

Joint Informational Hearing

Joint Committee on the Arts &
Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports and Tourism

State of the Arts:

How Current Federal Policies Are Impacting Arts, Culture and the Humanities in California

May 14, 2025 – 9:00 am - Swing Space, Room 2100, Sacramento

AGENDA

Opening Remarks

- **Senator Ben Allen**, Chair, Joint Committee on the Arts
- **Assemblymember Christopher M. Ward**, Chair, Assembly Arts, Entertainment, Sports and Tourism
- and other members as present

Overview and Update on the Status of the Arts in the United States

- **Erin Harkey**, CEO, Americans for the Arts
- **Joely Fisher**, National Secretary-Treasurer & Co-Chair National Government Affairs and Public Policy Committee, SAG-AFTRA

Panel 1: Federal Arts Agencies: The Relationship with California Agencies

- **Rick Noguchi**, Executive Director, California Humanities
- **Greg Lucas**, California State Librarian, California State Library
- **Danielle Brazell**, Executive Director, California Arts Council

Panel 2: Community Voices/Policy Impacts

- **Leslie A. Ito**, Executive Director, Armory Center for the Arts
- **Jacob Kornbluth**, Documentary Screenwriter & Director, Jacob Kornbluth Productions
- **Edward Tepporn**, Executive Director, Angel Island Immigration Station
- **Carlos Cristiani**, Director, Corporate & Government Affairs, Fleet Science Center
- **Ann Burroughs**, President & CEO, Japanese American National Museum

Panel 3: Valuing and Elevating the Arts

- **Adam J. Fowler**, Founding Partner, CVL Economics
- **Jennifer Caballero**, Executive Director, California Association of Museums
- **Julie Baker**, CEO, Californians for the Arts

Public Comment

Close

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WITNESS BIOGRAPHIES

OVERVIEW AND UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES



Erin Harkey
CEO, Americans for the Arts

Erin Harkey has over 20+ years of experience helping individuals and communities succeed through the arts.

Erin was the Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). She served the City of Chicago as Projects Administrator, then Deputy Commissioner for Programming and First Deputy Commissioner.

In her dual role as Senior Policy Advisor for Arts in Culture in the Mayor's Office, she advised on cultural policy and arts strategy across all City departments and agencies.

She previously managed public art programs at the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and the Arts Council for Long Beach.

Erin holds two master's degrees in Public Art Administration and Urban Planning from the University of Southern California (USC), and a bachelor's degree in Marketing from Howard University



Joely Fisher

National Secretary-Treasurer & Co-Chair National Government Affairs and Public Policy Committee, SAG-AFTRA

Joely Fisher was elected SAG-AFTRA Secretary-Treasurer in 2021 and re-elected in 2023. The daughter of former Screen Actors Guild Secretary-Treasurer Connie Stevens, Fisher continues her mother's legacy as a performer and in participating as a union leader, also serving as Co-Chair of the SAG-AFTRA National Government Affairs and Public Policy Committee. As Secretary-Treasurer, Fisher took the leading role in acquiring SAG-AFTRA's future headquarters in North Hollywood, California, a fiscally responsible move that will ultimately save the union millions. She also serves on SAG-AFTRA's TV/Theatrical Negotiating Committee, participating in important negotiations that impact the union's nearly 160,000 members.

Born in Burbank, California, to entertainers Connie Stevens and Eddie Fisher, Fisher was named Miss Golden Globe at the 1992 Golden Globe awards and would go on to be a triple threat in television, musical theater and motion pictures. After her Broadway debut as Rizzo in *Grease*, she made a "sensational and sexy" turn as Sally Bowles in Sam Mendes and Rob Marshall's critically acclaimed Broadway revival of *Cabaret*, which earned her rave reviews.

However, it was her five seasons as the monstrously ambitious and seductive Hollywood executive Paige Clark on the groundbreaking ABC show *Ellen*, that introduced her to television audiences around the world and earned her a Golden Globe nomination. She next starred opposite John Goodman in FOX's series *Normal, Ohio*, playing the hilariously fascinating combo of a young caring mother who just happened to be a "bit of a slut." She also spent two seasons starring in her own series, *Wild Card*, for Lifetime.

In 2005, Fisher joined the cast of the hit television series *Desperate Housewives* as Felicity Huffman's tough and complex boss, Nina Fletcher. She then returned to television opposite Brad Garrett for four seasons in FOX's *Till Death*, where their incredible chemistry kept audiences rolling with laughter. She also appeared in a recurring role on ABC's *Last Man Standing*, opposite Hector Elizondo.

Fisher's film credits have placed her opposite some of the finest actors in film, such as Jim Carrey in *The Mask*; Steve Martin in *Mixed Nuts*; and Nick Nolte in *I'll Do Anything*.

Her crowning achievement to date was starring with Matthew Broderick in the smash-hit Disney film, *Inspector Gadget*. She is a stand out in such indie films as *Perfect Prey*, *Slingshot*, *Killing Winston Jones* and *Search Engines*. Recently, she's been seen in *Tribes of Palos Verdes*, opposite Jennifer Garner, as well as *The Disappointments Room* and *By the Rivers of Babylon*. Her television movies include a starring role in NBC's *Thirst*, Showtime's *Jitters*, ABC's *Seduction in a Small Town* and Hallmark's *Cupid*.

Though the focus of her career seems to be acting, the underlying accompaniment throughout has been her love of singing and performing. She tells the tale of sleeping in the orchestra pit during one of mother Connie Stevens' performances, and by 12, she was singing all over the world, appearing in a USO tour with Bob Hope during the Persian Gulf War, and performing for President and Mrs. George H. W. Bush at the Kennedy Center. Joely has written, directed and performed in multiple one-woman shows, and was featured at a young age on the Tony awards, the Academy Awards.

In recent years, Fisher has embarked on a directing career in television and short films. Her black comedy short, *Sunset Fever*, is a commentary on reality television and the Hollywood family. Her first music video, "Sonte" by European artist MIRUD, has over a million views and landed her on a short list of women called upon to direct multi-camera television for the Disney Channel. This year, she will make her feature directorial debut with *Oliver Storm*, a family adventure film. In addition, she has directed socially conscious PSA campaigns for The International Fund for Animal Welfare and WelcomeUS, Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg's organization for immigrant heritage. She hopes to continue on this path and give the world delicious and compelling stories and lead the pack of women who make change in the world.

In her book *Growing Up Fisher*, she writes in gut-wrenching detail how the sudden loss of her sister, Carrie Fisher, inspired her creativity and gave her the strength to write. Fisher has been married for more than two decades to cinematographer and director Christopher Duddy. Together they have five children: Cameron, Collin, and daughters Skylar Grace, True Harlow and Olivia Luna.

PANEL 1: FEDERAL ARTS AGENCIES: THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CALIFORNIA AGENCIES



Rick Noguchi
Executive Director, California Humanities

Rick joined California Humanities as its President and CEO in 2023. Previously, Rick served as the Chief Operating Officer at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles, where he led the strategic direction of the museum and oversaw programs and external relations. Previous positions in philanthropy include the James Irvine Foundation and the California Community Foundation.

Rick earned a Masters of Fine Arts degree from Arizona State University and a Masters of Business Administration from Pepperdine University.

He serves on the board of the California Association of Museums, and he is a member of the Los Angeles Leadership team for Arizona State University. He also serves as a Board of Governor for the Japanese American National Museum.

Noguchi is a writer with two collections of poetry, *The Ocean Inside Kenji Takezo*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996, and *The Wave He Caught*, Pearl Editions, 1995, and as well as a children's book *Flowers from Mariko*, Lee & Low Publishing, 2001.

He has been an avid surfer since he was 12 years old.



Greg Lucas
California State Librarian, California State Library

Greg Lucas was appointed California's 25th State Librarian by Governor Jerry Brown on March 25, 2014. Prior to his appointment, Greg was the Capitol Bureau Chief for the San Francisco Chronicle where he covered politics and policy at the State Capitol for nearly 20 years.

During Greg's tenure as State Librarian, the State Library's priorities have been to improve reading skills throughout the state, put library cards into the hands of every school kid and provide all Californians the information they need – no matter what community they live in. The State Library invests \$10 million annually in local libraries to help them develop more innovative and efficient ways to serve their communities.

Since 2015, the State Library has improved access for millions of Californians by helping connect more than 1,000 of the state's 1,130 libraries to a high-speed Internet network that links universities, colleges, schools, and libraries around the world. Greg holds a Master's in Library and Information Science from California State University San Jose, a Master's in Professional Writing from the University of Southern California, and a degree in communications from Stanford University.



Danielle Brazell
Executive Director, California Arts Council

Danielle Brazell has had a distinguished career spanning over thirty years, marked by her transformative impact on public sector arts management and arts advocacy. In her current role as Executive Director of the California Arts Council, Brazell continues to advance support systems for creativity and promote the arts as vital to societal well-being. Her efforts are focused on fostering artistic innovation and ensuring that the arts remain a vibrant and integral part of civic and cultural life. Through her leadership, Danielle demonstrates the essential value of artists in shaping a more inclusive and culturally enriched society.

As the former General Manager of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA 2014-2021), Brazell played a pivotal role in expanding funding programs, developing new public arts initiatives, and championing equity and access in the arts. Her leadership resulted in a remarkable increase in the DCA's budget from \$13 million to \$22 million and the establishment of a \$150 million portfolio of capital projects and programming.

She was the founding Executive Director of Arts for LA (2006-2014), transforming the ad-hoc group of executive arts leaders into a new model for local arts and arts education advocacy. In addition, she served as the Artistic Director of Highways Performance Space and the Director of Special Projects for the Screen Actors Guild Foundation.

