

Overview of the San Francisco Arts Commission

August 27, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting



Presentation Overview & Agenda

- Introductions & Agency Overview (Ralph Remington)
 - Mission & Values
 - Commission
 - Staff & Organizational Structure
- SFAC Programs (Ebon Glenn)
 - Community Investments (Denise Pate)
 - Grantmaking
 - Cultural Centers
 - Art Vendor Program
 - Galleries (Jackie Im)
 - Main Gallery
 - Art at City Hall
 - Artists in Residence Programs
 - Public Art (Mary Chou)
 - Public Art Projects
 - Civic Art Collection & Shaping Legacy
 - Civic Design Review (Sarah Hollenbeck)
- Budget Overview (Sarah Hollenbeck)
- Q&A



Ralph Remington
Director of
Cultural Affairs



Sarah Hollenbeck
Deputy Director of
Finance & Administration



Ebon Glenn
Deputy Director of
Programs



Veronica Limcaco
Acting Chief of Staff



Coma Te
Director of
Communications



Denise Pate
Director of
Community Investments



Jackie Im
Acting Director of Galleries
& Public Programs



Mary Chou
Civic Art Collection and
Public Art Program Director



Mission & Vision

Mission:

Established by charter in 1932, the San Francisco Arts Commission is the City agency that champions the arts as essential to daily life by investing in a vibrant arts community, enlivening the urban environment and shaping innovative cultural policy.

Vision:

The San Francisco Arts Commission envisions a San Francisco where the transformative power of art is critical to strengthening neighborhoods, building infrastructure and fostering positive social change.

We believe the arts create inspiring personal experiences, illuminate the human condition and offer meaningful ways to engage with each other and the world around us.

We imagine a vibrant San Francisco where creativity, prosperity and progress go hand in hand.

We advance artists' ideas to improve the quality of life for everyone through a united cultural sector whose contributions are vital and valued.



Point of Infinity: Surface of Revolution with Constant Negative Curvature by Hiroshi Sugimoto, 2023, Yerba Buena Island. Image courtesy of Sugimoto Studio



Arts Commission

15 Commissioners, appointed by the Mayor to serve 4-year terms

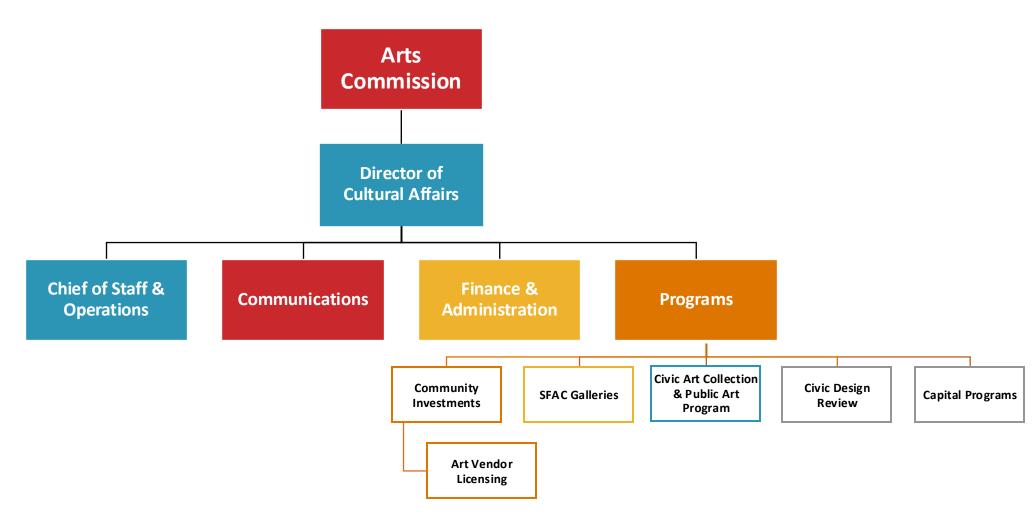
Chuck Collins, President
Janine Shiota, Vice President*
JD Beltran
J. Riccardo Benavides
Seth Brenzel
Patrick Carney*
Suzanne Ferras
Mahsa Hakimi*
Yiying Lu*
Nabiel Musleh
Jessica Rothschild
Marcus Anthony Shelby
Debra Walker
Commissioner 14 - Vacant Seat
Commissioner 15 - Vacant Seat

