

BCA Board of Directors Annual Meeting Minutes

Community Room, 405 Pine Street

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

Present: Michelle Buswell, Kelly Butts-Spirito, Joyce Cameron, Livia DeMarchis, Heather Ferrell, Billi Gosh, Rachel Kahn-Fogel, Sara Katz, Doreen Kraft, Hannah Lebel, Lisa Lillibridge, Carrie McCabe, Laura McDonough, Meara McGinniss, Ted Olson, Bryan Parmelee, Kristina Pentek, Barbara Perry, Elena Rosen, Lori Rowe, Parker Silver, Melissa Steady, Colin Storrs, Dana vanderHeyden, Deb Wilkinson, Zach Williamson, David Zacharis, Rachel Zellem

Absent: Ryan Moritz, Robin Pierce, Sarah Rogers, Patrick Shank

Lori Rowe called the meeting to order at 2:02

1. Parker Silver moved to accept the minutes of the June meeting and the agenda for today's meeting as written. This was seconded by Michelle Buswell. Vote: all were in favor.
2. Lori Rowe introduced new board member Carrie McCabe. Carrie gave a brief summary of her career, including her years in finance. Introductions were made around the table.
3. Livia DeMarchis moved to accept Bryan Parmelee, Lisa Lillibridge, Lori Rowe and Billi Gosh as Honorary Board Members. This was seconded by Laura McDonough. All were in favor.
4. Billi Gosh moved to accept a new slate of officers: Sarah Rogers: President, Laura McDonough: Vice President, Michelle Buswell: Treasurer, Hannah Lebel: Member-at-Large, Billi Gosh: Secretary, and Lori Rowe: Past President. This motion was seconded by Lisa Lillibridge. All were in favor.
5. Billi Gosh moved to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter under the provisions of Title One section 313.1. A . Parker Silver seconded the motion. All were in favor.
6. The board came out of executive session. Billi Gosh moved to accept David Zacharis as a new member of the Board of Directors. Laura McDonough seconded the motion. All were in favor.
7. Lori presented a memo from Emmett Wood, Assistant City Attorney, suggesting a language update to the Board of Directors Bylaws to clarify board members' fiduciary responsibility and insurance coverage. Hannah Lebel made a motion to review and accept the changes to the BCA Board Bylaws as recommended by Assistant City Attorney Wood. This motion was seconded by Deb Wilkinson. Carrie McCabe suggested that any language referring to the board as "advisory" be clarified by the City Attorney. The board voted to accept the changes presented by Assistant City Attorney Wood. All were in favor.
8. Lori introduced new board member David Zacharis and introductions were made all around.
9. Directors Report: Doreen Kraft (Executive Director) presented the Director's Report and welcomed the board to the new Community Room at 405 Pine Street. Billi Gosh asked about the

rental rate for the community room. Zach Williamson outlined the rental rates, announced that the first rental is coming up at the end of September, and explained that the acoustical challenges would be addressed. Doreen said that a fundraising effort will be undertaken to create a fund that will subsidize affordable access for those who need it, possibly with corporate underwriting. Sara Katz described the ambitious revenue goal.

Doreen then discussed a recent safety incident that occurred at 405 Pine Street during the last day of camp. The incident involved an individual who had entered the BCA facility, used violent language and refused to leave when asked. Staff called 911 for assistance. Melissa Steady described some details of the incident and answered board questions.

Doreen emphasized that city resources responded well to the incident, and the police department, Parallel Justice, and Community Justice have been supportive in providing mental health support, training and security assessments. DC Young has conducted a walk-through of the facility to suggest security enhancements and pointers for personal safety for staff and the public.

Doreen also noted a positive change in police response under the new interim police chief, Chief Burke, explaining that the department has shifted its approach to prioritize 911 calls with significantly improved response times compared to 2-3 years ago.

10. Staff members provided updates on their respective departments:
 - a. Colin Storrs (Public Art and Grants Program Manager) discussed current public art projects, noting that over the next 12 months, BCA would be installing or reaching the culmination of almost a million dollars worth of public art contracts.
 - b. Zach Williamson (Festival and Event Director) reported on events from FY25, including Festival of Fools and Highlight, which attracted approximately 55,000 people and supported about 130 artists. He discussed scaled-back programming for FY26 due to budget constraints, mentioning that the Festival of Fools was originally canceled, but was able to be presented as a scaled-back two-day festival produced with downtown business support. He identified challenges including safety concerns in City Hall Park and Main Street. He explained that the Winter Market will likely be moved inside this year. Zach and Assistant Development Director Rachel Zelle are working together to find corporate support for BCA events.
 - c. Heather Ferrell (Curator and Director of Exhibitions) provided an overview of exhibition programming, highlighting two upcoming shows: "Do We Say Goodbye? Grief, Loss, and Mourning" opening soon with eight artists, and "Human Impact" opening in March. Both shows are very relevant to current community concerns. She discussed challenges including downtown safety perceptions affecting attendance, staffing constraints, and the need to be nimble regarding facility issues like HVAC repairs. Heather expressed pride in the gallery learning tours program despite staffing challenges. She added that although attendance has been affected by community issues, it is still comparable to other cultural institutions statewide.
 - d. Melissa Steady (Education Director) described success in FY25 including continuing to increase revenue in our education programs. The new studio access add-on option increased revenue without increasing staff time or expense. Scholarship funding and equity

- presents an ongoing challenge. Melissa has redesigned the camp structure to make registration easier for families. She has been collaborating with Heather Ferrell to ensure that gallery learning programs continue, despite the loss of a position due to budget cuts.
- e. Elena Rosen (Communications Director) presented her goals, including establishing a communications plan for BCA to tell the story of who we are and what we do. She mentioned a recent brand strategy workshop with Tim Volk of KSV (donated pro bono). Elena addressed challenges regarding downtown Burlington's public perception issues and declining digital reach due to reduced resources and staffing turnover.
 - f. Joyce Cameron (Director of Philanthropy) discussed how charitable contributions sustain our programs. The fundraising team has expanded and is fully staffed allowing the focus to remain on expanding our constituent base, increasing grant opportunities, and advancing major gifts. The many challenges can be met, especially with the wonderful philanthropic culture of BCA supported by the board and staff.

5 minute break

11. Board and Staff Working Session, Board Engagement

Lori Rowe led a discussion on board engagement. She noted that over the past year, board members had expressed a desire to participate more actively and feel more useful. The board was challenged to select areas of interest from BCA's activities to become more involved with, including education, public art, communications and development, events, or exhibitions.

