 45% earned revenue and 55% contributed revenue. The Coppell Arts Center did not meet this benchmark in FY25. Since FY23, earned revenue has increased by only 1%, while the operating budget has remained flat and annual Presented Programming expenses have increased by an estimated 23% per year.

FY25 Budget Data:

- 32% Earned Revenue
 - 61% from Third Party Rentals
 - 37% from Ticket Sales of all Presented Programming
 - 2% from Other Fees as Playbill program sales and above basic services invoices to Local Resident Arts Groups
 - 0% from Facilities Fees (this fee was removed in 2024; however, it remains an industry-standard practice)
- 68% Contributed Revenue
 - 89% from the CRDC Fund
 - 10% from the HOT Fund
 - 1% from the Coppell Arts Center Foundation grants

In 2023, the DeVos Institute provided recommendations to assist the Coppell Arts Center in moving toward the standard operating budget benchmark. These recommendations included:

- Maximizing available operating days to increase third-party rental activity and continuing to monitor and market rental fees at competitive North Texas market rates.
- Identifying local market demand to determine the right mix of Presented Programming that differentiates the Arts Center within the North Texas region and attracts patrons from outside Coppell. “*Right-fit*” programming considers the number of artists engaged annually, genre diversity, and overall artistic quality.
- Transitioning Local Resident Arts Groups to standard user agreements, including revised use and rental fees, while assisting the groups in securing offsite rehearsal and scenery shop facilities to increase rental availability at the Arts Center.
- Supporting the Coppell Arts Center Foundation in cultivating additional donors and sponsorships to grow annual grant funding and support long term sustainability.
- Continuing support of Local Resident Arts Groups, as they are vital to community engagement and often provide residents with their first introduction to the arts.

Since receiving the DeVos Institute’s recommendations in 2023, the Community Experiences Department and the Coppell Arts Center have actively implemented strategies that are operationally and administratively within staff authority. These efforts have focused on increasing earned revenue, optimizing facility use, and strengthening long term sustainability while maintaining community access to the arts.

- The Arts Center has expanded marketing efforts to private, corporate, and promoter led rentals

- and prioritized booking third-party rentals on all available dark dates.
- The Arts Center has evaluated market demand and audience behavior to refine the mix and overall volume of Presented Programming. Programming is strategically scheduled during periods that have proven most successful in maximizing patron engagement, strengthening attendance, and increasing ticket sales, while further differentiating the Arts Center within the regional market.
 - Per City Council direction in 2023, the Arts Center revised Local Resident Arts Groups' facility use agreements by transitioning to a block booking structure and reducing in-building rehearsal use to increase available dates for third-party rentals. The City also opened offsite rehearsal and scenery shop facilities for Local Resident Arts Groups. The Arts Center continues to support these organizations as essential partners in community engagement and arts education.
 - The Arts Center continues to support the Coppell Arts Center Foundation in donor cultivation and grant development to strengthen contributed revenue streams. Concurrently, staff is actively pursuing grants to supplement Presented Programming and expanding Playbill program advertising sales with the goal of cultivating future donors for the Foundation.

While staff-led efforts have successfully improved operational efficiency, the Arts Center has reached the ceiling of what can be achieved under current policies. **To meaningfully increase earned revenue and reach industry standard benchmarks, City Council's direction is now requested to define the future of the Center's programming, community impact, and long-term financial sustainability.**

Benefit to the Community:

Ensures business continuity and long-term sustainability of the Coppell Arts Center while maintaining access to arts programming for the community.

Legal Review:

Legal review is not required for this agenda item.

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Recommendation:

Staff requests that City Council offer strategic guidance regarding the Coppell Arts Center's future. Specifically, direction is sought to align the Center's programming and community impact with its long-term financial sustainability goals, informed by historical performance and the DeVos Institute's findings.