Lydia So, Ex Officio, Planning Commission

*Term Expiring Soon







SFAC Programs









Community Investments

SFAC Galleries

Public Art & Civic Art Collection

Civic Design Review

- Grantmaking, Cultural Centers, and Art Vendor Licensing
- Main Gallery and City Hall Exhibitions, Tours, Public Programs and Artist in Residency

- 2% for Public Art and Public Art Trust, Care and Maintenance of the Civic Art Collection, Temporary Art, and Mellon Grant funded Shaping Legacy work to crucially examine the City's monuments & memorials
- Charter mandated review of civic capital improvement projects in the public realm



Our Work - Putting the Art in City Partnerships:









































San Francisco























Community Investments



APICC United States of Asia America festival at Kapwa Gardens. Photo by Marie Fontejon

The Community Investments program supports San Francisco artists, arts organizations, and communities with an equity lens through grants, technical assistance and capacity building, economic development, arts education initiatives and community-based Cultural Centers.

Established in 1993 through the landmark Cultural Equity Endowment legislation.

In FY 25-26, more than \$7.5 million in grant funding has been awarded to 98 individual artists and 47 arts nonprofit organizations, and nearly \$3 million in funding support has been awarded to support the cultural centers, with nearly half of San Francisco Artist (SFA) grant awardees being first-time grant recipients.

Grantmaking Program



2025 Artistic Legacy Grantee, Mestra Cigarra

Guidelines and Applications typically released in the fall and awarded by the following spring, through a public, open, and transparent community engagement and review process.

Available Grant Categories:

- Artistic Legacy Grant (up to \$75,000 to recognize an artistic director who has served an organization consistently for 25+ years, over a 2-year period)
- Arts Impact Endowment (up to \$50,000 for sustaining ongoing initiatives, resilience and growth, and new creative opportunities)
- Cultural Equity Grants (up to \$100,000 to organizations for core operating support, over a 2-year period)
- San Francisco Artists (up to \$30,000 to SF-based artists to create work across all genres, over an 18-month period)
- Special Project Grants (various amounts for citywide programs as well as for services and resources in respective Board of Supervisor districts for arts focused work)

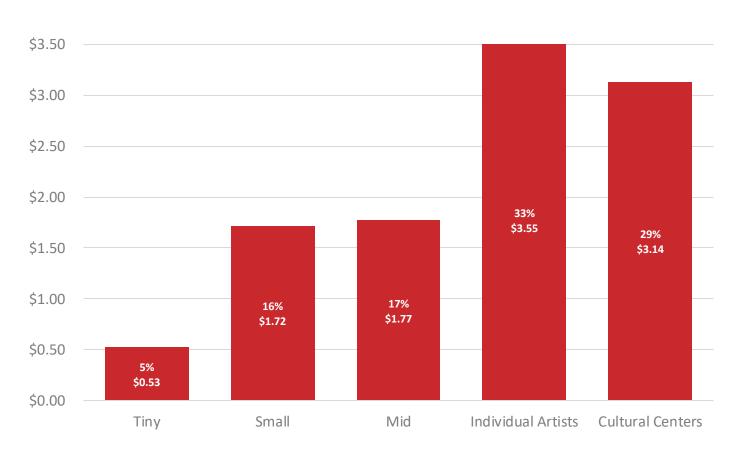
Types of Organizations SFAC funds:

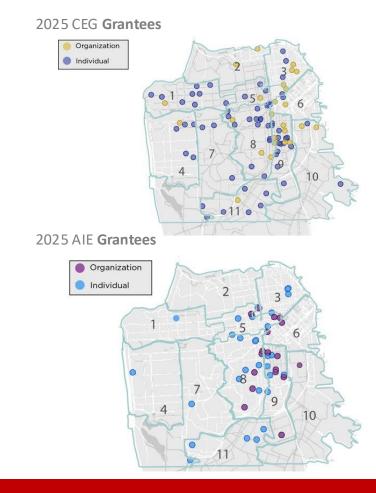
- Tiny: >\$100k
- Small: \$100,000 \$500,000
 Mid-size: \$500,000 \$2.5M