The board and staff divided into small groups (3-4 board members per group) based on interest areas, with each executive committee member participating in a conversation. The groups spent approximately 45 minutes brainstorming ways board members could be more actively engaged without crossing into operational roles.

After the brainstorming session, each group reported back:

Events (reported by Hannah Lebel): Discussed potential events including winter programming, pursuing a partnership with Nectar's Presents, creating opportunities for young musicians, developing stronger connections with New York City arts communities, evaluating the calendar to potentially focus on fewer but more impactful events, and exploring nightlife arts events.

Public Art (reported by Sara Katz): Identified several potential initiatives including ongoing awareness and advocacy for public art, developing a neighborhood watch for public art projects, fundraising around public art through sponsorships, researching how other cities recognize sponsors/donors, and building a roster of community members for public art review committees. Kristina Pentek volunteered to act as chair of the Public Art Committee. Barbara Perry asked about a brochure that included all the public art pieces in Burlington. Sara responded that this information is on our website but there is not currently resources to produce a printed piece. There is desire to develop an effective online walking tour when resources allow.

Exhibitions (reported by Dana vanderHeyden): Focused on the board becoming a conduit to engage artists and interested community members. Board members could act as docents,

inviting in community groups and leading tours, without relying on staff time. The group had a discussion of the themes of upcoming exhibitions.

Development and Communications (reported by Laura McDonough): Discussed public perception issues and the board's role in making new connections for BCA. They identified three tangible asks: board members bringing 1-3 names of potential donors, making introductions to business owners, and sharing BCA content on personal social media channels. They suggested creating "Ask me about BCA" buttons for board members and developing profiles of board and staff members for social media.

Education Committee (reported by Lori Rowe): Focused on department engagement through idea generation and appreciation without overstepping operational boundaries. They discussed challenges including the absence of a gallery learning position and engaging existing staff without adding burden. Solutions included developing strategies for maximizing staffing capacity, engaging staff in problem-solving, and concrete ways to show appreciation to staff. Deb Wilkinson was identified as committee chair.

Lori Rowe suggested that ad-hoc working groups meet on a regular basis on months when the full board does not meet, and report back at the next board meeting.

12. Development Committee: Billi Gosh presented the Development Committee Report, discussing board giving. The committee is looking for 100% participation in pledges by the end of September, with flexibility on fulfillment timing. The annual Board and Friends dinner will take place on Tuesday, December 9th in the Community Room. Save the dates will go out.
13. Billi Gosh made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Lisa Lillibridge. Vote: All were in favor. 4:43pm

BCA

FY2026 ANNUAL MEETING



Mission

BCA's mission is to nurture a dynamic environment through the arts that makes quality experiences accessible regardless of economic, social or physical constraints.

We do this by:

Supporting and promoting Vermont artists and advancing the creation of new work

Offering a wide spectrum of arts education and engagement opportunities

Presenting exhibitions and events that place Burlington in a global context, promote critical dialogue and encourage local participation

Serving as the City of Burlington's cultural planner by making the arts integral to the area's economic and civic development, urban design, and livability

Fostering partnerships among the arts, education, human service and business communities

Vision

Artists are key contributors to a healthy, equitable community

Arts programs and experiences that foster social connections, well-being and learning opportunities should be accessible to all, especially to youth/intergenerational constituents, and to those who experience social and economic barriers to participation.

Three Year Strategic Plan Goals

Foster artistic excellence and development of artist sector

Ensure broad community access to arts education, learning and engagement activities

Preserve and expand artist space in Burlington for creating, exhibiting, rehearsing and performing

Strengthen organizational sustainability and build resilience



PUBLIC ART

FY25 ACHIEVEMENTS

Lake Champlain Mural: Juniper Creative Arts and 8 youth apprentices. Research, archives, and expert interviews. 20ft x 8ft mural at 405 Pine Street. Paired with Vermont Folklife audio stories. \$40,000 LCBP grant

Dance in Place: Sculpture by Christopher Kojzar. Bank and St. Paul Street. Celebrates queer joy, Black identity, and Burlington history. Total City Funds: \$96,500

Artist Support: \$383,619 as direct artist payments through public art projects, including \$291,660 to Vermont Artists

Community Fund Grant gave out \$59,327 to support community-oriented art projects and organizations



FY26 OVERVIEW

Dance in Place Unveiling: October 2nd, 2025

Lydia Kern, *Anthology*: October 2025

12-foot resin archway with community-donated dried flowers.

Airport: January 2026

3 new commissions at Leahy BTV Airport. Final selection scheduled for Oct 10th, 2025. Projects will total \$357,033 in artist fees slated for three new BTV spaces.

