The Vidda Foundation
Final Report of Harlem School of the Arts on grant period beginning 07/01/2025

NARRATIVE

1. **Major Objectives**
   List the major objectives of the grant as specified in your original grant proposal. Describe the progress toward accomplishing your objectives and note the number of persons affected by your activities (when appropriate).

As stated in our original proposal, the Harlem School of the Arts (HSA) sought general operating support from the Vidda Foundation to advance six interconnected institutional goals: (1) expanding accessibility and inclusivity across HSA programs; (2) sustaining the highest standards of cultural competence; (3) enhancing artistic excellence; (4) ensuring financial sustainability and growth; (5) upgrading facilities and technology infrastructure; and (6) expanding community and alumni engagement while strengthening HSA's visibility.

The Vidda Foundation's $10,000 grant, awarded in November 2025, supported these goals across the full breadth of HSA's core programming during the grant period. FY2025–26 was a year of substantial growth in reach: HSA served over 2,000 youth ages 4–24 and reached more than 12,000 community members, an increase from approximately 1,500 students and 10,000+ community members the prior year.

Progress toward each objective was concrete and measurable:

- Accessibility/inclusivity: 100% of Youth Arts Enrichment Program students (541 enrolled) received financial aid, scholarships, or attended tuition-free.
- Artistic excellence: PREP enrollment grew to 115 students, with 17 graduating seniors achieving 100% college/conservatory acceptance and awarded over $750,000 in scholarships and financial aid.
- Sustainability and growth: HSA's Development team closed FY26 having exceeded its overall revenue goal (102.3% of a $3,248,805 target. HSA invested in a strong Development and Marketing/Communication staff, adding a Chief Development Officer, a Chief Marketing and Communication Officer, a Marketing Manager, and a dedicated Development and Marketing Associate to build long-term fundraising

capacity and collaboration between the Marketing and Development departments.
- Facilities/technology: HSA continued a multi-year effort to strengthen data and enrollment systems (see Outcomes, below).
- Community/alumni engagement and visibility: HSA launched its first tracked, multi-channel marketing program (email, paid and organic social, website analytics), establishing FY26 as a baseline year for measurable outreach performance. We also launched our Alumni portal through Graduway, giving HSA's growing alumni network a dedicated platform to reconnect with the school, engage in mentorship, and access career and networking opportunities, and join an HSA Alumni Giving Society.

2. **Outcomes**

What outcomes have been achieved over the grant term? Was it necessary to make any modifications to the program? Are you on schedule? If the grant did not achieve some of the objectives above, please explain.

HSA met or exceeded its objectives for the grant period and, in several areas, exceeded internal targets set at the start of the year.

Enrollment & program outcomes:
- PREP: 115 students enrolled (up from 100 the prior year); 17 seniors graduated in June 2026 (up from 15), with 100% accepted to colleges, universities, conservatories, or professional companies, earning over $750,000 in combined scholarships and financial aid.
- Youth Arts Enrichment Program: held steady at 541 students; financial aid/tuition-free access reached 100% (up from 99% the prior year).
- Full-year cumulative enrollment (per HSA's June 2026 Board Report) rose from 683 to 775—a 13.5% increase—with associated tuition revenue growing from $748,584 to $801,982.
- Summer camp enrollment declined for two consecutive years (305 → 265 → 226, FY24–FY25) before rebounding. As of the May 30, 2026 measurement point for the following summer, enrollment had already reached 333 campers—44% above the prior year's final total of 226. This provided an early indication that the recent operational improvements

(described below) were beginning to take effect.

New program launches: The Career Pathways to the Creative Economy Initiative launched fully during this period, serving youth ages 16–24 with professional development, financial literacy, and internships. HSA also launched Culture + Care, a new creative aging initiative in partnership with Lifetime Arts, the Jackie Robinson Senior Center, and the West Harlem Older Adult Alliance.
Operational modifications: No reductions to planned programming were required. HSA did make several significant staff modifications this grant period

- A New Chief Operations Officer
- A new Director of Student Services, Student Services Coordinator, and Student Services Manager were hired in August 2025
- HSA launched electronic sign-in/attendance systems, redesigned its registration platform, completed a full student-database cleanup (eliminating duplicate records), and introduced HSA's first comprehensive family enrollment packets.
- For 2026–27, HSA is returning to a semester-based registration model (from an annual model) to increase flexibility and affordability for families and support continued enrollment growth.