Grantmaking Program

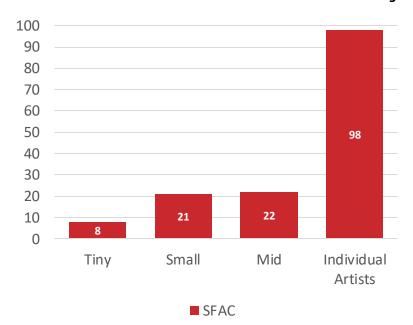
Total Grants Amounts Awarded by SFAC to Artists, Arts Organizations, and Cultural Centers - FY2025-2026





Grantmaking Program SFAC Compared To GFTA

Total Number of Grants Awarded by Organization Size - FY2025

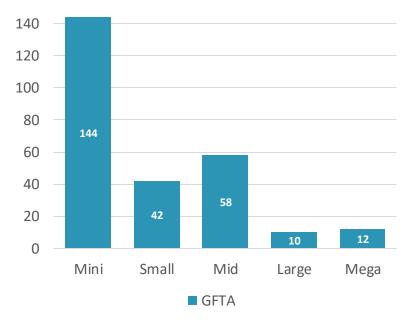


Funding Breakdown of SFAC Supported Organizations:

• Tiny: <\$100k

Small: \$100,000 - \$500,000

Mid: \$500,000 - \$2.5M



Funding Breakdown of GFTA Supported Organizations:

Mini: <\$500k

• Small: \$500,000 - \$1M

• Mid: \$1M - \$5M

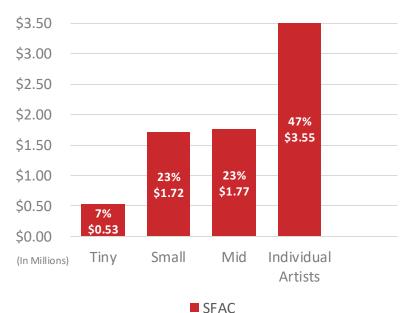
Large: \$5M-15M

• Mega: >\$15M



Grantmaking Program SFAC Compared To GFTA

Total Competitive Grants Awarded to Artists and Arts Organizations by Size - FY2025



Funding Breakdown of SFAC Supported Organizations:

Tiny: <\$100k

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Cultural Centers

Community-based Cultural Centers provide accessible arts opportunities for all San Franciscans, comprised of **four City-owned facilities** and **three virtual* Cultural Centers** that are operated by nonprofit arts organizations and provide cultural and arts programing. The center facilities are available for rent and offer free or low-cost performances, gallery exhibitions, and classes.



Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts Building















Art Vendor Program



Art Vendor Program Licensee, Courtesy of SFAC

Formally known as the "Street Artists Program," the San Francisco Art Vendor program was established in 1972 and permits artists to sell their handmade items on City streets in designated areas.

Nearly 9,000 licenses issued since the program's inception. In FY23-24, 210 art vendor licenses were issued free of charge for applicants.

License applications are reviewed and approved quarterly by a five-member Mayoral appointed Advisory Committee of Street Artists & Crafts Examiners oversight body.

SFAC Galleries







A dynamic contemporary art program that has shown more than 4,400 local, national and international artists in over 650 exhibitions at two unique Civic Center locations since 1970: Main Gallery in the War Memorial Veterans Building and in City Hall.

- Collaborating with artists, curators, scholars, galleries, museums and community organizations
- Commissioning new works

Artist in Residence program in partnership with City departments and at locations such as City Hall, SF Planning, SF Public Library, Recreation and Parks Department at India Basin Waterfront Park, COVID Command Center, and upcoming partnership at Department of the Environment.

Clockwise from top left: *Juanita! 30 Years of MORE!*; opening reception of Art With Elders at City Hall; opening performance at *Carlos Villa: Roots and Reinvention*



SFAC Galleries - Public Programs









Galleries' public programs include receptions, artist talks, performances, panel discussions, readings, workshops, film screenings, off-site events, tours, and many more.

SFAC Galleries produces 2 – 3 programs per exhibitions, as well as public facing programs for the Artist in Residence Program.

Clockwise from top left: opening procession by Rachel Lastimosa for Carlos Villa: Roots and Reinvention; Juana Alicia: Dreaming in Color symposium at Brava Theater; closing reception and performance by Leyya Mona Tawil for When Unearthed Sights Collide; and fresco workshop led by Daniela Rivera for Praxis of Local Knowledge.