PANEL 2: COMMUNITY VOICES/POLICY IMPACTS



Leslie A. Ito
Executive Director, Armory Center for the Arts

Leslie A. Ito is Executive Director of the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena. Armory Center for the Arts is the region's leading independent institution for contemporary art exhibitions and community arts education. The Armory's mission is to nurture our community and its young people by creating, learning, and presenting art to advance equity and social justice, we envision joyful, healthy, and equitable communities shaped by imagination, creativity, and diverse voices. Leslie is highly regarded as one of the most skillful, entrepreneurial arts executives in the Los Angeles region with over 20 years of proven leadership and fundraising expertise to her credit. Ito's reputation for cultural "bridge-building" and advocacy underscores her deep commitment to arts equity and access for all people.

Prior to this position, she was the President & CEO of the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, one of the largest ethnic arts and cultural centers of its kind in the U.S. She has also held the position of Program Director for Arts and Health at the California Community Foundation, and Director of Grant Programs at the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. She has served as Executive Director of Visual Communications, the nation's premiere Asian American media arts organization, and as Program Associate in the Media, Arts Culture Division at the Ford Foundation in New York.

Ms. Ito currently served as a Community Trustee for the Durfee Foundation. She has also served on the Board of Directors for Arts for Healing & Justice Network, Little Tokyo Community Council, Americans for the Arts, TELIC Arts Exchange in Los Angeles' Chinatown, and Films By Youth Inside (FYI Films), inspiring incarcerated youth through filmmaking. She is also a co-founder of the LA Asian American and Pacific Islander Giving Circle.

In 2016, Leslie was awarded the prestigious Stanton Fellowship from the Durfee Foundation, focusing on how community-based, ethnic-specific organizations can reinvent themselves for a new generation in a changing social context and evolving cultural ecology. Japan's Ministry of

Foreign Affairs appointed her as a Japan House, Los Angeles Steering Committee member. Leslie was also part of the 2017 Japanese American Leadership Delegation through the U.S. Japan Council. In 2019, she received the Cultural Leadership Award from the Vincent Price Art Museum.

A native of Pasadena and a *Yonsei*, fourth-generation Japanese American, Ms. Ito attended Stanford University Graduate School of Business's Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders. She received a Master of Arts in Asian American Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from Mount Holyoke College.



Jacob Kornbluth

Documentary Screenwriter and Director, Jacob Kornbluth Productions

Jacob Kornbluth is an Emmy award-winning filmmaker with experience in Film, Television, and Theater. Jacob has directed five theatrically released feature films and over 200 shorts.

Jacob was awarded a Special Jury Prize for excellence in Filmmaking from the Sundance Film Festival for his feature documentary *Inequality For All*.

Jacob founded Inequality Media, with Robert Reich, which has been called a "light house" brand for economic storytelling and played a crucial role in framing an economic case for policies in ways everyone can understand. His short-form His short-form videos have been viewed over a billion times on social media.



Edward Tepporn
Executive Director, Angel Island Immigration Station

Edward Tepporn is the Executive Director of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, the primary nonprofit organization working in partnership with CA State Parks to preserve the buildings at the former US immigration station on Angel Island. Edward joined the AIISF team in November 2019. He has over 29 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. He previously served on staff at the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) for nearly 16 years, most recently as APIAHF's Executive Vice President.

During his time at APIAHF, he oversaw multi-million dollar national programs, functioned as chief strategy officer, served as key liaison to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation-funded national racial equity collaborative, and helped secure over \$32 million in funding.

Edward received a B.A. in Biology and Psychology from Washington University. He was also a Nelson Mandela Scholarship recipient in the M.S.W. program at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work. In 2019, Ed was awarded a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Award for Health Equity. He was also recognized as a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Fellow. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Western Museums Association.



Carlos Cristiani

Director, Corporate & Government Affairs, Fleet Science Center

Carlos Cristiani is the Director of Corporate and Government Affairs at the Fleet Science Center. Concurrently, he is the Legislative Analyst and Lobbyist for San Diego ART Matters, a regional arts and culture advocacy organization. He led Design Forward Alliance, a design and creative non-profit organization in San Diego as its Executive Director, advocating for human-centered design and design-driven innovation practices for community impact.

Carlos was born and raised in Mexico City and moved to San Diego, California to attend UCSD in 2002. He has served in several boards of directors in arts and culture organizations in San Diego such as Mingei International Museum, San Diego Art Institute, House of Mexico, and as Commissioner in the City of San Diego Arts and Culture Commission. He currently serves on the board of the VAPA Foundation (Visual and Performing Arts), an arts education nonprofit organization focused in San Diego Unified School District students, teachers and schools.



Ann Burroughs
President & CEO, Japanese American National Museum

Ann Burroughs is the President and CEO of the Japanese American National Museum. She is an internationally recognized leader in the field of human rights and social justice. She serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors of Amnesty International USA and was formerly Chair of Amnesty International's Global Assembly.

Her life-long commitment to racial and social justice was shaped by her experience as a young activist in her native South Africa where she was jailed as a political prisoner for her opposition to apartheid.

For over 25 years, she has worked with leaders, organizations, and networks in the US and abroad to promote diversity, racial justice and a rights-based culture. She has previously served as Executive Director of the Taproot Foundation and as the Executive Director of LA Works, and has worked as a consultant to the Omidyar Network, the Rockefeller Foundation and the government of South Africa.

PANEL 3: VALUING AND ELEVATING THE ARTS



Adam Fowler
Founding Partner, CVL Economics

Adam J. Fowler is an economist and founding partner at CVL Economics. His work focuses on the intersection of economic development and the creative economy.

Recent engagements include designing and implementing creative placemaking initiatives and developing strategies for supporting creative talent pipelines. Adam serves on the California Arts Council (CAC) Creative Economy Workgroup and the Entertainment Industry Foundation's (EIF) Careers Program Advisory Council, where he chairs the Data and Research Working Group. He is a member of the Entertainment Equity Alliance (EEA) and teaches strategic planning for the Economic Development Certificate Program at Fresno State University.

His research, thought leadership, and expert commentary have been cited in a wide variety of media outlets, including the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, Bloomberg, the San Francisco Chronicle, and National Public Radio.



Jennifer Caballero
Executive Director, California Association of Museums

Jennifer Caballero joined the California Association of Museums (CAM) staff as Interim Executive Director in March 2022, following three consecutive two-year terms as a member of the CAM Board, with the final two years in the role of Board President.

Prior to joining the CAM staff, she was the Marketing Director for the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles, creating general and targeted marketing initiatives using multimedia promotion, in-kind and paid sponsorships, community-based marketing, branding, and market research.

Jennifer has particularly deep experience in promoting a culturally-specific institution to a broad audience; before the Skirball, she was Manager of Marketing, PR, and Audience Development at the Pacific Asia Museum in Pasadena.

She holds a BA in American Studies from Scripps College.



Julie Baker
CEO, Californians for the Arts

Julie has been the CEO of California's statewide arts advocacy organizations since late 2018. During her tenure, she has increased the legislative influence and visibility of arts and culture communities by building coalitions across for-profit and non-profit sectors of California's creative industries. She has championed a month-long arts awareness and advocacy campaign every April and fought for resources and legislation to serve and protect artists and cultural workers. Julie has served in various leadership roles, including California State Captain to Americans for the Arts' National Arts Action Summit, co-chair of the creative economy working group at the CA Economic Summit, and co-chair of the Western Arts Advocacy network for Creative West, where she is also a member of the Board of Trustees. In 2025, she was appointed to the CalNonprofits Board of Directors. She also serves as Board President of California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project. Her past roles include serving on the Nevada County school board (2020-2024) and as an appointed member of the State of California's 2022 Entrepreneurship & Economic Mobility Task Force (EEMTF) and the Creative Economy Working Group (2024-25). In 2021, Julie received the Americans for the Arts Alene Valkanas State Arts Advocacy Award, which honors an individual at the state level whose arts advocacy efforts have dramatically affected the political landscape.

Julie Baker's extensive experience in the arts includes owning a fine arts gallery showcasing emerging artists, co-founding the Flow art fair, establishing Julie Baker Projects, a consulting firm, and curating a world music series at the Crocker Art Museum. Previously, she served as President of her family's arts marketing firm in New York City and worked at Christie's Auction house. Her non-profit leadership experience includes eight years as Executive Director for The Center for the Arts, a performing arts organization and the California WorldFest. In recognition of her contributions, she received the inaugural Peggy Levine Arts & Community Service Award from the Nevada County Arts Council.



10 Reasons to Support the Arts in 2025

The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They ennoble and inspire us—fostering creativity, empathy, and beauty. The arts also strengthen our communities socially, educationally, economically, and improve health and well-being. If you believe everyone should have the opportunity to participate in the arts and every child should be receiving a quality arts education, use the following 10 reasons to show why an investment in artists, creative workers, and arts organizations is vital to the nation’s health and prosperity.