HSA remained on schedule throughout the grant period. All original objectives were substantively achieved or are actively in progress heading into FY2027.

3. **Evaluation & Learning**
Briefly summarize the evaluation process for the effectiveness of the grant. What have you learned from your own evaluation? Describe any lessons you learned in carrying out the objectives (improved processes, new strategies, unexpected obstacles or results, etc.)

HSA evaluates program effectiveness through a combination of enrollment and retention data, family/student feedback, faculty assessment, and hard outcome measures, most visibly PREP's college acceptance and scholarship totals, tracked annually and reported publicly.

This period marked a genuine evaluation turning point for HSA at the institutional level. Marketing and communications had no systematic measurement infrastructure

prior to November 2025; FY26 represents the organization's first full operating period under active tracking across email, paid social, organic social, and website analytics. That baseline data is already generating actionable learning: for example, HSA's email open rate (57%) runs 21 points above the nonprofit industry average, but click-through remains low (0.7%), pointing to a conversion, not an attention, problem to solve in FY27. Similarly, HSA identified that no donation or enrollment conversion events are currently configured in its analytics platform, meaning marketing spend cannot yet be connected to enrollment or fundraising outcomes in an automated way; closing this gap has been named a top FY27 technical priority.

On the enrollment operations side, HSA's most important lesson from this period was diagnostic: several process gaps (delayed tuition collection, weak attendance/billing reconciliation, and fragmented family communication) were suppressing both revenue capture and family experience even as enrollment demand was strong. Correcting these process issues, rather than needing to invest further in outreach, has driven this year's registration recovery (the 44% early rebound in summer registrations, noted above).

A further lesson, articulated directly by HSA's President & CEO, was organizational: FY2025 was a year of financial stabilization, and FY2026 was explicitly framed internally as "about rebuilding confidence", rebuilding core administrative infrastructure, enrollment systems, and fundraising capacity after a prior period of organizational restructuring. HSA enters FY2027, describing its priorities as "disciplined growth" built on the systems and data practices established this year, rather than growth pursued without that foundation

4. **Notable Accomplishments**
What do you consider your most notable accomplishments during the past year?

HSA's most notable accomplishments this period spanned artistic achievement, institutional visibility, and organizational capacity-building:

- **Guggenheim Museum performance series**: HSA students delivered 14 performances over a several-month-long residency designed to enhance Rashid Johnson's exhibition/installation *A Poem for Deep Thinkers*.
- **Radio City Rockettes partnership**: HSA's Teen Precision Dance company

opened for the Rockettes at Radio City's Annual Holiday Spectacular for the fourth consecutive year.

- **Curtains Up: HSA Celebrates Broadway (2026 Gala)**: One of HSA's most successful benefit galas to date, with 60+ students performing, and exceeding the gala's own fundraising goal by 141%.
- **In the Heights**: A full student production (cast ages 9–18) of the groundbreaking musical by Lin Manuel Miranda. The opening performance was attended by Jeffrey Seller, the producer of "Rent," "Hamilton," and "In the Heights." After the performance, Seller participated in a Q&A session with the student performers and the audience.
- **Drama Department's first-ever Shakespeare Festival**,
- **Dizzy Gillespie Jazz Academy growth**: The Academy's annual funding grew by 50%+ with combined support from the Natalie Cole Foundation, Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, and Herb Alpert Foundation, and the Louis Armstrong Education Foundation sustaining every Academy program tuition-free.
- **Overall institutional growth**: reach expanded from roughly 1,500 to over 2,000 youth served and from 10,000+ to 12,000+ community members year-over-year.

5. **Challenges & Obstacles**

What were the greatest challenges/obstacles you faced while developing and implementing the program(s)?

HSA's greatest challenges this period were operational and capacity-related rather than programmatic: the core arts programming this grant supported was delivered fully and on schedule.

- Development staffing capacity: For much of FY26, HSA's development function operated with ⅓ of a sustainable staffing capacity, constraining donor acquisition, retention, cultivation, and stewardship. The appointment of a Chief Development Officer, a Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, a Marketing Manager, and a Development Associate has addressed this obstacle.
- Data systems and Technology Infrastructure:: Outdated and fragmented data systems across departments created data reporting and aggregation inefficiencies,

a vulnerability HSA is actively addressing by launching an aggressive campaign to secure capital investments to upgrade hardware and software systems. We have already researched and chosen and integrated system replacements and made significant progress toward our goal

- Enrollment and billing infrastructure: Prior to this year's operational overhaul, inconsistent attendance tracking, delayed tuition capture at the point of registration, and accumulating delinquent balances constrained both revenue collection and the family enrollment experience. HSA rebuilt its registration process to address this, including pioneering an interactive course catalogue for parents to browse course listings more easily and clear, step-by-step guides on our website to support parents in the financial aid and registration processes.
- Funding environment: More broadly, HSA continues to operate in a funding environment marked by inconsistent federal arts funding and rising competition for private philanthropic support, which has heightened the importance of institutionalizing donor relationships and diversifying revenue streams.