SFAC Galleries - Artist in Residence Program









Launched in 2015, the <u>Artist in Residence (AIR) program</u> builds partnerships with City Departments in order to provide unique residency opportunities that result in strengthening the value of artists participating in and responding to the advancement of civic dialogue. AIR opportunities are only open to artists residing in the Bay Area.







CURRENT ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE - REC AIR 2024 (above, left to right)
Afatasi The Artist (India Basin Waterfront Parks)
Rhiannon Evans MacFadyen, Curator (India Basin Waterfront Parks)
Conni McKenzie (India Basin Waterfront Parks)

Past projects, clockwise from top left: Preethi Ramaprasad (SFPL 2023); Mansur Nurullah (SF Planning, 2020); Jeremy Fish (City Hall 2015); Christopher Burch (SFPL 2023)



SFAC Galleries - Recent and Upcoming Exhibitions









Recently closed: *Metaphors of Recent Times* at City Hall and *Service Tension* in the **SFAC Main Gallery**, War Memorial Veterans Building

Upcoming: *To Bright Disturbances* in the SFAC Main Gallery and at City Hall, *Nowhere in Particular,* a collaboration with the SFMTA Photo Archive



Public Art & Civic Art Collection







SFAC's Public Art program enhances the beauty of San Francisco's public buildings and spaces.

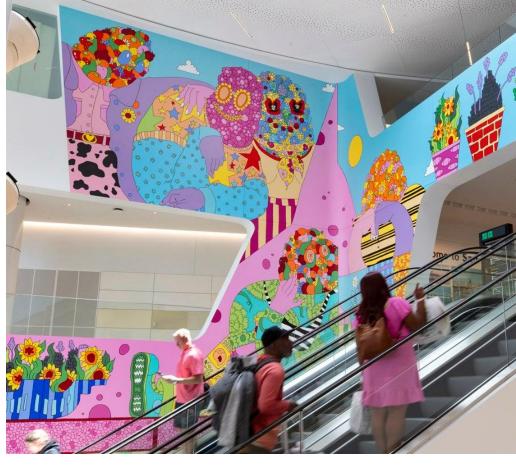
Left (top to bottom): **Promissory Notes** by Mildred Howard and **Building a Better Bayview** by Phillip Hua- Southeast Community Center. Right **Portrait of a Phenomenal Woman** - San Francisco Main Library. (Images by Ethan Kaplan Photography and Fred Rowe Foto.)



Public Art & Civic Art Collection - 2 Percent for Art







Over 60 active public art projects that enliven the city with art installations.

Left (top to bottom): *Arrival* by Tomie Arai and *Lucy in the Sky* by Erwin Redl – Central Subway Chinatown Rose Pak Station and Union Square/Market Street Station. Right: *The Only Blue is the Sky* by Craig Calderwood – San Franciso Airport. (Images by Ethan Kaplan Photography)



Public Art & Civic Art Collection - Collections









SAN FRANCISCO MONUMENTS & MEMORIALS



Over **4,000** pieces of art in the Civic Art Collection, which includes more than **100 monuments & memorials** located throughout the city.

Shaping Legacy, 3year funded Mellon Grant

Left (top to bottom): Coit Tower Murals and The Whales by Robert Howard – Student Success Center, City College of San Francisco, Ocean Campus. Right: Removal of Christopher Columbus by Vittorio Di Colbertaldo – Coit Tower. (Left bottom image courtesy of Anne Schnoebelen)



Public Art Trust and Temporary Projects





Public Art Trust permanent and temporary projects – funded by 1% for art requirement in C3 district

Art on Market Street Program – funded by MTA since 1992

StreetSmARTS Mural Program – partnership with Public Works





Left: *Aurum* by HYBYCOZO — Mint Plaza. Right top: *As Sounds Turn to Noise* by Thomas J Price on Embarcadero by Ferry Building. Bottom middle: *Market Street Mysteries*, by Kate Rhoades for Art on Market Street Poster Series. Bottom right: StreetSmarts mural by Nathan Phelps at 1285 Sutter. (Images on left and top right by Ethan Kaplan Photography.)