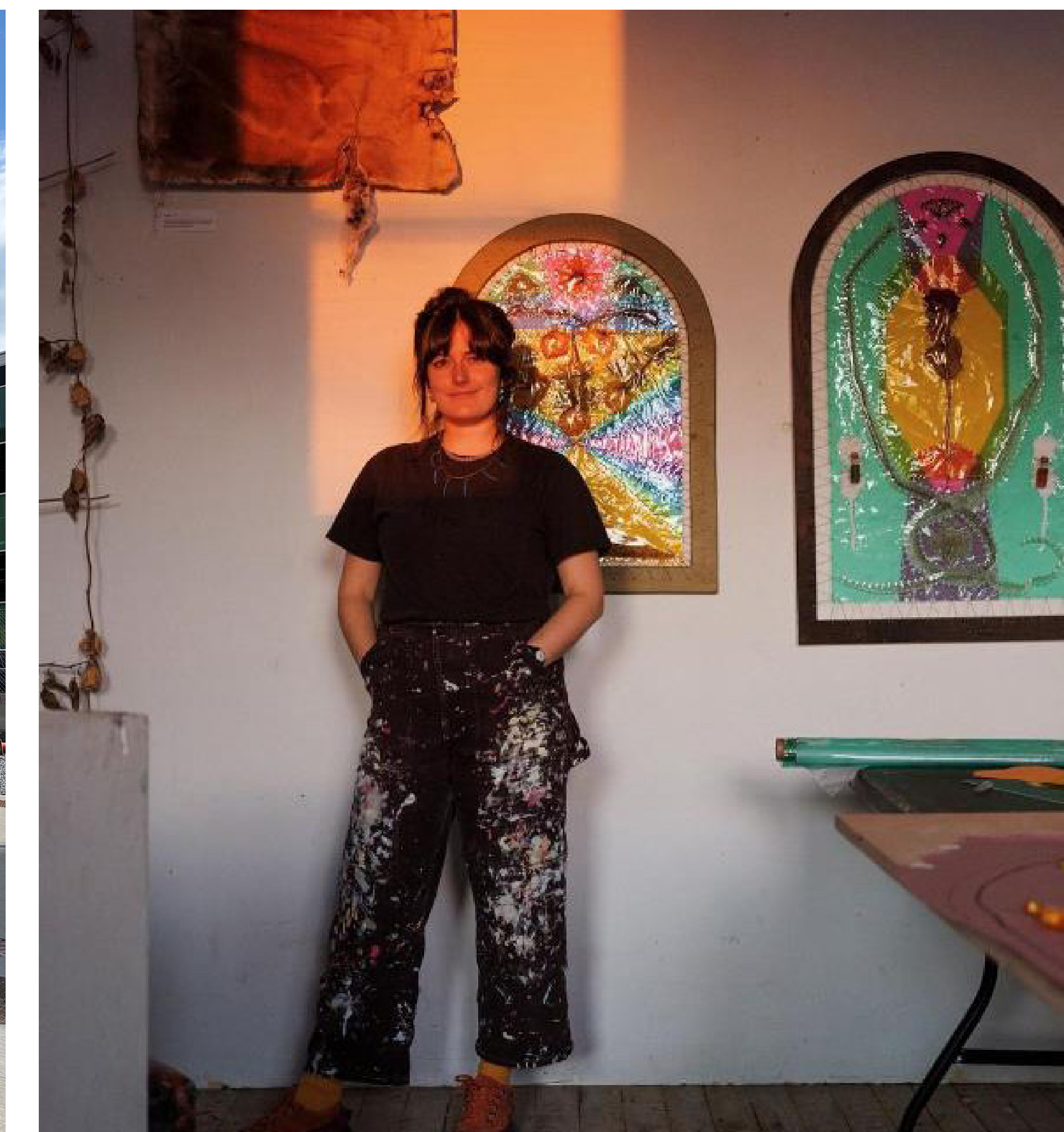
Abenaki donation of public art for Battery Park

Main Street Summer Installations (2026)

Nancy Winship Milliken, *Oasis*

Noa Younse, *Block by Block*

Wowhaus, *Magnus*



FY26 GOALS

Manage the installation of nine permanent pieces of Public Art

4 on Main Street, 2 on CityPlace, 3 in BTV

Successfully navigate the nuanced landscape of the Vermont Abenaki discussion

Acceptance of a donation to replace Chief Greylock

Support the multidepartmental effort to change the narrative that has negatively effected Burlington

Promotion of public art as a welcoming and accessible asset for connection and learning through community partners and broader BCA and City communications initiatives

Get more comprehensive and consistent artist feedback to capture the impact of the program

Artist Survey



FY26 CHALLENGES

Vandalism

Banner project at Memorial Auditorium halted due to damage. Other works are vulnerable to tagging and damage

BTV Funding Restrictions

FAA grants restrict the scope of selection of the work

Resource Allocation

Most Public Art Projects are multidepartment efforts and the larger City budget has implications that are often out of our control

Maintenance

Ensuring new works are durable and maintainable long-term, existing work is protected and maintained to ensure they last, and addressing any damage as it arises

Bandwidth

Small team, wide range of programming





EVENTS

FY25 ACHIEVEMENTS

Produced and presented two large Festivals: the Festival of Fools in Summer 2024 and Highlight on New Year's Eve, 2024. Welcomed over 55,000 people, and supported over 130 artists

Produced and presented a successful summer in City Hall Park, featuring the Summer Concert Series, Splash Dance, the Twilight Series, Market Music, and Sunday Classical

Worked with Love Burlington to produce the summer BTV Market and Winter Market in City Hall Park

Managed community rentals of the BCA Center, Contois Auditorium, and City Hall Park



FY26 OVERVIEW

Fools Block Party (Fools on a shoestring).

2 Day, scaled back Festival

Summer in the City- collaboration with Love Burlington.

83 Events for all ages from Splash Dance to Sunday Classical

A/V design and installation for the Community Room

at 405 Pine Street

Highlight still planning events on the waterfront and in downtown with scaled back budget

Winter Market collaboration with Love Burlington, reduced scale, indoors

Series of smaller events and marketing to promote downtown experience



FY26 GOALS

Meet rental revenue goal of 50K for Community Room on top of 40K in existing rental spaces by June 30

Collaborate with Development to retain new presenting sponsors for Festival of Fools and Highlight and meet the Highlight fundraising goal of \$120K

Design an annual events schedule for downtown and 405 Pine Street that aligns with resources and supports artists and civic needs



FY26 CHALLENGES

Managing change while we reduce the scale of events to align with resources but still strive to meet community expectations

Shrinking sponsorship support

Ongoing public safety issues and downtown reputation affecting attendance

Continued construction on Main Street

Increasing number of events with the same staffing level in Events and Communications divisions of BCA





EDUCATION

FY25 ACHIEVEMENTS

Increased earned net revenue by \$29k with the creation of Student Membership Add-on

