

SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL FACILITIES DISTRICT



We Fund Culture.

SCFD

SCFD ROAD TO REAUTHORIZATION

The Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD) manages a nearly 40-year-old sales tax in the seven-county Denver-metro area. It provides funding to 300+ arts, cultural and scientific organizations, free days at anchor institutions and more. Since authorizing the tax in 1988, voters have renewed the tax three times, each by overwhelming margins.

In 2028, SCFD's 40th anniversary, voters will be asked to reauthorize the district for the fourth time. Between now and then, the SCFD is conducting its most thorough assessment and overhaul since its formation. Aided by an expert and diverse consultant team at GBSM, the district will undergo an in-depth stakeholder process to identify and recommend an updated model and structure to ring in the next era of providing Culture For All.

2026 ACTIVITIES

Inform the development of options for the new funding model and structure

- Financial analysis of the current model
- Focus groups and individual interviews with funded organizations, community/cultural leaders and County Cultural Councils
- A survey of all 304 funded organizations
- Develop thematic options for new funding models and structures
- Form and facilitate stakeholder advisory group

2027 ACTIVITIES

Review, refine and select the future funding model and structure

- Reviewing and refining new models
- Financial modeling and forecasting
- Focused engagement and input opportunities
- SCFD Board of Directors vote on the recommended funding model and structure
- Following adoption, SCFD transitions work to the Colorado state legislature to draft and vote on the SCFD Reauthorization statute

The adopted statute will be on the November 2028 general-election ballot for in-district voters. If a majority of voters approve the reauthorization, the new SCFD model and structure will take effect beginning July 1, 2030.

JOURNEY TO TODAY

Since the SCFD formed, the metro-area's population has **nearly doubled**, the number of organizations funded has **more than doubled**, and the amount of funding distributed has increased by **more than five times**. Despite this impressive growth, SCFD's core structure and model has remained relatively the same.

	1989	2024 ¹
Tier I Share of Funding / Number of Organizations	65% / 4 Avg per Org: \$2,300,000	59.4% / 5 Avg per Org: \$10,200,000
Tier II Share of Funding / Number of Organizations	25% / 7 Avg per Org: \$500,000	23.9% / 34 Avg per Org: \$600,000
Tier III Share of Funding / Number of Organizations	10% / 123 Avg per Org: \$71,000	16.6% / 268 Avg per Org: \$53,000
Total Funds Distributed	\$14 million	\$85 million

¹ 2024 amounts reflect the percentage of total dollars distributed by tier. The current statute distributes funds by tier in two different ratios. The first \$38 million in taxes collected are distributed as follows: Tier I gets 64%; Tier II receives 22%; and Tier III gets 14%. All taxes beyond the first \$38 million are distributed as follows: Tier I gets 57%; Tier II gets 26%; and Tier III gets 17%.

IMPACTS AND CHALLENGES

The SCFD has enabled transformational experiences and unparalleled opportunities and access across the District's science, art and culture industries and is widely regarded, nationwide and globally, as a model for cultural funding. As the region has grown, the SCFD model has faced increasing challenges in how it operates and in ensuring equity among all funded organizations.

Remarkable Regional Impact

In 2024, the SCFD delivered meaningful and powerful results for the taxpayers in the district:



15 Million People Served: Roughly three times more people than those that attended the Broncos, Avalanche, Nuggets and Rockies games combined.



4 Million Children's Experiences: With decreased school funding, particularly in the arts, the SCFD plays a critical role in the region's education ecosystem.



3.9 Million Free Experiences: SCFD organizations in all tiers regularly offer free admission and programming to keep money from being a barrier to science, arts and culture.



304 Organizations Funded: The number of organizations funded by the SCFD has increased 47% more than the district's population since it was formed.



Enabling Expanded Impact: SCFD's funding for general operating support enables funded organizations to fundraise for deeper and more meaningful community impact and innovation.

A Model with Challenges

This process will address challenges in the current SCFD financial model and structure including:



Tier II Funding Issues: Tier II organizations are getting a lower percentage of the overall funding than they did when the SCFD was formed.



Tier III Mobility: The current model may actually incentivize some Tier IIIs to avoid advancing to Tier II status as they would get less SCFD funding.



County Cultural Council Inconsistencies: Each county uses different models, rules and criteria to determine funding, potentially creating increased administrative burdens on Tier III organizations.



Model Complexity and Transparency: The distribution process is complicated and the formula to allocate funding among Tier II organizations is challenging to understand.



Funded Organization Concern: The current model has fueled a level of concern around unity and the impacts of funding across Tiers.

GET INVOLVED!

Drawing on lessons learned from the 2016 Reauthorization process, the SCFD Board of Directors is firmly committed to ensuring this reauthorization process is as inclusive and transparent as possible.

We want to hear from you! Your participation in the Road to Reauthorization is key to ensuring our collective impact on the new model we'll create together. Visit scfd.org/reauthorization or scan the QR code to track our progress and discover ways to engage and share feedback.