None of these challenges affected program delivery to the students this grant served; they represent organizational infrastructure HSA is actively building to support continued growth.

6. **Partnerships**

What other organizations/coalitions have you worked with to achieve these goals?

HSA deepened and expanded partnerships across a wide range of cultural, educational, and community institutions this period, including:

- **Cultural, Arts, and Community Institutions and Organizations:** the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Central Park Conservancy, the Jazz Power Initiative ,The Apollo, Jazz at Lincoln Center, the Juilliard School, the Harlem Arts Alliance, the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, Harlem Chamber Players, Harlem Opera Theater,
- **New/expanded school and community partnerships**: MS 322, PS 92, PS 129, Harlem Academy, Gramercy Arts High School, Graham Windham Harlem Beacon Community Center, New York French Academy Charter School, the New York City Department of Education Audition Bootcamp, Neighborhood Charter School, PS 076 A. Philip Randolph, PS 92 Mary McLeod Bethune, YWHA/Columbia Secondary School, MS 371/Fordham Lincoln Center Campus

- **New initiative partnerships**: Lifetime Arts, the Jackie Robinson Senior Center, and the West Harlem Older Adult Alliance
- **Corporate Partnerships:** JLL, Inc., Seward & Kissel, LLP, The New York Times, Morgan Stanley, Tradeweb, Neuberger Berman, NBC/Universal Music, Madison Square Garden Entertainment Group

7. **Looking Ahead**
   What opportunities and challenges do you foresee for the near future?

HSA's President & CEO has framed FY2027 explicitly as a year of "disciplined growth, thoughtful innovation," building on FY2025's financial stabilization and FY2026's operational rebuilding. Specific priorities include:

- **Enrollment growth**: continuing the shift to a semester-based registration model, is expected to increase flexibility for families and support further enrollment growth, building on FY26's 13.5% year-over-year increase.
- **Revenue diversification**: growing donor-advised fund (DAF) giving, recurring/sustainer giving programs, and employer matching gift participation, and launching a Major Gifts Society.
- **Program expansion**: growing the Career Pathways to the Creative Economy Initiative beyond its first cohort, expanding the Lifetime Arts/Culture + Care Initiative for senior citizens past its summer 2026 pilot, and exploring new program offerings, including building an intergenerational Harlem School of the Arts Classical Music Ensemble.
- **Board development**: continued growth of the Board, and expansion of the Development Committee to include dedicated Gala and Annual Support Campaign ad-hoc committees.

8. **Financial**
   Please provide income and expense information to date for the program(s) funded by the grant. Describe any budget changes or financial adaptations.

The Vidda Foundation's $10,000 grant supported HSA's FY2025–26 general operating budget, which totaled $4,697,236 for the fiscal year (July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026), consistent with the budget figure provided in HSA's original proposal.

For institutional context on HSA's overall FY26 financial performance (not specific to the Vidda grant, which was unrestricted general support and not separately tracked by program): HSA's Development office reported total FY26 contributed revenue of $3,324,433 against a goal of $3,248,805 (102.3% of goal), including Foundation & Corporate giving totaling $1,421,000 (87.5% of goal); Government funding: $241,110 (142.3% of goal); Individual giving: $272,292 (60.5% of goal); Gala/fundraising net revenue: $916,941 ($1,341,807 gross).

9. **Suggestions**

Do you have suggestions for ways to improve the Vidda Foundation's grant, proposal, and evaluation processes? Feel free to answer in the space provided below. Alternatively, these may be submitted anonymously by mail to:

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OPTIONAL ATTACHMENTS

1. Updated HSA Board List & Affiliations
2. Updated HSA Key Staff List
3. HSA Most Recent Audited Financials
4. HSA FY27 Final, Board-Approved Budget
5. Supplemental Materials: Program Photos, Videos, links to Press
6. HSA 2025-2026 Impact Report
7. HSA Biweekly Newsletters