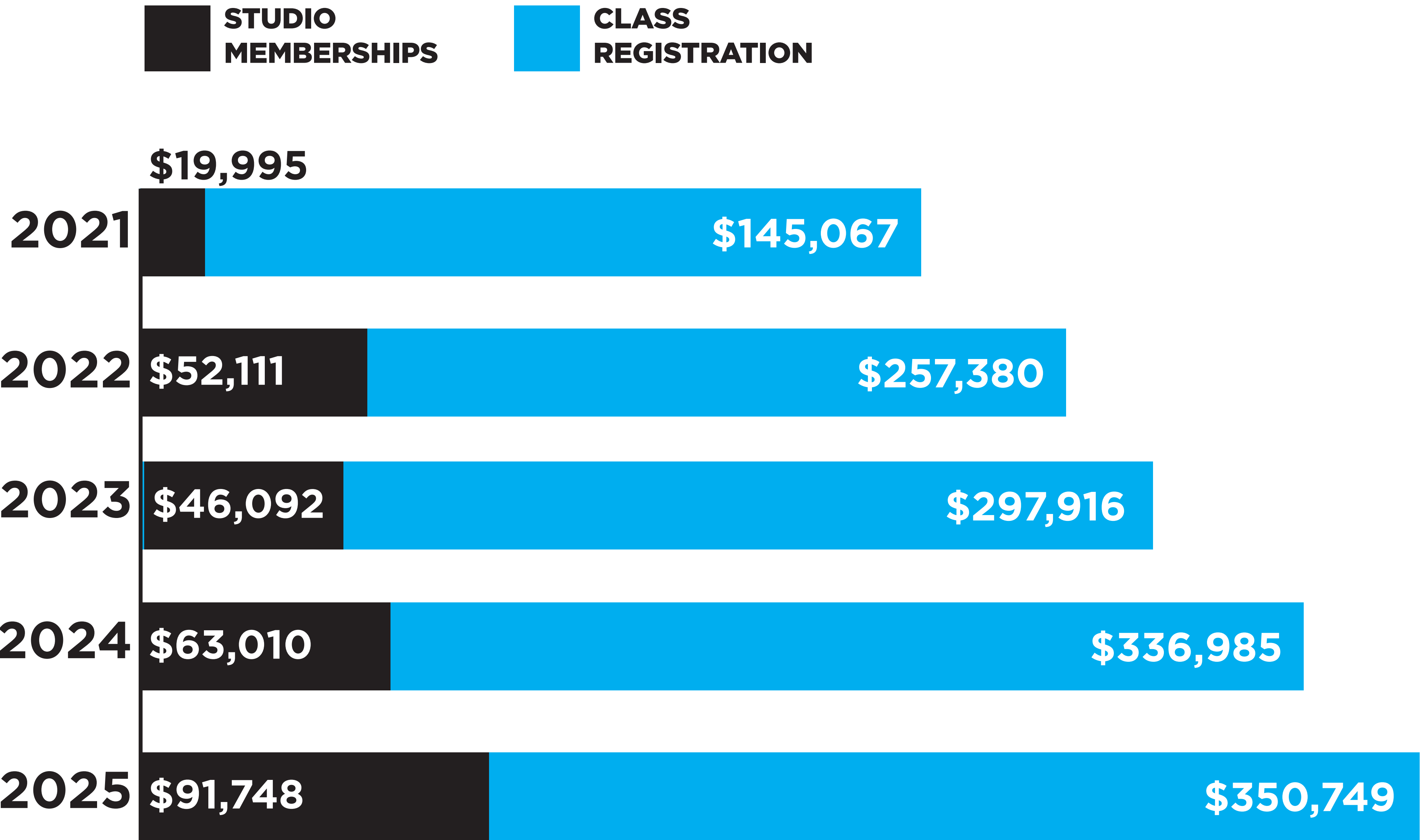
Ran 74 camps and sparked joy for 533 campers ages 6-17. Provide 165 scholarships. 31% campers received a partial or full scholarship (Summer 2024)

73 Adult classes provided hands-on studio learning to 511 adults (60% Burlington residents)

510 studio memberships sold (40% Burlington residents, 207 student memberships)

Art from the Heart engaged with 11,550 children and adults at UVM Medical Center, through volunteer visits and art kits

BCA STUDIO REVENUE TREND



FY26 OVERVIEW

BCA Studio programming:

- 8 weeks of summer camp
- 3 sessions of adult classes in clay, printmaking, jewelry, painting, darkroom and digital photography

Youth, family, and teen drop ins, workshops and vacation camps

Studio membership with access to 7500 square feet shared studio facility

Art From the Heart 7 days a week at UVMMC includes new bereavement support projects and a collaboration with upcoming gallery exhibition

Gallery school tour coordination with teachers from Burlington and the state



FY26 GOALS

Meet another year of increased revenue goals for class registration and studio rental fees

Ensure budgeted scholarship funding is available for all requests and especially to the most vulnerable users through revised scholarship application and messaging

Improve FY26 Summer Camp design and registration process based on parent feedback and post covid enrollment trends

Collaborate with BCA Exhibitions to support 30 gallery school tours



FY26 CHALLENGES

Balancing need to meet increased revenue expectations with accessibility, with continuously increasing program costs

Scholarship requests increase but we have the same budget as last year

Incorporating coordination of gallery school tours into team workplan post the elimination of FT Gallery Learning Coordinator as part of FY26 Budget cuts. Union and logistical challenges