Current and Upcoming Projects









Chinatown Registry for new projects at Portsmouth Square, Chinatown Public Health Center, Him Mark Lai Library

Canopy of Sky by Ned Kahn for Cityside Park, Treasure Island

Redevelopment of Terminal 3 West at San Francisco International Airport

5 Temporary Public Art Projects for Shaping Legacy



Civic Design Review (CDR)

- Civic Design Review mandate Charter Sec. 5.103:
 - Approve "the design of all public structures, any private structure which extends over or upon any public property, and any yards, courts, setbacks or usable open spaces which are an integral part of any such structure"
 - Also governed by Administrative Code Sec, 2A.150
- Civic Design Review Committee composed of five Arts Commissioners
 - 2 architects, 1 landscape architect, 2 design professionals/lay people
- Up to four-phase review process, based on project type and budget:
 - Conceptual Presentation
 - Phase 1 Schematic Design
 - Phase 2 Design Development
 - Phase 3 Construction Documents
- Self-supporting, fee-based program
 - CDR Base Fee currently \$17,900
 - Lower fees for smaller projects



Rendering of Bayview Opera House



Rendering of Chinatown Public Health Center



Budget Overview

Funding for SFAC's programs comes from three primary sources:

- Hotel Tax (Proposition E)
- Art Enrichment Ordinance
- General Fund

General Fund support for SFAC operations has been reduced by 75% since FY23, dropping from \$8M to less than \$2M

Hotel Tax recovery has been sluggish, with FY26 revenue budgeted lower than FY24 or FY25

Art Enrichment funding varies from year to year, has averaged approximately \$4M over the last three fiscal years



Photo courtesy of Jocelyn Reyes. Photo by Maximillian Tortoriello

Budget Overview - Revenues

ART Revenues by Funding Source (in Millions)				
	FY25	FY26	FY27	
Hotel Tax (Prop E Annual Revenue)	14.20	13.09	13.70	
General Fund [1]	6.41	6.29	6.33	
Interdepartmental Services	1.85	1.13	1.14	
Shaping Legacy (Mellon Grant)	1.50	-	-	
Other	3.04	2.51	2.00	
Total Operating Budget	27.00	23.02	23.17	
Cultural Centers and Collections - Capital	2.91	1.53	1.02	
Total Capital Budget	2.91	1.53	1.02	
Total Budget - (Operating + Capital)	29.91	24.55	24.19	

^[1]Includes \$4.4M-\$4.6M of funding for SF Symphony per Charter Section 16.106



Budget Overview - Expenditures

ART Expenditures by Program (in Millions) [1]				
	FY25	FY26	FY27	
Community Investments	16.79	14.36	14.46	
Symphony Charter Allocation [1]	4.42	4.52	4.60	
Administration	2.19	1.87	1.95	
Shaping Legacy (Mellon Grant)	1.50	-	-	
Public Art & Civic Collection [2]	0.85	0.98	1.01	
Municipal Galleries	0.94	0.93	0.79	
Other	0.31	0.36	0.36	
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^[1] Per Charter Section 16.106



^[2] Excludes Art Enrichment funds budgeted in other departments, \$4M/year average since FY23

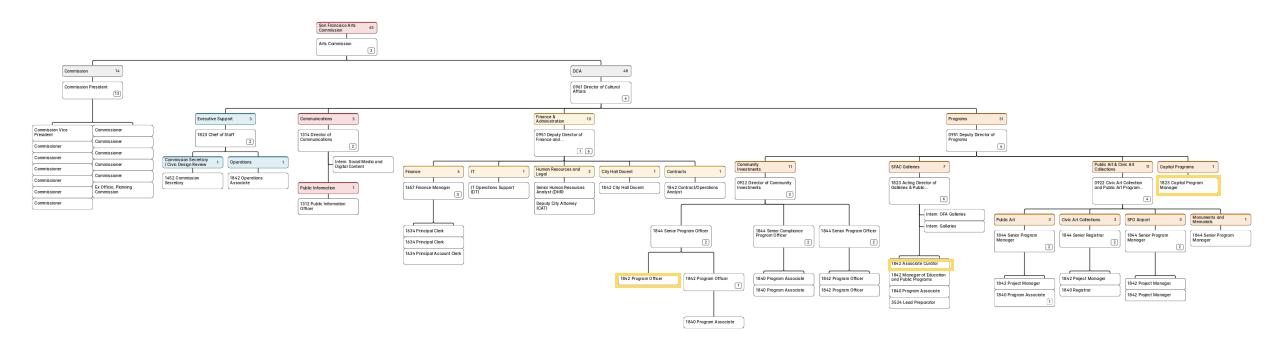
THANK YOU!