1. **[Arts strengthen the economy.](#)** The nation’s arts and culture sector—nonprofit, commercial, education—is a \$1.2 trillion industry that supports 5.4 million jobs (2023). That is 4.2% of the nation’s economy—a larger share of GDP than powerhouse sectors such as Transportation, Agriculture, and Utilities. Similar results are found at the [state level](#) (source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). The arts [accelerate economic recovery](#): a growth in arts employment has a positive and causal effect on overall employment. The nation’s [nonprofit arts and culture industry](#) alone generated \$151.7 billion in economic activity in 2022—spending by arts organizations *and their audiences*—which supported 2.6 million jobs and generated \$29.1 billion in government revenue.
2. **[Arts drive revenue to local businesses.](#)** Arts attendees spend an average of \$38.46 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking, and lodging—vital income for local businesses. 30% of attendees come from outside the county in which the arts event took place; those nonlocal attendees average \$60.57 in spending beyond admission, and 77% said they traveled to the community specifically to attend that arts event.
3. **[Arts unify communities.](#)** 72% of Americans believe “The arts provide shared experiences with people of different races, ethnicities, ages, beliefs, and identities.” 63% agree that the arts “help me understand other cultures in my community better”—perspectives observed across all demographic and economic categories.
4. **[Arts strengthen mental health and wellbeing.](#)** Just 45 minutes of art making can [lower the stress hormone cortisol](#) by 25%. More than half of Americans (60%) say the arts have “helped them cope during times of mental or emotional distress,” and 69% believe the arts “lift me up beyond everyday experiences.”
5. **[Arts and culture are tourism drivers.](#)** Arts travelers are ideal tourists, staying longer and spending more to seek out authentic culture experiences. 70% of Americans agree, “The arts improve the image and identity of my community,” and 53% say, “When planning a vacation, I consider the destination’s arts and culture experiences when deciding where to visit.”
6. **[Arts improve academic performance.](#)** Students engaged in arts learning have higher GPAs, standardized test scores, and college-going rates as well as lower drop-out rates. These academic benefits are reaped by students across all socio-economic strata. [Nine-in-10 Americans](#) believe that every pre-K-12 student should be receiving an arts education; 83% support government funding for arts education.
7. **[Arts spark creativity and innovation.](#)** *Creativity* is among the top five applied skills sought by business leaders—per the Conference Board’s *Ready to Innovate* report—with 72% saying creativity is of “high importance” when hiring. Research on creativity shows that Nobel laureates in the sciences are 17 times more likely to be actively engaged as an *arts maker* than other scientists.
8. **[Arts have social impact.](#)** University of Pennsylvania researchers have demonstrated that a high concentration of the arts in a city leads to greater civic engagement, more social cohesion, higher child welfare, and lower poverty rates.
9. **[Arts improve healthcare.](#)** One-half of the nation’s healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and even staff. 78% deliver these programs because of their healing benefits to patients—shorter hospital stays, better pain management, and less medication. 75% of Americans say if their doctor wrote them a prescription to participate in the arts as a way to improve their physical or mental health, they would likely follow that recommendation.
10. **[Arts for the health and well-being of our military.](#)** The arts can heal the mental, physical, and moral injuries of war for military servicemembers and Veterans—who rank the creative arts therapies in the top four (out of 40) interventions and treatments.

The National Endowment for the Arts is the only funder, public or private, that supports the arts in all 50 states in the United States.

IN THE PAST 5 YEARS...

The National Endowment for the Arts distributed more than **\$81,970,268** in grants in **California**.



PC Ryan P. DeWolfe works with Danielle Vetro Kalseth, Music Therapist, HJF, in support of Creative Forces at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) in Anchorage, Alaska. Army photo/John Pennell

In one year alone...

- Arts and cultural production in California added **7.5% or \$288.9 billion** to the state's economy.
- California's arts and cultural industries employed **821,183** workers. These workers earned wages and benefits totaling **\$136.2 billion**.
- **36.7%** of California's adults attended live music, theater, or dance performances, while **18.7%** attended art exhibits.

National Endowment for the Arts Programs



The **Blue Star Museums** program provided free admission to thousands of active military personnel and their families at **311 participating museums** in California.



More than **20,796 students** from **960 high schools** in California participated in **Poetry Out Loud**.



The **NEA Big Read** program generated community events focused on reading outstanding American literature and involving more than **175,391** adults and students in California.



The **Shakespeare in American Communities** program in California enabled schools to offer **17,076** children the opportunity to see live professional performances of Shakespeare, or to engage in educational programs.



Creative Forces brings creative arts therapies to military personnel and veterans who are experiencing post-traumatic stress, mild traumatic brain injury, and related psychological illnesses. The program also offers community arts programming to improve the well-being and resilience of all military-connected people.

Produced 2025

Various Locations of Arts Endowment-Supported Projects

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|--|--|--|--|---|
| CA-01 BIG VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL | CA-12 CALIFORNIA COLLEGE OF THE ARTS | CA-24 OJAI VALLEY MUSEUM | CA-35 UPLAND STUDIOS | CA-46 CIRCULOS HIGH SCHOOL |
| CA-02 BROT RESTAURANT | CA-13 MCSWAIN UNION ELEMENTARY | CA-25 CENTINELA STATE PRISON FIRE DEPARTMENT | CA-36 ANIMO VENICE CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL | CA-47 MY HERO FILM FESTIVAL |
| CA-03 FLOUR GARDEN BAKERY | CA-14 MT. EDEN HIGH SCHOOL | CA-26 THACHER SCHOOL | CA-37 EL MARINO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | CA-48 HILLSDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL |
| CA-04 HISTORIC LOWER LAKE SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM | CA-15 HILLCREST AT YOUTH SERVICES CENTER | CA-27 SAINT KATERI TEKAKWITHA CATHOLIC CHURCH | CA-38 WILCOX ELEMENTARY | CA-49 EL CAMINO HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY |
| CA-05 OAK RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL | CA-16 OCEANA HIGH SCHOOL | CA-28 ABOUT PRODUCTIONS | CA-39 UC RIVERSIDE'S UCR ARTS | CA-50 CULTURE SHOCK SAN DIEGO |
| CA-06 SACRAMENTO TAIKO DAN DOJO | CA-17 TRITON MUSEUM ART | CA-29 SUN VALLEY BRANCH LIBRARY | CA-40 CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY | CA-51 HICKMAN ELEMENTARY |
| CA-07 CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM | CA-18 NATIONAL STEINBECK CENTER | CA-30 DIRECTOR'S GUILD OF AMERICA | CA-41 FOOTHILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | CA-52 AUDUBON K-8 SCHOOL |
| CA-08 VALLEJO NAVAL AND HISTORICAL MUSEUM | CA-19 BRADLEY ELEMENTARY | CA-31 CALIFORNIA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS - SAN GABRIEL VALLEY | CA-42 THE BEVERLY O'NEILL THEATER | |
| CA-09 EDISON HIGH SCHOOL | CA-20 SIMAS ELEMENTARY | CA-32 CANOGA PARK HIGH SCHOOL | CA-43 BURSCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | |
| CA-10 CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY | CA-21 GASTON MIDDLE SCHOOL | CA-33 BARTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL | CA-44 GRAND ANNEX | |
| CA-11 CIVIC CENTER SECONDARY, SCHOOL LIBRARY | CA-22 KING ART CENTER | CA-34 OXY ARTS | CA-45 RALSTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL | |
| | CA-23 TWENTYNINE PALMS LIBRARY | | | |

National Endowment
for the Arts:

Your State Arts Agency:

California Arts Council

www.cac.ca.gov

Testimony of Shelly C. Lowe
Former Chair, National Endowment for the Humanities
For the California Joint Committee on the Arts and
The Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism
May 14, 2025 - Sacramento, CA

Dear Senator Allen, Chair of the Joint Committee on the Arts, members of the Joint Committee on the Arts, and members of the Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of humanities initiatives across the state of California. My name is Shelly Lowe and from February 14, 2022 to March 10, 2025, I served as Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

2025 marks sixty years since Congress and the White House established the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) as independent federal agencies to provide access to the arts and humanities to all Americans. In the founding legislation for NEH and the NEA, Congress recognized that “an advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future.”ⁱ

NEH is the nation’s largest federal funder of the humanities, which includes history, philosophy, literature, language, ethics, law, archaeology, political theory, comparative religion, anthropology, sociology, and media and cultural studies. Since its founding in 1965, NEH has awarded nearly \$6 billion in grants to support museums, historic sites, colleges, universities, K-12 teachers, libraries, public television and radio stations, research institutions, independent scholars, and state and jurisdictional humanities councils nationwide.

Under 20 U.S. Code § 956 for the National Endowment for the Humanities, as Chair I was authorized to establish and carry out grant programs to public agencies and private nonprofit organizations across the US for the purpose of:

- (a) enabling cultural organizations and institutions to increase the levels of continuing support and to increase the range of contributors to the program of such organizations or institutions;
- (b) providing administrative and management improvements for cultural organizations and institutions, particularly in the field of long-range financial planning;
- (c) enabling cultural organizations and institutions to increase audience participation in, and appreciation of, programs sponsored by such organizations and institutions;
- (d) stimulating greater cooperation among cultural organizations and institutions especially designed to better serve the communities in which such organizations or institutions are located;

- (e) fostering greater citizen involvement in planning the cultural development of a community; and
- (f) for semiquincentennial programs, assessing where our society and Government stand in relation to the founding principles of the Republic, primarily focused on projects which will bring together the public and private citizen sectors in an effort to find new processes for solving problems facing our Nation.

Expanding Access to the Humanities in All 56 States and Jurisdictions

I was also authorized to carry out a program of grants-in-aid through the NEH Office of State and Federal Partnerships to each of the 56 established and approved State Humanities Council partners across the country. This funding supports the cost of existing activities in the humanities that furnish adequate programs in the humanities in each of the US states and jurisdictions. Approximately 40% of NEH's annual appropriation is distributed to the state and jurisdictional humanities councils to help the councils sponsor thousands of family reading programs, K-12 education projects, documentary films, book festivals, symposia, and state and local history projects. These projects reach millions of Americans in rural areas, urban neighborhoods, and suburban communities.

NEH's yearly appropriations reflects the resources needed to continue NEH's support for American civil society, helping us to advance research and development in the humanities, examine the human condition, understand our cultural heritage, foster mutual respect for diverse beliefs and cultures, develop media and information literacy, and promote civics education. The agency's most recent yearly budget included \$60 million for NEH's state affiliates, the state and jurisdictional humanities councils, to support humanities programming at the grassroots level in all 50 states; the District of Columbia; Puerto Rico; the U.S. Virgin Islands; Guam; the Northern Mariana Islands; and American Samoa. In 2024, California Humanities received \$3.5M in funding to support humanities programming across the state.

NEH's 56 state and jurisdictional humanities councils are essential partners in ensuring the Agency reaches audiences of all ages and in every community across the nation. One example is through NEH's longstanding partnership with National History Day, which engages more than half a million middle and high school students annually in a national historical research competition. Under my tenure, NEH launched a program with the humanities councils to extend National History Day's reach to underserved communities. The state humanities councils are ideal partners for this work, extending the reach and impact of our funding to communities often underserved by federal funding.