EXHIBITIONS

FY25 ACHIEVEMENTS

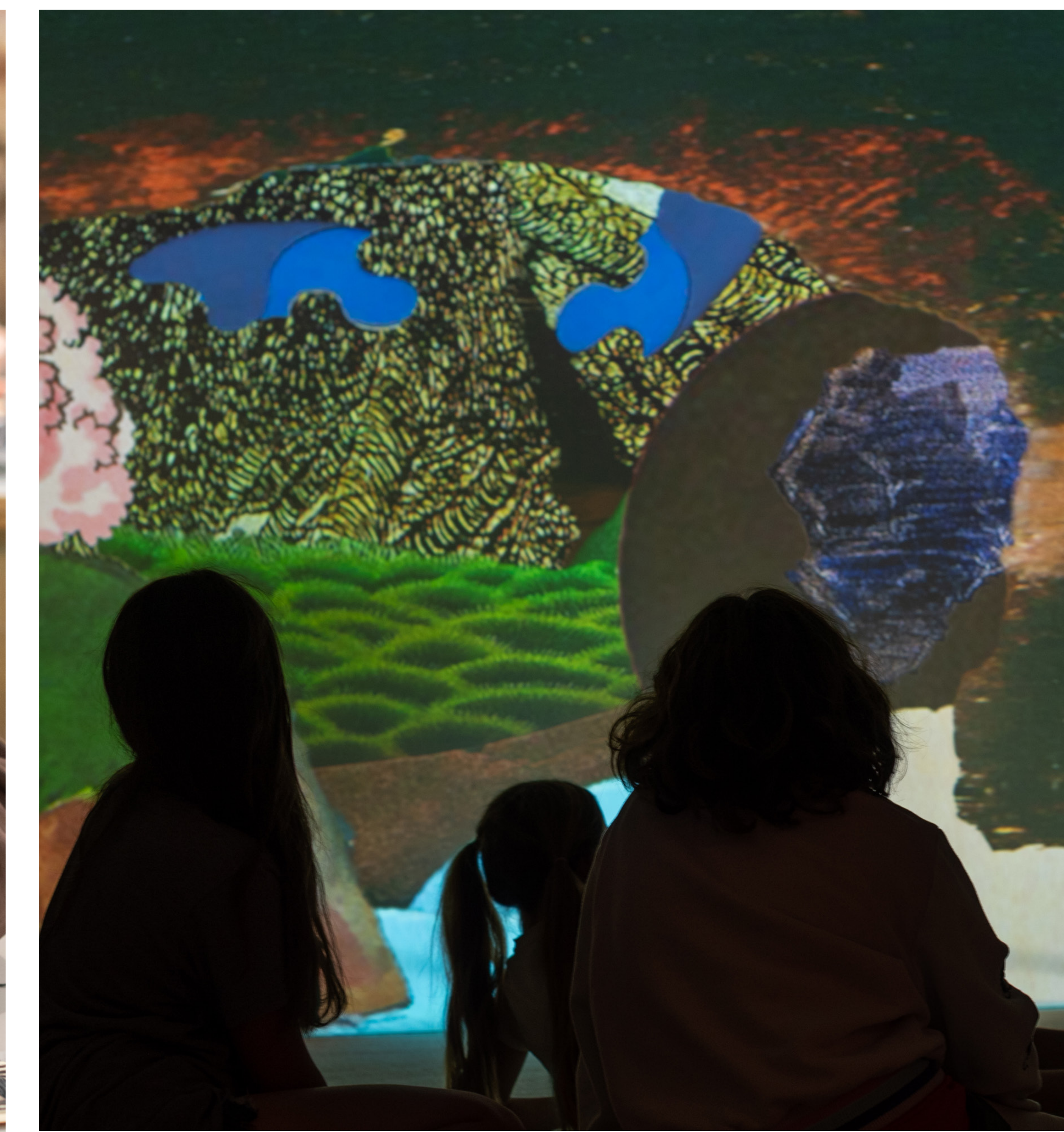
Organized 9 original, curated exhibitions at BCA Center and 17 external exhibitions including UVMMC, BTV Airport, and City Hall

Distributed \$60,767 in stipends and \$18,500 in commissions to 12 Vermont, and 8 regional and national artists

Organized 11 exhibition-based public programs that served 1,082 participants in person (26 online)

Provided inquiry-based tours and art-making activities to 1,019 visitors, through 133 school and adult visits to BCA Center that explored exhibition themes and artmaking

Implemented the artist residency program (and exhibit) *Becoming / Vermont*—a collaboration between BCA, Burlington High School, and Burlington Technical Center. Funded by the NEA, *Becoming / Vermont* served 408 students through gallery tours, and 64 students working with 6 artists



FY26 OVERVIEW

Do We Say Goodbye? Grief, Loss, and Mourning

Friday, September 26, 2025 – Saturday, January 24, 2026

Human Impact: Contemporary Art and Our Environment

Friday, March 13 – June 20, 2026

New partnerships and collaborations:

Vermont Association of Psychoanalytic Studies (VAPS)
and Middlebury College

Art Services

Showcases local artists at UVMMC, BTV and City Hall



FY26 GOALS

Support more than 60 artists through original curated, thought-provoking exhibitions at BCA Center and external spaces

Diversify and potentially increase attendance over last FY by identifying new or innovative partnerships, programs, and resources

Collaborate with BCA Education to support 100+ annual tours for students and adults

Sustain positive and supportive relationships with artists (direct feedback, studio visits, professional development)

Enhance assessment of audience engagement with BCA exhibitions, artists, and ideas through evaluation—artist, program, and tours



FY26 CHALLENGES

Reduced staff positions in Gallery Learning (1 FT and .5 PT)

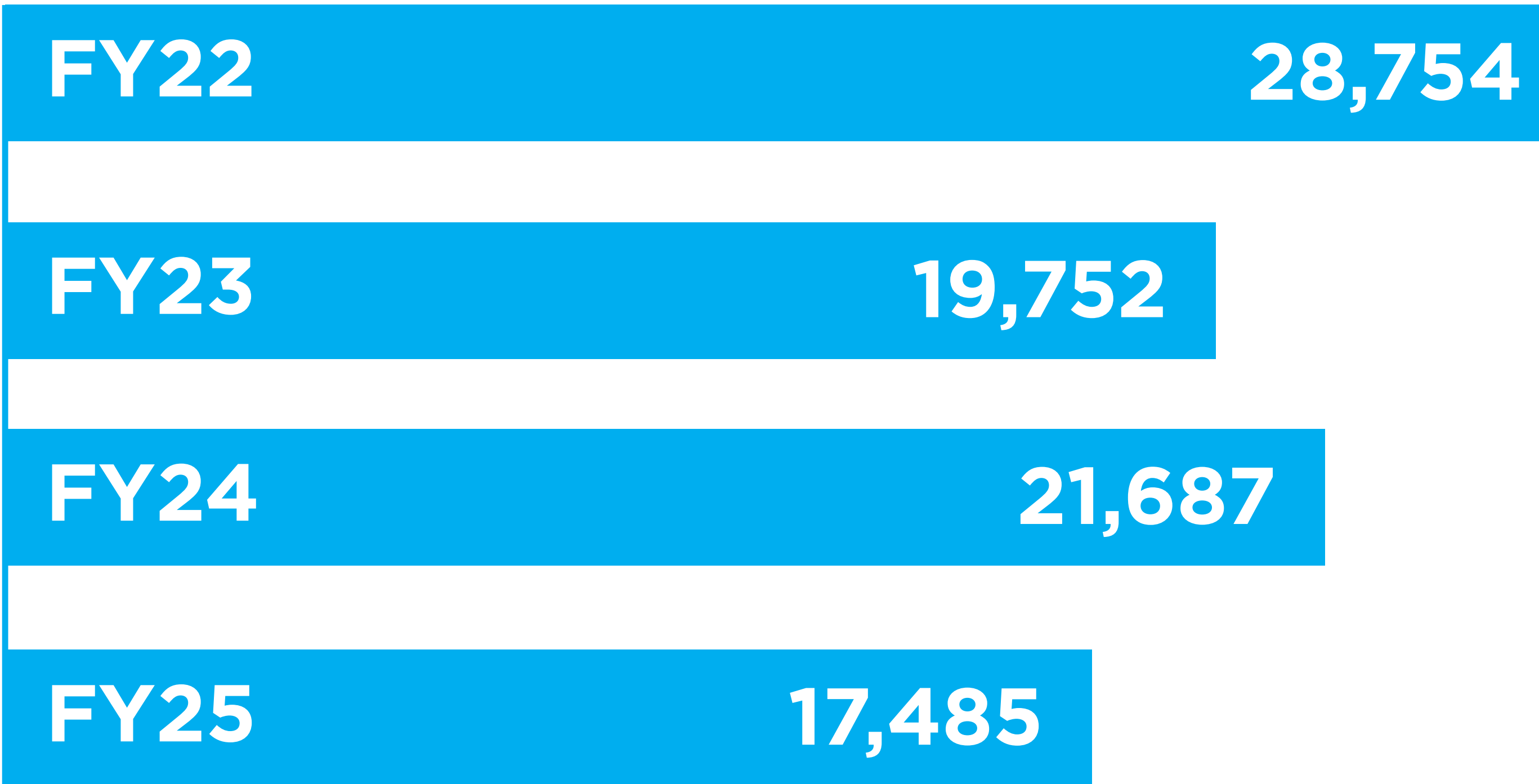
Facility maintenance that impacts exhibition scheduling

