

CULTURAL ACCESS GIG HARBOR Q&A

- **What is Cultural Access**—Cultural Access (CA) is a state legislated funding mechanism for communities to support local non-profit organizations that provide school and/or public programming.
- **Why is it important**—The legislature initiated a taxing levy in 2015 to provide public and educational benefits and economic support for cultural organizations. The legislature found that giving local governments the authority to enact local support for the state's cultural organizations is in the public interest. It will serve multiple public purposes, including the enhancement and extension of educational outreach and offerings of cultural organizations, ensuring continued and expanded access to the facilities and programs of cultural organizations by economically and geographically underserved populations, and providing financial stability to the organizations to continue and extend the numerous public benefits they provide.
- **How easy is it to start the program? CA can be enacted with a simple majority vote from the city council.** If passed in 2025, funds will be collected in 2026 and made available to cultural organizations starting in 2027. If enacted, funds will be collected for seven years and then must renewed by council or public vote.
- **How is the program administered?** Per RCW 36.160, the city will need to establish guidelines to administer the program and can appoint an advisory body for it. The program is self-supporting and does not require general funds to cover administrative costs.
- **What organizations would benefit**—Established non-profit organizations providing school or public programming such as the Harbor History Museum, Harbor WildWatch, Gig Harbor BoatShop, Peninsula Hands on Art, the Peninsula Youth Orchestra, and more.
- **How does it benefit the Gig Harbor Community**—Support of free and low-cost programming is a hallmark of Cultural Access. Organizations such as Harbor WildWatch, Gig Harbor BoatShop and the Harbor History Museum would not only be able to continue offering excellent programming, but expand throughout the community and to serve all schools in the region.
- **What does it cost?** CA is funded by a one-tenth of one percent of the city sales tax (.001) and as an increase in the sales tax while benefiting the community. Unlike a property tax increase, residents and non-residents will bear this modest increase, including many seasonal visitors who benefit from Gig Harbor's cultural organizations. The cost per household is approximately \$44 per year or just \$3.66 per month.

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- **What's the ROI for the community—** The .001% increase in sales tax will generate approximately \$1,000,000 for Gig Harbor's cultural organizations. These organizations currently generate more than \$1.5 million in economic activity annually. With Cultural Access, that ROI can increase to as much as \$3.8 million in return.
- **What does it mean for Gig Harbor's cultural organizations—**CA provides important baseline support to shore up the often-precarious operating budgets of Gig Harbor's cultural organizations. Stable funding provides critical working capital to fund programming and, most importantly, private fundraising.
- **What other Washington communities have enacted Cultural Access?—**Tacoma was the first to enact Cultural Access with "Tacoma Creates" after Pierce County opted not to enact the program county wide. Olympia was next with "Inspire Olympia." King County enacted Cultural Access, calling their program "Doors Open." Most recently, the city of Vancouver and San Juan county enacted their own Cultural Access program, the first for a rural community in the state.

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