NEH and the State of California

The impact of NEH funding to the state of California cannot be understated. Between 2021 and 2024, California received 786 awards totaling \$64.8M, which was the second highest number of awards, only after New York state. Included in this total was funding awarded to California Humanities, which used funding for both operational costs and for providing direct grants to

state entities for humanities programming. All but one California congressional district, District 25, benefitted from NEH funding during this period and funding to rural areas of the state totaled \$1.7M. In addition to direct funding received from NEH, California also received \$9.35M in matching gifts and third-party funding in support of these humanities initiatives.

The role of NEH in directly supporting humanities institutions in the state during COVID-19 should be noted. NEH worked diligently to stabilize and support colleges and universities, museums, libraries, historic sites, public television and radio stations, independent researchers, and documentary filmmakers struggling to cope with the economic fallout of the pandemic. The organizations funded all experienced severe declines in revenue while being closed to visitors or affected by declines in student enrollment; many were compelled to furlough or lay off staff and curtail public and educational programs. Thanks to special funding allocated by Congress to NEH by the CARES Act of 2020, and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, our agency has been able to quickly distribute economic recovery funding in California to help cultural and educational organizations retain staff, maintain programs, facilities, and operations, and convert physical programs into digital offerings to increase access, even from a distance.

And we learned from this experience how to better respond to humanities organizations in times of need. During my tenure as Chair, NEH established a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for humanities organizations in need of support after nature disasters - such as hurricanes, floods, and fires - or after devastating community events such as mass shootings. This NOFO allowed humanities organizations and state humanities councils to apply for NEH funding to assist with the assessment of damage and repair costs, provide direct care for damaged humanities collections and storage sites, the rehousing of collections, the repair or replacement of key informational items such as roadside markers and signs, and community gatherings and convenings to address needs and next steps as related to humanities activities and programs. This important funding for communities was often received in a timely manner, allowing for quick assessment and action on the ground. Had the agency's work not been halted after January 20th, NEH support for communities affected by the January fires in California would have commenced with the assistance of California Humanities.

Impacts from the Loss of NEH Funding

The loss of disaster relief funding for cultural organizations is just one example of how a lack of NEH funding will affect the American people. As the largest and most prestigious funder of advanced humanities research in the United States, NEH invests in scholarship and complex research projects by individual scholars, collaborative research teams, and institutions in all disciplines of the humanities and humanistic social sciences. While this work may sometimes seem distant from everyday life, humanities research and development, or R&D, is foundational to American life. For example, NEH's support for humanities R&D has resulted in the publication of more than 16,000 books and academic monographs since NEH's founding in 1965, including 20 Pulitzer Prize-winning books. This includes *American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer* by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin, the sweeping biography that inspired the Academy Award-winning film *OPPENHEIMER*.

NEH also supports the building blocks of humanities R&D by ensuring the public can more easily find and make use of cultural heritage collections at libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations across the country; and by fortifying under-resourced collecting organizations, such as small and mid-sized libraries, archives, and museums. One example is NEH's support for the National Digital Newspaper Program, which produces *Chronicling America*, a digital repository of more than 21 million pages of historical American newspapers from 1690 to the present in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

Another core aspect of NEH's work is its support for the teaching and study of the humanities at K-12 schools and colleges and universities around the nation, including Native American and Indigenous institutions; Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or HBCUs; Hispanic Serving Institutions, or HSIs; community colleges; rural colleges and universities; schools with a majority-minority undergraduate enrollment; and schools with significant numbers of first-generation students.

In each of these examples, California has played a role in offering humanities initiatives that have impacted Americans across the country. From documentary movies, museum exhibitions, in depth research, course offerings, and teacher training programs led by faculty in California universities and colleges, NEH funding has propelled California as a humanities leader. Much of this work is done in tandem with the efforts of California Humanities, who ensures humanities programming is offered in all communities for all Californians. The humanities are essential to American life and non-profits like California Humanities ensure national support for the humanities is reaching the state population in the most effective way. Having worked three years with the California Humanities staff and visiting California cultural organizations whose work is supported by NEH either directly or through California Humanities, I saw first-hand the impacts federal funding in the humanities has on the state. I am deeply saddened and concerned with the current decision to terminate NEH awards to California entities, including California Humanities, and the potential loss of all NEH funding in the next fiscal year. The nation's work in the humanities requires support in each state and as a leader in this realm, I hope California continues to be a model through support of California Humanities.

Senator Allen, Chair of the Joint Committee on the Arts, distinguished Members of the Joint Committee on the Arts and members of the Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, and Tourism, thank you again for allowing me to provide this testimony on the importance of NEH and California Humanities.

ⁱ The National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, Pub. L. 89-209, sec. 2(4), codified at 20 U.S.C. § 951(4).

NEWS



APRIL 29, 2025

Creative Coalition President Tim Daly Says Investing in the Arts Pays Dividends for America



“At this moment in time, it occurs to me that we could use some empathy and compassion for each other.”

WASHINGTON, DC — In remarks this past Friday afternoon before a luncheon meeting of The Ripon Society and the Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange, actor and advocate Tim Daly discussed the importance of arts in America and why he believes that investing in the arts pays dividends for the American people — and the American economy — down the road.

Daly serves as President of the Creative Coalition, the nation’s leading nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization of the arts and entertainment industry. He was joined by Creative Coalition CEO Robin Bronk, as well as fellow actors and Coalition members Iain Armitage, Rachel Bloom, Alex Borstein, Amy Brenneman, Mehdad Brooks, Pauline Chalamet, Michael Chiklis, Courtney Eaton, Sean Giambrone, Asher Goodman, Rachel Harris, Marg Helgenberger, Jason Isaacs, Sonequa Martin-Green, Tig Notaro, Alan Ruck, Lorraine Toussaint, and Rebecca Wisocky.

“The Creative Coalition is an organization that was founded by prominent members of the arts and entertainment community who felt, because we have this unique platform, that we had a responsibility to educate and motivate our constituents, our audiences, and ourselves around issues of public importance, particularly arts education and public funding for arts,” Daly stated. “We believe that every person and especially every child in the United States should be exposed to and participate in the arts — not so that they can necessarily become a professional artist, but because we know that a full curriculum in the arts will make them better human beings.

“Who would like their kids to be more likely to graduate from high school? Who would want their kids to be more likely to go to college? Who wants their kids to be better in math? Who wants their kids to be better in science? Who wants their kids to participate in student government? Who wants their kids to learn teamwork? Who wants their kids to learn to be responsible and on time? Who wants their kids to make more money? Who wants their kids to be more empathetic? Who wants their kids to be kinder? Who wants their kids to be more compassionate and more imaginative? Who wants their kids to be more creative? Who wants their kids to be better at communicating their thoughts and feelings?

“The answer, I hope, is everybody. And here’s the deal — that’s what arts education teaches. It is the one thing that I know of that teaches empathy. It literally forces the people that participate in it to walk in someone else’s shoes, to see the world from someone else’s perspective. And I think that that is a profoundly healing and important thing for people to experience. That’s not to say that they shouldn’t experience music and poetry and drama and dance and literature and all the other wonderful artistic pursuits. But certainly at this moment in time, it occurs to me that we could use some empathy and compassion for each other.”

Daly and the other members of the Creative Coalition were in Washington to participate in the group’s annual “Right To Bear Arts” day, making the case that investing in the arts fuels economic growth, job creation, and thriving local communities. Daly noted that the arts sector generated over \$1.1 trillion in 2022, accounting for 4.3 percent of the U.S. GDP. He also noted that more than three million Americans rely on arts-related jobs, and that every \$1 invested in the arts generates nearly \$9 in economic activity.

The Ripon Society is a public policy organization that was founded in 1962 and takes its name from the town where the Republican Party was born in 1854 – Ripon, Wisconsin. One of the main goals of The Ripon Society is to promote the ideas and principles that have made America great and contributed to the GOP’s success. These ideas include keeping our nation secure, keeping taxes low and having a federal government that is smaller, smarter and more accountable to the people.

Founded in 1978, The Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange is a non-partisan, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization committed to enhancing global understanding of important international issues. The Franklin Center brings together Members of the U.S. Congress and their international parliamentary counterparts as well as experts from the Diplomatic corps, foreign officials, senior private sector representatives, scholars, and other public policy experts. Through regular conferences and events where leading international opinion leaders share ideas, the Franklin Center promotes enlightened, balanced, and unbiased international policy discussion on major international issues.



**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
NOTICE OF GRANT TERMINATION**

April 2, 2025

Mr. Rick Noguchi

California Humanities

Dear NEH Grantee,

This letter provides notice that the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is terminating your federal grant (Grant Application No. SO28987823) effective April 2, 2025, in accordance with the termination clause in your Grant Agreement.

Your grant no longer effectuates the agency's needs and priorities and conditions of the Grant Agreement and is subject to termination due to several reasonable causes, as outlined in *2CFR§200.340*. NEH has reasonable cause to terminate your grant in light of the fact that the NEH is repurposing its funding allocations in a new direction in furtherance of the President's agenda. The President's February 19, 2025 executive order mandates that the NEH eliminate all non-statutorily required activities and functions. *See Commencing the Reduction of the Federal Bureaucracy*, E.O. 14217 (Feb. 19, 2025). Your grant's immediate termination is necessary to safeguard the interests of the federal government, including its fiscal priorities. The termination of your grant represents an urgent priority for the administration, and due to exceptional circumstances, adherence to the traditional notification process is not possible. Therefore, the NEH hereby terminates your grant in its entirety effective April 1, 2025.

Please remember that your obligations under the Grant Agreement continue to apply. Additionally, an audit may be conducted by the NEH after the termination of your grant.

Please contact Grant_Notifications@nehemail.onmicrosoft.com with only urgent questions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael McDonald

Michael McDonald
Acting Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities
400 7th Street S.W., Washington, DC 20506

Testimony on Behalf of California Humanities

Prepared for the State of California Joint Committee on the Arts by Phoebe Stein, President, Federation of State Humanities Councils, for May 13, 2025.