Downtown safety and construction environment
and reduced tourism impacting exhibition attendance
and program delivery

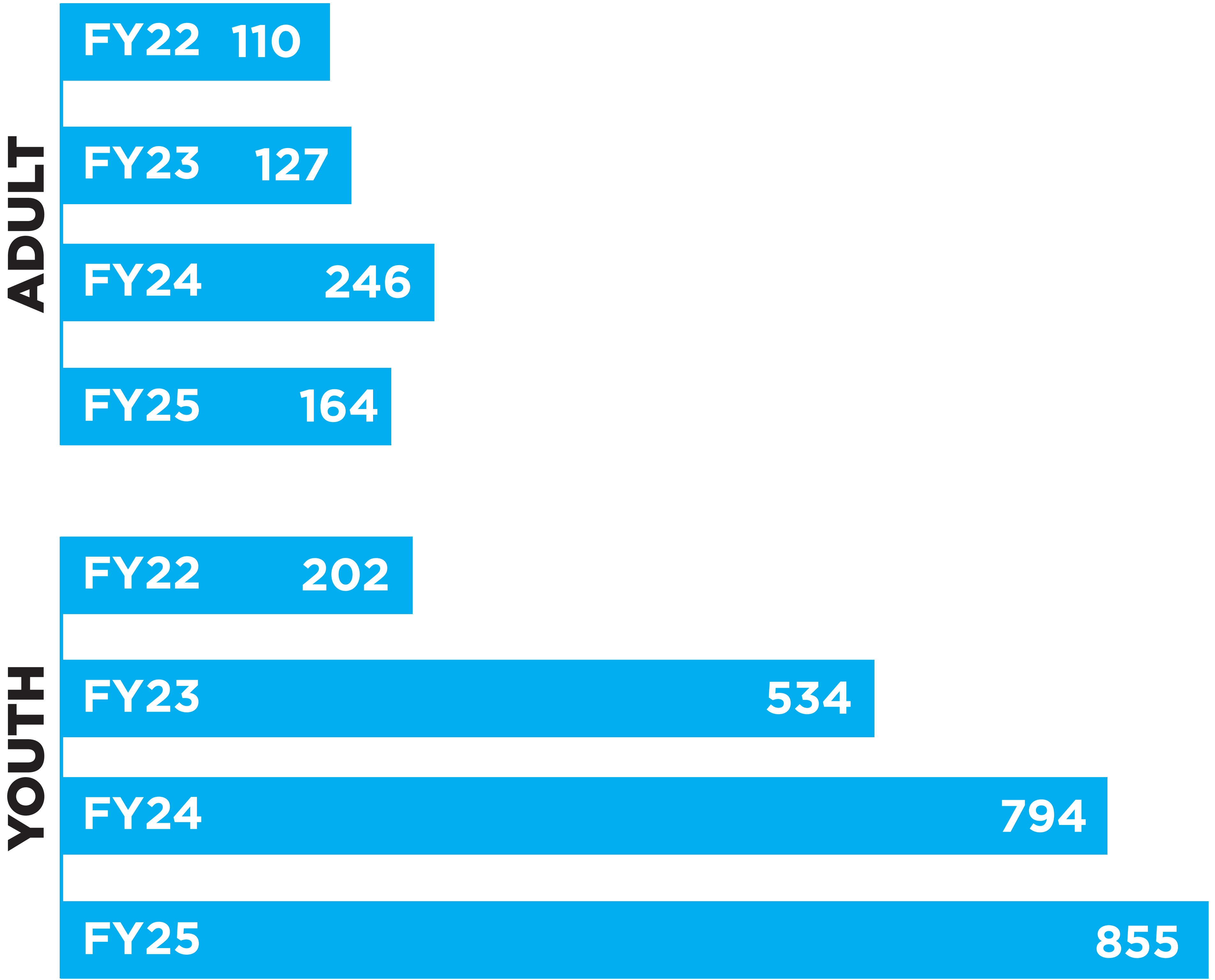


FY22-FY25 Attendance

BCA CENTER GALLERY



GALLERY LEARNING TOURS





COMMUNICATIONS

FY26 GOALS

Establishing a BCA Communications Plan

Building a foundational structure to support evolving programming needs and fundraising goals

Fostering Collaborative Initiatives with City Partners

Maximizing audience reach and marketing spend by working with other City organizations such as the Church Street Marketplace, CEDO, the Fletcher Free Library, and more

Evaluating Marketing Spend

Analyzing marketing budgets to find efficiencies and new channels that will support meeting programmatic goals

Increasing Earned Media and Public Recognition

Identify and pursue opportunities for BCA to receive national and statewide recognition for arts excellence across programming disciplines



FY26 CHALLENGES

Countering Increasingly Negative Perception of Burlington's Brand

As public perception of struggles in downtown has grown both within Burlington and in the surrounding areas, traditional marketing techniques are increasingly less effective at driving visitation and event attendance.

A documented drop in tourism also means fewer people regularly downtown. We're working on growing BCA press placements and collaborating with other organizations and businesses to highlight the positive.