Questions?



Answering the Call, Monica Magtoto, 2019

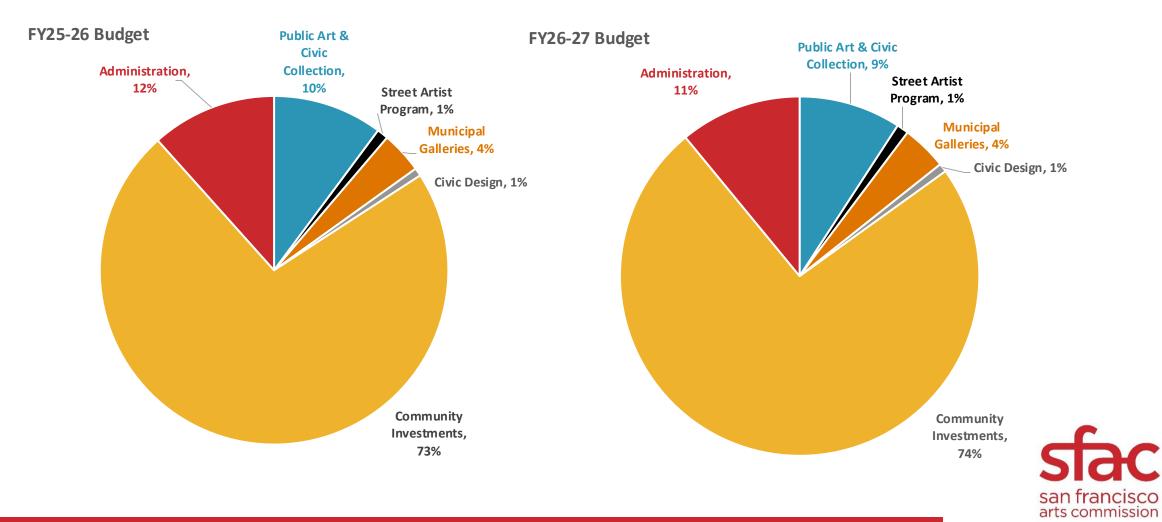
Sac san francisco Detailed Organizational Chart



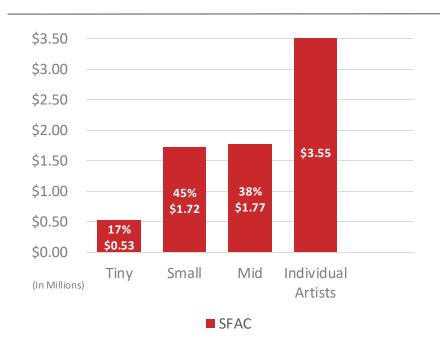
Total FTE: 43

Vacant Positions: 3

Budgeted Amounts Per Work Area



Grantmaking Program SFAC vs GFTA

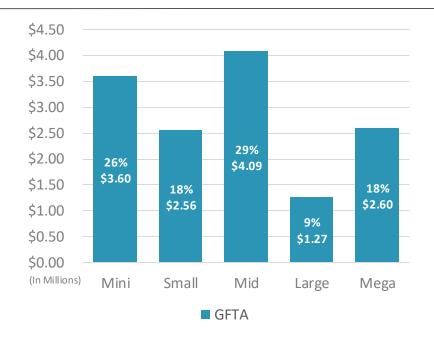


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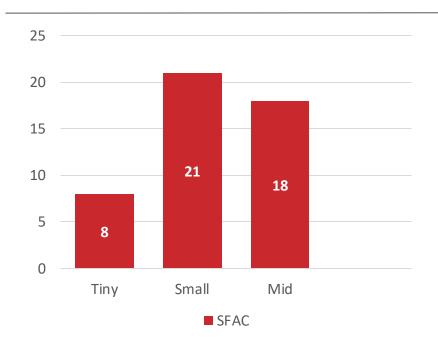
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