Dear Senator Ben Allen and Members of the Joint Committee on the Arts,

I am Phoebe Stein, President of the Federation of State Humanities Councils, the membership organization for the nation's 56 state and jurisdictional humanities councils, which includes California Humanities.

I am submitting testimony on behalf of California Humanities regarding the impact of federal policies on humanities councils nationwide.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) on April 2 notified the state humanities councils and approximately 1,400 other NEH grantees that current grants were being terminated. All humanities councils, including California Humanities, had their five-year operating grants terminated in their entirety, effective immediately, with no ability to draw down reimbursements for funds already spent and allocated. This resulted in a loss of \$65 million of appropriated funds from Congress for humanities councils for FY 2025, including \$3.5 million for California Humanities. These are federal taxpayer dollars that will not come to California. We challenge the legality of this action as well as its wisdom. In the recent budget proposal released by the White House, the administration proposed completely defunding NEH, along with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Congress created the state and jurisdictional humanities councils more than 50 years ago to ensure that local programming and activities would be available in each and every state and jurisdiction and their communities and that such programming and activities should be guided by locally based and locally directed organizations. Today, these 56 state and jurisdictional councils proudly and effectively deliver history, education, literacy, civics, and other public programming for teachers, students, veterans, and the public at large in almost every Congressional district in the country.

The state and jurisdictional humanities councils, like California Humanities, are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations with voluntary boards that exist in every state and six jurisdictions. Councils reach nearly 43 million residents annually through programs and grantmaking and operate everywhere in the nation. They were specifically authorized by Congress, which spelled out detailed structural and budgetary requirements for the councils. Like California Humanities, they receive annual funding through the Federal/State Partnership (F/SP) line in the NEH budget. They leverage their NEH funding to raise millions of additional dollars to invest in local projects and grassroots organizations—at an average rate of \$2 leveraged for every \$1 in federal funding. In California, it is a 4:1 ratio.

Humanities councils such as California Humanities are exemplary of the strongest public/private partnership. Funds distributed to the councils by NEH are locally controlled and used by councils to create locally tailored programs and support American institutions like historical societies, museums, schools, and heritage sites.

While councils' funding comes from a variety of sources, federal support is critical, especially for on-going operations. The loss of NEH funding to humanities councils will decimate the ability of these nonprofits to serve communities in their states, eliminating programs that are essential to each state's cultural infrastructure. Without federal funds, many humanities councils have already suspended programs, halted local-grantmaking, and in some cases risk closing their doors altogether. California Humanities is facing a similar fate without federal funding, which has been there for fifty years. The NEH budget for humanities councils is small, but the losses to everyday Americans will be devastating, and the ripple effects of these cuts will be felt in every state and territory.

It is important to remember that the state councils like California Humanities, are long-standing institutions that understand the cultural infrastructure in their states and Congressional districts. They are run by local residents, citizens of the communities they serve, and their priorities are set at the local level. They partner with more than 6,500 local organizations across the country—an average of 123 partners annually per state. Some councils focus on grant-making to local entities; others concentrate on developing and presenting programs; still others provide both. In any event, these funds are the principal NEH investment in many states and are the most evenly distributed federal source of humanities funding within a state.

Each year, councils make thousands of grants to local organizations (more than 3,700 grants in 2024 alone)—schools, libraries, museums, historical societies, preservation groups, service-providing nonprofits—to develop and/or present programs, exhibits, lectures, and discussions free to their communities. Every council has far more requests for funding than it can accommodate, illustrating the need and desire to access this funding. For California Humanities, less than 10% of grant applications received funding. These activities contribute to quality of life in communities, support a shared American culture, strengthen community cohesion, expand educational opportunities, help with community development and redevelopment plans, and support a variety of economic activities.

Without federal funding for humanities councils, California will lose access to humanities grants and programs that educate, inspire, and bring communities together.

Services for Californians and State Workers that will be lost if federal funding for the State Library is discontinued

California's federal Library Services and Technology Act funds support critical programming and operations for millions of Californians through local libraries and the State Library.

This year, California received nearly \$16 million in federal funds. Californians will lose programs and services in over 1,000 libraries if federal support is reduced or eliminated.

Library services and programs currently paid for with federal funds strengthen families and communities, support education, workforce development, and health and wellness, and preserve free and unbiased access to information for all.

They support and advance the administration's priorities and initiatives and provide all Californians with opportunities to succeed. Through programs and services that shine a light on diversity, encourage civic engagement, and close the digital divide, the State Library contributes to "a collective vision [of] one state where everyone has access to the programs and resources they need to thrive."

Streamlined operations at the State Library ensure that the majority of these funds go directly to services that benefit Californians. Breakdown of costs, rounded up:

- Local assistance funds for programs and services statewide: \$9,000,000
- Cost of programs delivered directly from the State Library: \$3,000,000
- 34 State Library positions: \$4,000,000

Without state funds to replace lost federal funds, California will lose the following:

Programs and Services for Children, Teens, and Families

Early Learning Play Spaces and Storytimes for low-income families, helping children develop fine motor skills, language skills, creativity, reasoning, and empathy.

Teen Volunteer and Internship Programs—paid and unpaid—that help at-risk young people develop social-emotional and workforce-readiness skills.

Support for **Summer Reading Programs** that help combat "summer learning loss" and provide opportunities for over one million children and teens kids during the summer.

Support for **Literacy Services**. Federal funds pay for staff who implement the State Library's literacy program in 103 library jurisdictions and training for local library staff.

Youth and Family Book to Action Club, which inspires Californians to read books and engage in community service projects.

Student Success Card. Federal funds pay for staff to implement SB 321 which ensures all students are issued a public library card by third grade.

Supporting and Protecting Communities and Cultural Heritage

Climate Education and Sustainability Programs including community gardens, bike repair clinics, and tool libraries that support California's climate goals.

Community-Driven Programs and Resources in local libraries that range from exercise sessions, to makerspaces, art, music, and author events, services to Veterans, programs for decarcerated populations, an oral history of the opioid epidemic, and privacy pods that enable Californians without home access to the internet to have telehealth appointments, consult with legal advisors, and study.

Tribal and rural communities. Federal funds pay for staff to support tribal libraries and programs designed for hard-to-reach and underserved rural communities.

Support for **High-Speed Broadband.** Federal funds pay for staff to implement the State Library's broadband program which brings high-speed internet to California libraries.

Protection for California's cultural heritage:

- The **California Revealed** project **protects and preserves California history** via digitization and online access to valuable cultural artifacts.
- Federal funds pay for staff to implement the **Cultural Heritage Disaster Preparedness Program** which helps organizations protect their collections from disaster

Preservation of California's unique history. Federal funds support preservation and digitization of collections at the State Library to ensure state history is available to future generations and easily accessible online.

Access to Information and Learning Resources for Californians

EBooks for All. California's only **statewide shared eBook collection** which provides free access to eBooks and Audiobooks in over 20 languages with an emphasis on K-12.

Free access to the **New York Times** and **CalMatters for Learning** for every Californian, at a time when access to non-partisan high-quality journalism is severely threatened.

Freedom to Read Act. Federal funds pay for staff to implement AB 1825 which requires public libraries to maintain publicly accessible collection development policies.

Career Online High School. Federal funds pay for staff to implement this program, which enables adults to obtain a high school diploma through their local public library.

Databases, eBooks, and print materials for state employees, the Legislature, and the general public. Federal funds provide state government employees with current information they need to do their jobs, and Californians access to the resources their representatives use to formulate statewide policy.

Accessible library materials for the blind and print disabled. Federal funds support the operations of the Braille and Talking Book Library, which loans equipment and more than half a million audio and braille books by mail or download — for free— to blind, visually impaired or dyslexic Californians in 43 Northern California counties annually.

Library materials that strengthen public library collections. Federal funds enable the State Library to provide Californians with the more scientific, legal, and scholarly library resources they need that are typically not collected by public libraries.

Research support for all Californians seeking credible information services. Federal funds support quality research and reference services for all, in-person and remotely.

Training Programs and Resources for Library Workers

Statewide Library Training and Leadership Program. Provides **training and skill-building** for all California library workers to ensure high-quality services in every library.

The **Get Involved** project helps libraries **recruit, train, and work with skilled volunteers** and increases capacity in local libraries.

The **Public Library Staff Education Program (PLSEP)** provides library staff who are studying to become librarians with tuition reimbursement, expanding education opportunities.

Access to data about California's public libraries. Federal funds are used to **collect and maintain data about California's libraries** and deliver data-driven library services.

Consultation, leadership, and support for library workers in all local libraries.

Partnerships with other state agencies and organizations—including the California Departments of Aging, Public Health, and Technology, and the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency—that bring resources, information, and content about state government initiatives to Californians through their public libraries.

Leadership and cataloging services for California libraries collecting government documents. Federal funds enable the State Library to provide program administration and cataloging services to California libraries participating in the Federal and State Depository Library Programs, which uphold government transparency and provide Californians access to official government data and publications.

WHAT FEDERAL IMLS FUNDS DO FOR CALIFORNIA



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, TEENS, ADULTS, AND FAMILIES:

\$4
million

If funds are not restored or replaced, California will lose:

- Play for All: Early learning play spaces and storytimes for families.
- Teens Succeed: Internships and workforce readiness opportunities for teens.
- Climate education and sustainability programs in libraries.
- Innovation and community-driven programs in libraries from makerspaces to services to Veterans to a community archive of the opioid epidemic.
- Resources and training for library workers who deliver:
 - Summer reading programs for over one million Californians each year.
 - Adult, family, and ESL literacy services statewide.
- Book to Action: Collections of books and programs that encourage civic engagement.
- Resources, training, and support for programming from California State Library staff.