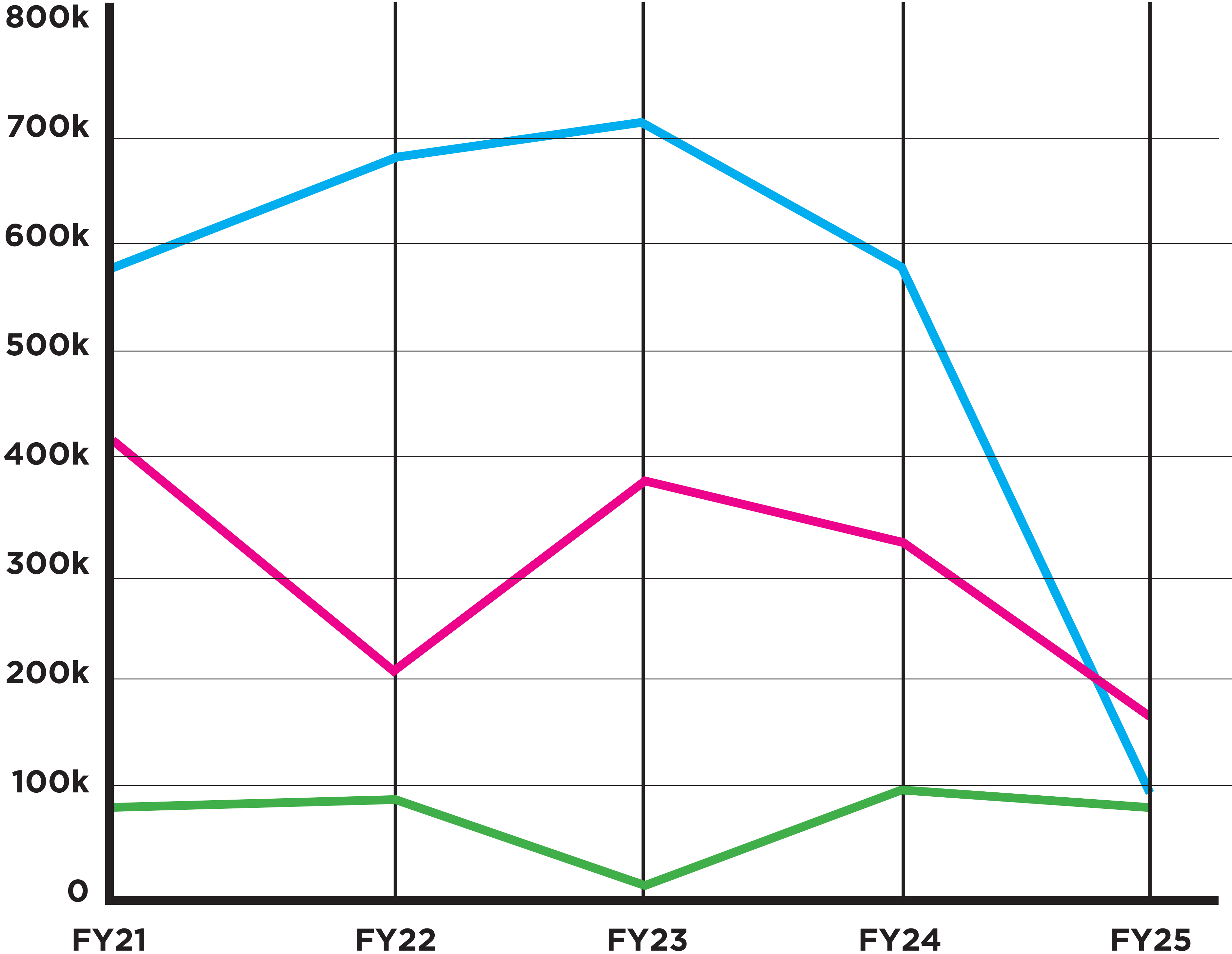
FY26 CHALLENGES

Declining Digital Reach

Reduced resources have led to a declining numbers in impressions and reach, particularly with digital content, which had previously been on a growth trend.

We're prospecting for efficiencies and new channels to keep our reach robust and ensure we're reaching all of our audience segments in multiple mediums.