ACCESS TO BOOKS AND INFORMATION:

\$4.9
million

If funds are not restored or replaced, California will lose:

- The New York Times free for all Californians through their local library. Over 4 million articles read since January.
- California's new and only shared statewide eBook library. The collection includes over 300,000 eBooks and eAudiobooks. Used by 80,000+ Californians and growing.
- CalMatters for Learning free for all libraries.
- Research support, reference services, and accurate information for all Californians. 22,800+ research questions answered annually.
- Databases, eBooks, and print materials for state employees, the Legislature, and the general public.
- Interlibrary loan of materials from the California State Library to local libraries.
- Virtual programs like author talks and panels featuring subject matter experts, offered by the California State Library for the enlightenment and education of Californians.
- Resources, training, and support for local library services from California State Library staff.

PROTECTION FOR CALIFORNIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE:

\$1.8
million

If funds are not restored or replaced, California will lose:

- California Revealed: Digitization and preservation services for libraries and other community-based organizations, and an online collection of more than 175,000 items from over 450 California organizations.
- Preservation and digitization of the State Library's special collections documenting California's unique history. 99,000+ views and downloads annually.
- Resources and support for protection and preservation services from California State Library staff.

TOTAL FEDERAL IMLS FUNDS:

\$15.7
million

BRAILLE AND TALKING BOOK LIBRARY:

\$1.7
million

If funds are not restored or replaced, California will lose:

- Opportunity to use accessible audiobooks, braille, and large print books and magazines. 574,600+ accessible books circulated annually.
- News and current events in accessible format.
- Braille e-readers, talking book machines, hand-held magnifiers, WiFi hotspots, and other assistive technology devices that enable patrons to read accessible books.
- Training and technical support for patrons using assistive technology devices.
- Services provided by Reader Advisors, who assist patrons with navigating services, selecting books, and using devices.
- Local recording studio that produces accessible audiobooks available nationally.
- Production of fully accessible voter information to enable civic engagement for all.

TRAINING AND RESOURCES FOR LIBRARY WORKERS:

\$3.3
million

If funds are not restored or replaced, California will lose:

- California Libraries Learn (CALL): Training and skill-building for thousands of California library workers. Hundreds of free trainings online and in person each year, plus free registrations to library conferences.
- Catalyst: Training, coaching, and mentoring for California's next generation of library leaders.
- Public Library Staff Education Program: Tuition reimbursements for library workers studying to become librarians.
- Get Involved: Resources for library staff to recruit and work with skilled volunteers.
- Dedicated support for tribal and rural libraries.
- Leadership and cataloging services for libraries participating in the Federal and State Depository Library Programs.
- Resources for library workers collecting government documents.
- Resources and support for training and leadership development from California State Library staff.

Note: Numbers included above include actual and planned expenses for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Numbers have been rounded.



Alert: President's Budget Recommends Elimination of the NEA

This morning, the White House submitted President Trump's budget request to Congress for fiscal year 2026. It calls for elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Dismantling the NEA would hurt every state and jurisdiction across America. Families would be affected when their children's arts programs close. Local businesses would suffer. We'd lose an important thread in the fabric of American communities, where the arts tell our stories and preserve our cherished traditions for future generations.

Every state would feel the loss of the NEA. **Federal arts funds support thousands of communities across the nation, including [678 counties that private foundations do not reach](#).** Critically, the [federal-state partnership](#), long upheld by Congress as a positive example of federalism, would be undercut. This partnership facilitates more than 30,000 state and regional arts grants and ensures that every community—not just urban or wealthy places—can thrive through the arts.

Next Steps

The White House's budget recommendation signals the beginning of the appropriations process, not the end. Congress holds the ultimate constitutional authority to appropriate funds to federal agencies and will formulate a budget for the NEA in the months ahead.

In anticipation of this scenario, NASAA has already initiated conversations with key appropriators to secure their help in securing funds for the NEA. Now, that work expands to the full Interior Appropriations Subcommittees in the [House](#) and the [Senate](#).

NASAA will vigorously advocate to sustain funding for the NEA in FY2026—but we need your help to succeed. Please contact your congressional delegation. [Equip them with the facts](#) on federal arts funding and ask them to sustain support for the NEA in FY2026. Be respectful in tone and be specific about community impacts and the state programs and grants that are at stake.

Messaging

Key to these efforts is positioning the arts as a consensus investment, not a wedge issue. **The NEA has earned strong bipartisan support, and funds every congressional district.** In other words, every community is a stakeholder in the NEA and the federal-state partnership. The good work of state arts agencies is essential to the NEA's success and to the confidence of Congress.

Our message must be strategically attuned to the current political environment. NASAA recommends these top talking points:

- **The NEA is committed to efficiency.** Since inauguration, the agency has proactively streamlined its grant programs, downsized the agency workforce and used technology well. It manages a high volume of grants competitively adjudicated by citizen panels on the basis of merit.
- **The NEA is an important partner in attaining White House goals such as the national America 250 celebration.** State arts agencies are an essential part of that effort. 100% of state arts agencies are actively engaging in America 250 planning and programming: 87% are planning to make grants, 96% are active promotional partners, and more than two-thirds serve on America 250 commissions or committees. Disruption of federal support to state arts agencies could weaken America 250 efforts across the country.
- **The arts and creative industries give America's economy a competitive edge,** [achieving](#) a \$36.8 billion trade surplus and adding \$1.2 trillion in value to the U.S. gross domestic product. The NEA and state arts agencies catalyze cultural production and grow the talent pool for this important American industry that creates 5.4 million jobs on American soil.
- **The NEA offers a big bang for the buck.** Every \$1 the NEA invests in grants leverages \$9 in local and private match—a tremendous return on investment.

- **While many industries produce jobs and revenue, only the arts offer a [fivefold bottom line](#) that strengthens America.** Arts activity supported by the NEA and state arts agencies boosts economic productivity, improves education outcomes, fosters civic cohesion, facilitates good health, and preserves our cherished heritage and traditions for future generations. These are consensus values that all Americans want for their communities and families.

NASAA's [Return on Investment: Public Arts Funding](#) resource center contains additional tips and tools for nonpartisan advocacy. NASAA also can supply customized maps to members that show NEA and state grants by U.S. congressional district. Contact [Mohja Rhoads](#) to request a report for your state.

Be assured that NASAA is doing everything in our power to secure a federal investment in the arts and state arts agencies. Thanks for standing with us. When we come together to share a unified message with Congress, we amplify our impact—strengthening our sector, enriching our communities and advancing our nation. Your voice is essential, and together, we will succeed.

In solidarity,



Pam Breaux, President and CEO



Donna Collins, Board Chair

NASAA's mission is to strengthen state arts agencies.

[About NASAA](#) | [About State Arts Agencies](#) | [Member Benefits](#) | [Contact NASAA](#)

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

1200 18th Street NW

Suite 1100

Washington, DC 20036

United States

nasaa@nasaa-arts.org

ARMORY

Community Resources

Free and Low-cost Programs, Employment Opportunities for Youth, & More



Public Art Events



Community Art Installations



Gallery Tours



Offsite Art Workshops

Armory Center for the Arts, nonprofit and community-based, nurtures our community and its young people by creating, learning, and presenting art to advance equity and social justice.



Field Trips for K-12th Grade



Teen Job Opportunities



Free Exhibitions & Events



Onsite & Online Classes

About the Armory | armoryarts.org/about

Nonprofit and donor-supported, Pasadena's Armory Arts is a leader in contemporary art exhibitions and community-based arts education. We envision joyful, healthy, and equitable communities shaped by imagination, creativity, and diverse voices.

We Bring Art To You | armoryarts.org/offsite

Every day, at no cost to participants, our Teaching Artists provide quality art instruction for all ages at libraries, parks, schools, and community partner organizations throughout Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley.

Visit Our Gallery | armoryarts.org/exhibition

Our exhibitions are always free and open to everyone, as are our exhibition-related performances, lectures, workshops, and events. We present critically-acclaimed exhibitions by established and emerging contemporary artists, especially women, artists of color, and artists of the LGBTQIA+ community. Visit during gallery hours or schedule a tour for friends, students, or colleagues.

Make Art In Our Studio Classes | armoryarts.org/studio

With financial assistance available for eligible students in all age groups, our studio art program offers year-round art classes for adults, teens, children, and families in ceramics, digital arts, painting, drawing, letterpress, photography, and much more. Armory Teaching Artists are professional, highly trained artists and compassionate educators committed to helping students find their unique voices as they explore new ideas, techniques, concepts, and the diverse history of art.

Field Trips: See Art Make Art | armoryarts.org/fieldtrip

Designed for K-12th grade by our Teaching Artists; our standards-based lessons engage students in thought-provoking art discussions while touring our galleries. Then students are guided in an art project related to themes of the exhibition, creatively exploring where critical thinking meets imagination. Sliding scale options are available.

Art+Math Lessons | armoryarts.org/lessons

Our free curriculum makes abstract math concepts fun, approachable, and understandable with the integration of artful hands-on lesson plans and videos, engaging all styles of learners. These are brought to you courtesy of a 3-year collaboration with Pasadena Unified School District, and support from the U.S. Department of Education.

Paid Teen Apprenticeships, Internships, & More

Neighborhood teens work with our Teaching Artists in classrooms throughout our community, gaining valuable employment experience in San Gabriel Valley's creative economy. We also partner with local schools and universities to offer paid internships and work-study opportunities for college students onsite and remotely. Schedules are designed to prioritize their schoolwork.

For more information, please contact our team.

Art Classes & Scholarships

Alheli T. (626) 792-5101 x121
registrar@armoryarts.org

Exhibition Programs

Heber R. (626) 792-5101 x123
hrodriguez@armoryarts.org

Offsite Community Programs

Lilia H. (626) 792-5101 x111
lhernandez@armoryarts.org

Field Trips, Schools, or Partner Collaboration

Karen S. (626) 792-5101 x114
ksatzman@armoryarts.org

Join Our Community



Tell Others!

Review us on Yelp, Facebook, Google, etc. Share your positive memories with us and your friends!