BCA DIGITAL REACH FY21-FY25





FUNDRAISING

FY25 ACHIEVEMENTS

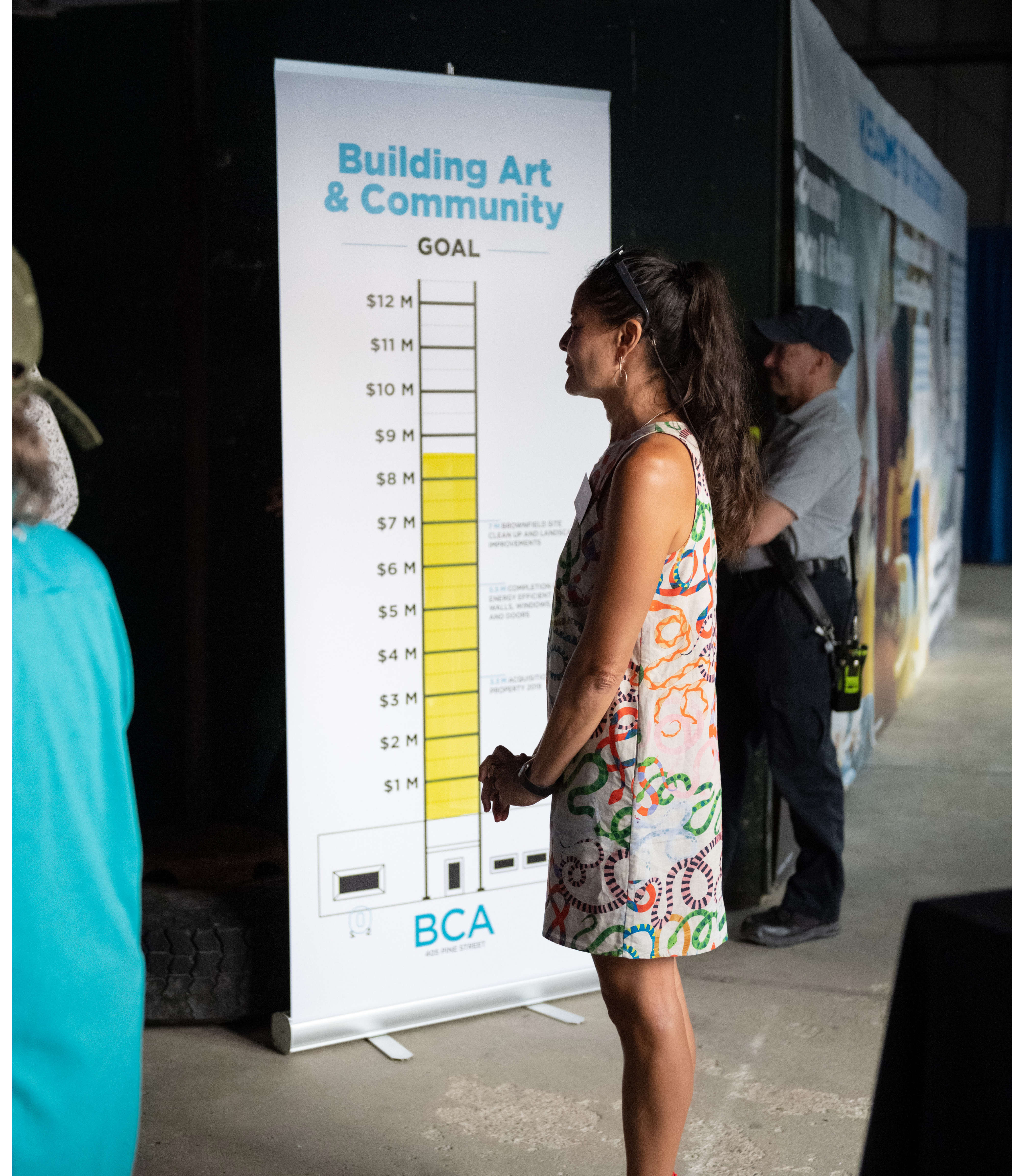
Acquired 132 new donors

Digital appeal gifts increased by 20 individual donors

Major Gifts and General Donations (<\$499) gifts increased by 13 and 128 gifts respectively

Expanded the capacity of the development department to include a Director of Philanthropy and Assistant Director of Development through administrative reorg

Raised \$2m for capital campaign renovation of 405 Pine Street



FY26 GOALS

Raise \$1 million plus for operations and \$1 million for capital campaign

Move donors to a higher giving level through stewardship

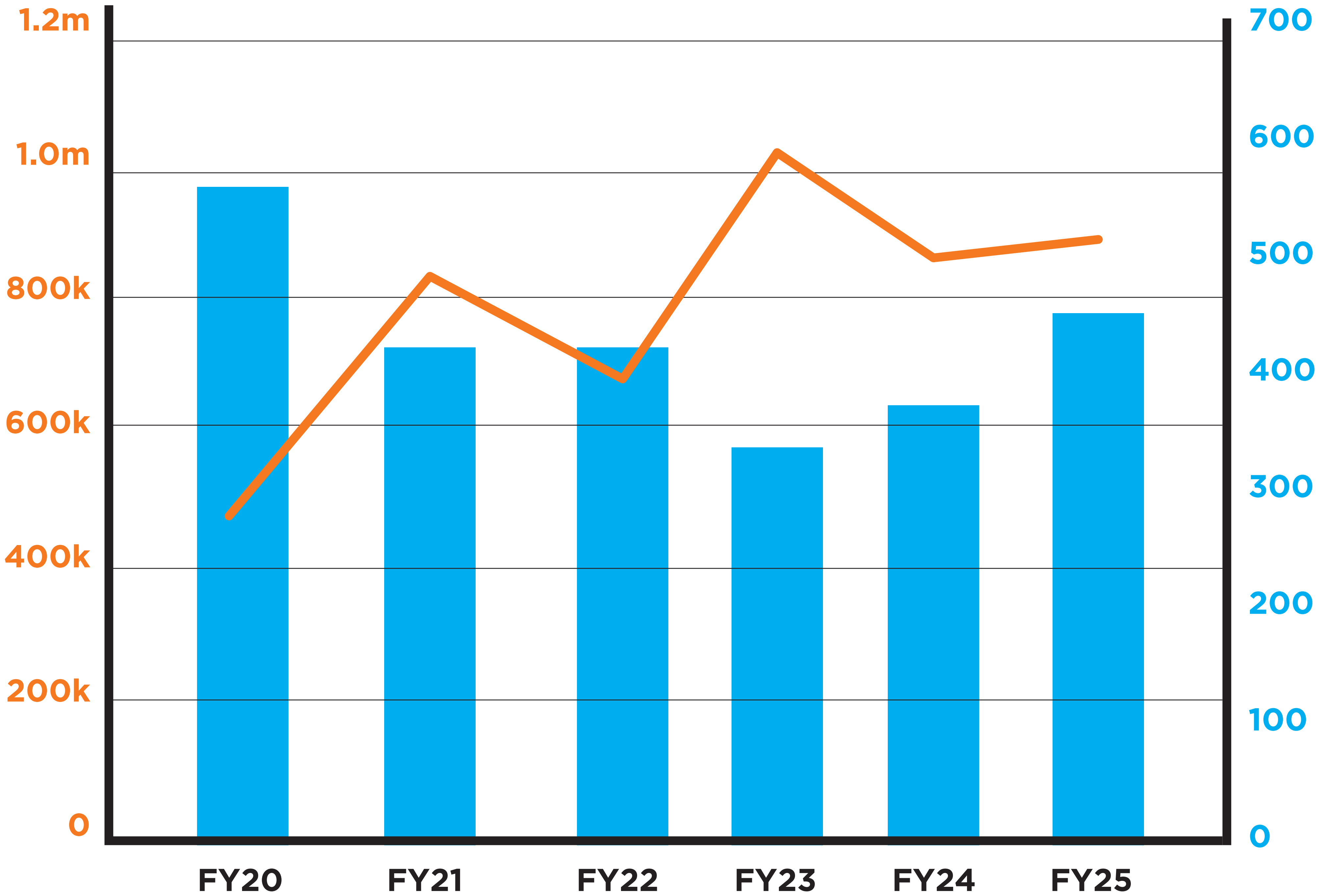
Identify new presenting sponsors and increase opportunity pipeline at all sponsorship levels for corporate giving to meet target

Increase the number of unique donor constituents through cultivation

UNIQUE DONORS & DOLLARS RAISED

TOTAL DOLLARS RAISED
BCA OPERATIONS

UNIQUE
DONORS



FY26 CHALLENGES

Navigating external economic pressures and the changing philanthropic landscape

Competing with other social service non-profits

Burlington's brand and public perception issues

Branding BCA to enhance community support for arts





**Thank You
BCA**