Visit Our Gallery

Experience thought provoking contemporary art and community programs. Admission is always free. armoryarts.org/exhibition



Partner with Us

Collaborating with members and organizations in our community is one of our top goals and joys. For any partnership inquiries, please email Armory Executive Director Leslie A. Ito at lito@armoryarts.org.



Share your memories with us
[@ArmoryArts](https://www.instagram.com/armoryarts)



Enroll in a Studio Art Class

Scholarships are available for all ages for our year-round art classes. armoryarts.org/studio

Become A Member

For only \$60 a year, membership supports the arts and gives you benefits year-round! armoryarts.org/member



The Armory can provide many community resources for one simple reason: We have a strong community that supports and inspires us. You are part of this community. This is what the power of art looks like. This is your Armory.



ABOUT ANGEL ISLAND

Although sometimes referred to as the “Ellis Island of the West”, the US immigration station at Angel Island functionally was an immigrant detention center. From 1910-1940, site was used to detain, interrogate, and process over one million immigrants from 80 different countries. The majority were from Asia and the Pacific due to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and other exclusionary immigration laws. Compared to their European counterparts, Asian immigrants experienced longer periods of detention of up to two years, more intensive interrogations, and more invasive medical examinations.

ABOUT THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION FOUNDATION (AIISF)

AIISF is the primary nonprofit organization that has worked in collaboration with CA State Parks to preserve the buildings at this California and National Historic Landmark and to uplift its histories. The organization was founded in 1983 by a group of community leaders, many of whom were descendants of immigrants who had been detained on Angel Island. Over the past 42 years, AIISF has raised over 40 million dollars in public and private funding to help renovate the buildings, develop exhibits, and host in-person and virtual programs.

WHY AIISF’S WORK IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT NOW?

California is a state that is known for its values of hope, equity, and opportunity. Despite the state’s sizable Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander population, California has not been immune to the rise in anti-Asian hate and broader immigrant xenophobia that has increased sharply across the US over the past years.

- 10.6 million people (27% of the state population) are foreign-born.¹
- There are over 6 million AANHPIs living in California, about 15% of the state’s population.²
- One national survey indicated 50% of AAPIs have experienced a hate act due to their race/ethnicity.³
- CA Health Interview Survey data reveal that among recent immigrants who have lived in the US less than 5 years, the rates of serious psychological distress increased by 140%. Similarly, among all adult immigrants, there was a 50% increase.⁴
- 1 in 4 Americans worry that Chinese Americans are a threat.⁵

LOSS OF FEDERAL FUNDING

On April 2, 2025, AIISF received an email communication from the National Endowment For The Humanities notifying us of the abrupt termination of our \$25,000 grant. The notice stated that “Your grant’s immediate termination is necessary to safeguard the interests of the federal government.” The grant would have funded efforts to increase dialog and conversation about historical and current day immigration.

AIISF also has a \$69,662 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services that we anticipate will be terminated. The grant supports additions to the site’s permanent exhibits.

¹ Public Policy Institute of California. Immigrants In California. January 2025.

² US Census Bureau. Quick Facts.

³ Stop AAPI Hate. The State of Anti-AA/PI Hate in 2023.

⁴ UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. Immigrants in California Have Increased Psychological Distress and High Rates of Unmet Need for Mental Health Care. December 2023.

⁵ The Asian American Foundation. Social Tracking of Asian Americans in the U.S. (STAATUS) Index. April 2025.



26,000,000+

The Fleet Science Center has served over 26 million people since opening in 1973.



Transformational Moments at the Fleet



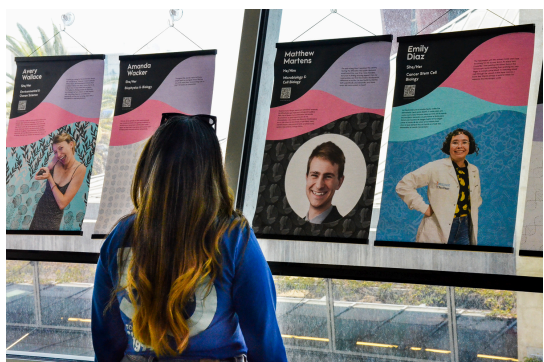
“*The Fleet has been integral in my life and my career as an engineer...It’s programs like BE WiSE and memories like those at the Fleet Science Center that I can now see were the steppingstones to becoming an engineer.*

-Isalys Quiñones
Olympic Athlete

Isalys Quiñones spent her weekends surrounded by science at the Fleet, from playing with the plasma globe to marveling at the floating beach ball. When she was old enough, her mother enrolled her in the BE WiSE (Better Education for Women in Science and Engineering) program, where Isalys explored STEM through field trips, sleepovers, and workshops. These experiences built her love of STEM from a young age and inspired her to pursue a career in environmental engineering. Now, Isalys participates in the Fleet’s *Two Scientists Walk into a Bar* program, sharing her passion for science with her community.



Fleet on the Go



In its third year, *Fleet on the Go* has expanded, with a catalog of **18 interactive exhibits** for libraries to choose from. The newest addition to the program is New Science, a panel exhibit that profiles nine queer, intersectional STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Medicine) professionals in San Diego. Between July 2023 and June 2024, the Fleet delivered and installed **42 unique installations** at **16 different libraries**, reaching a cumulative total of **501,146 library visitors** across San Diego County.

Field Trips & School Programs

A total of **46,510 San Diego students** participated on Fleet educational programs in FY2024, and the Fleet facilitated inbound and outbound programs covering the entire county, working with **304 schools**. These range from field trips and IMAX Documentaries to inquiry-driven STEM investigations that carry over into classrooms. Offsite events include interactive workshops, presentations, and assembly shows and *Family Science Night*, at which students and their families rotate through ten different stations of hands-on STEM activities.



STEM in Your Neighborhood



The Fleet Science Center was recently awarded a **\$3.7 million multi-year grant** from the National Science Foundation (NSF), funded by the Directorate for STEM Education via the Racial Equity in STEM Education activity. By highlighting stories and STEM identities of historically marginalized communities in their local contexts, STEM in Your Neighborhood (SiYN) challenges the pervasive narratives of white cultural dominance in STEM. Central to the project are the voices and lived experiences of the Southeastern San Diego communities, and, through SiYN, they will develop community-authored STEM narratives. Project partners include Project New Village, World Beat Center, NERD'S RULE INC and the Elementary Institute of Science.

NSF Award Number: 2411999

Wraparound Services for STEM Learning



As military contractors and supported by a grant from the Department of Navy's STEM Education and Workforce Program, the Fleet piloted Wraparound Services for STEM Learning (WSSL) in National City. This program supports STEM learning in schools and communities through in-school, out-of-school, and after-school activities for students, their families, and educators. In its second year, WSSL expanded drastically, reaching **4,272 children and adults** through workshops and community events in National City – a **270% increase** from year one. In the third and final year of the grant, the Fleet hopes to grow WSSL and to use the program as a STEM education model that can be replicated in other schools and communities through additional military contracts. We would love to explore similar opportunities for this programming in District 52.

Our partners: National School District, Sweetwater Union School District, National City Public Library, Naval Base San Diego, Ocean Connectors, Olivewood Gardens and Learning Center, A Reason to Survive (ARTS)

Art for Planetary Health

Funded by the Prebys Foundation, the *Art for Planetary Health* initiative invited five talented creatives from diverse San Diego neighborhoods to develop collaborative art pieces. Creatives were selected via committee, and each creative was given a **\$20k stipend**. They collaborated with their community members to explore the interconnectedness of human health and the environment through their projects at STEM Fairs and festivals across San Ysidro, Barrio Logan, National City, and Southeastern San Diego. Following the completion of all five art pieces, the *Art for Planetary Health* initiative culminated in a weekend-long exhibition at the Fleet Science Center in October 2024.



Yvette Roman | San Ysidro

letters to mother earth / cartas de la madre tierra featured letters from community members on handmade paper, infused with native seeds and crafted from materials collected during community clean-ups.

Activation: San Ysidro STEM Fair (April 2024)



Claudia Rodriguez-Biezunski | Barrio Logan

Our Sacred Planet is a 10' x10' textile tapestry created with the community, raising awareness of textile pollution and underscoring the importance of individual action in addressing environmental challenges.

Activation: Barrio Logan Art & Science Expo (April 2024)



Kline Swonger | National City

Landscape Labyrinth was built with eco-friendly cyanotype prints of local plants on rocks, created by community members.

Activation: Youth ARTS Festival (ARTS Center, May 2024)



La Raza Webb | Southeastern San Diego

Water Mane Art Experience is an installation exploring the relationship between Afro Hair and water.

Activation: Southeast Art & Science Expo (August 2024)



Dawud Hasan | Southeastern San Diego

StarDust is a multi-media performance project to elevate peoples' perceptions of who they are by highlighting that we are all made of elements that came from stars.

Activation: Community Health & STEM Fest (August 2024)

Two Scientists Walk into a Bar



Throughout FY2024, we partnered with **43 venues** across San Diego County to host a total of **68 occurrences** of *Two Scientists Walk into a Bar*, inviting local scientists to engage with their communities and share their passion and knowledge for STEM. To celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the program in September 2024, the Fleet collaborated with **Barley and Sword Brewing** to develop the *Thirst for Knowledge Festbier*, which debuted at a special edition of *Two Scientists* that spotlighted our local, brilliant scientists and the creative brewers and breweries who support the Fleet. Partners include:

- Ballast Point Brewing
- Belching Beaver
- Bivouac Ciderworks
- Culture Brewing
- Duck Foot Brewing
- Fall Brewing Co.
- Kove Brewing
- Lightning Brewing
- Modern Times Beer
- Original 40 Brewing
- Pure Project
- Quantum Brewing
- Storyhouse Spirits
- The Reading Club
- Thorn Brewing Co.

Building STEM Identities for Young Women



The Fleet's BE WiSE (Better Education for Women in Science and Engineering) program provides hands-on STEM learning experiences to female and female-identifying students in grades 7-12, fostering a community of young women with a passion for science. In FY2024, the Fleet partnered with **32 organizations** across San Diego to host workshops for **800 BE WiSE girls**, connecting them with female scientists and STEM professionals. BE WiSE host organizations have included:

- Allgire General Contractors
- B-NOW (Bristol Myers Squibb Network of Women)
- Cabrillo National Monument
- Carollo Engineers
- EcoLogik
- FBI San Diego
- Girls Who Click
- IF/THEN Ambassadors
- MANA de San Diego
- Nano Pharma Solutions
- National Marine Mammal Foundation
- Native Poppy
- Salk Institute
- Our Genetic Legacy
- Salk Institue
- San Diego State University
- University of California, San Diego

Museums For All



Since the Fleet Science Center joined *Museums for All* in July 2024, **6,434 visitors** have taken advantage of the program and its benefits. Administered by the Association of Children's Museums, *Museums for All* encourages people of all backgrounds to visit cultural institutions regularly and build lifelong museum-going habits. This program supports those receiving food assistance (SNAP) benefits visiting the Fleet Science Center for a minimal fee of \$3.00 per person for gallery-only admission. We are proud to be one of over 850 institutions participating in *Museums for All*, as this program helps raise awareness about how museums reach their entire communities, supporting the Fleet's mission of connecting everyone in San Diego to the power and possibilities of science.

As DOGE cuts hit SoCal cultural spaces and libraries, Little Tokyo museum fights to keep programs alive

By [Josie Huang](#)

Published Apr 19, 2025 5:00 AM



A panel of volunteers with the Japanese American National Museum give first-person testimony of being incarcerated during World War II. (Japanese American National Museum)

Throughout Southern California, museums and libraries in recent weeks have been learning they are collectively losing millions of federal dollars.

The Trump administration, led by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency, has been gutting agencies that support cultural and educational organizations around the country.

Against this bleak backdrop, one Los Angeles museum has stood out in speaking against the cuts.

As DOGE cuts hit SoCal cultural spaces, Little Tokyo museum fights to keep programs alive

Despite losing more than \$1.45 million in federal funds, leaders at the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo have been publicly saying they won't stray from their defense of civil rights to appease the Trump White House.



An educator with the Japanese American National Museum speak to teachers participating in a workshop that was until a few weeks ago funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. (Japanese American National Museum)

“We won't scrub any websites,” said Ann Burroughs, the museum’s president and chief executive, referring to the practice of [federal agencies removing references to diversity and inclusion](#). “We stand up for our values, and we aren't prepared to sacrifice those values for federal funding.”

Somewhere, somehow, the museum will have to recover the funds cut by National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

In the case of one program starting this summer, museum leaders knew they had to act fast.

Immersing teachers

For what was to be its third year of doing so, the museum was to host teachers for a continuing education program that, until this month, was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

More than 120 teachers have come from around the country to be immersed in every aspect of Japanese American history, including World War II incarceration and the post-war fight for civil rights. Last year's workshop included a trip to the former Manzanar War Relocation Center.

"Those individuals are reaching over 20,000 kids each year," said Lynn Yamasaki, the museum’s director of education. "The hope is that this is learning that they can apply throughout the rest of their teaching career."

Melissa Collins of Tennessee was part of last year’s teacher cohort. In a [video](#) about the program, Collins described wanting to be a better teacher because of the experience, which includes meeting Japanese Americans who were incarcerated.

“As they say, read history books, but I don't have to do that here,” Collins said. “I had an opportunity to talk to so many wonderful people who have impacted history.”



Teachers participating in the museum's summer workshops went to the Manzanar National Historic Site last year. (Adrianna Nicole Buenviaje)

With the latest round of teacher workshops scheduled to start in June, the Japanese American National Museum rushed to get the program funded. Days after its plight was covered in the news, an anonymous donor gave \$85,000 dollars.

A bright spot

Museum leaders were so heartened they issued a fundraising appeal to supporters and have raised the \$170,000 needed to put the program on.

“What they are doing is bold, and I think it is starting a movement of people wanting to resist what is happening in society,” said Rick Noguchi, the museum’s former chief operating officer.

Noguchi now leads [California Humanities](#), the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. He says strong voices are needed as the Trump administration attacks diversity and inclusion initiatives. He thinks back to when his own parents were children incarcerated during World War II.

“They were being taken to concentration camps, and there was no one there to stand in front of them,” Noguchi said. “And to think that this small museum, this Japanese American National Museum, is standing up for all of us? Pretty powerful.”

The museum’s funding victory offers inspiration as Noguchi faces his own struggle. State humanities councils like his learned this month they would lose all their funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

California Humanities can no longer make \$1 million in grants this year and expects it may have to close its own doors in about six months. Noguchi hopes to raise funds and fight the federal cuts in court with the other humanities councils. The state is already suing the Trump administration over [its dismantling of the Institute of Museum and Library Services](#).

“There’s an attack on culture, and there’s a struggle of who tells the history of this country, and that’s really what is at stake here,” Noguchi said.

Ripple effects around Southern California

Other smaller organizations across Southern California are also questioning how they will survive the federal cuts. The [Santa Monica History Museum](#) lost a \$25,000 federal humanities grant that was earmarked for enhancements to its Tongva exhibit and programming.

Also, the museum will no longer benefit from a program that provided free promotion and advertising to underserved communities after the Trump administration [shrunk the Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) late last month.

“We’re gutted,” Kathleen Rawson, chair of the Santa Monica museum’s board of directors, said in a statement. “Due to the fires, the first quarter fundraising has been dismal. Now coupled with the clawbacks of these essential grants, the museum’s existence is severely threatened.”

Meanwhile, projects that have been in the works for years are now stalled.

Coordinators of the [Chinatown History Project](#) say they've lost a \$300,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities that was to go toward building out an augmented reality project that would tell the story of L.A's first Chinatown before it was razed in the 1930's to construct Union Station.

"We're still reeling, actually, from this news," said Elizabeth Logan, who's helping to oversee the project as co-director of the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West. "I think we just have to figure out what the path forward looks like."

Neither the National Endowment for the Humanities nor the Institute of Museum and Library Services has responded to requests for comment.

Running out of time

At the Japanese American National Museum, leaders say they have been lucky to have a loyal donor base and will keep raising their own funds to support upgrades to its buildings and programs.

There is a sense of urgency around supporting programs where older Japanese Americans share their experiences of being incarcerated, such as the teacher workshops.

"We're not going to have these voices forever, and this might be the last time we get to share them on this scale," Yamasaki said. Yamasaki says after finishing a workshop last year, an Arkansas teacher went back to her classroom and arranged a Zoom call between a camp survivor in her 90s and her students.

"They get to meet a person who lived in Arkansas during World War II, because she was forcibly removed from her home and incarcerated in their home state," Yamasaki said. "And so, in that sense, it's local history too."

About California Museums

? What is a “Museum”?

Museums are nonprofit and educational institutions that make unique contributions to communities by interpreting and preserving the things of this world. Museums include art and natural history museums, historical societies and museums, science and technology centers, botanical gardens, zoos, children’s museums, aquariums, and cultural centers.



? How many museums are there in California?

There are over 1,500 museums in California. They are evenly distributed among communities of all sizes, in urban, suburban, and rural areas – and in every county across the state.

97% of Americans believe that museums are educational assets for their communities. This was true across all ages, races, and geographical locations.

- Museums are considered the most trustworthy source of information in America, rated higher than local papers, nonprofits researchers, the U.S. government, or academic researchers.
- Museums are good public investments and contribute greatly to the economy.

89% of Americans believe that museums provide important economic impacts back to their communities.

- California museums have a \$6.55 million financial impact on the economy and support 80,722 jobs.
- Museums generated \$492 million in tax revenues for the State of California in 2017, in addition to over \$1 billion in federal taxes.
- Cultural or heritage travelers spend 60% more on average than other leisure travelers.
- Museums and other nonprofit cultural organizations return more than \$5 in tax revenues for every \$1 they receive in funding from all levels of government.

22,000,000



It is estimated that California museums serve nearly **22 million visitors per year.**

Nationwide, more Americans visit museums than the attendance for all major league sporting events and theme parks combined. The following are examples of the impact of these museum visits:

- K-12 students who participated in one art museum field trip demonstrated stronger critical thinking skills, displayed higher levels of tolerance, and had more historical empathy.
- After their families, Americans rank authentic artifacts in history museums and historic sites most significant in creating a strong connection to the past.
- Children who visited a museum during kindergarten had higher achievement scores in reading, mathematics and science in third grade than children who did not.
- A study in Norway found that an appreciation of culture and the arts can lower the risk of anxiety and depression.
- Seeing wildlife in zoos and aquariums has a measurable impact on the conservation attitudes and understanding of adult visitors.
- Frequent museum visits increase a person's well-being to the same degree as making an additional \$5,301 per year.
- Students in hands-on, or activity-based, science programs have been shown to exhibit increases in creativity, positive attitudes toward science, perception, logic development, communication skills, and reading readiness.
- Museums are especially effective among traditionally marginalized, isolated people, like the elderly and unemployed.



More Information:

Please contact Jennifer Caballero, Executive Director, California Association of Museums, at 831-471-9970 x2, or cam@calmuseums.org.

WHY THE ARTS MATTER IN CALIFORNIA



NATIONAL ARTS FACTS

FOR-PROFIT & NON-PROFIT ARTS & CULTURE SECTORS REPRESENT

4.24% Nation's GDP **5.4 M** Jobs



\$1.17 TRILLION Arts & Culture



\$943.7 B Transportation



\$274.2 B Agriculture & Forestry

The national arts and culture sector was a **\$1.17 trillion industry** in **2023** (**4.24%** of the nation's GDP), representing **5.4 million jobs** (**3.35%** of nation's workforce), and total compensation of **\$553.9 billion**.

Source: [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#) & [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (2025). Data collected for 2023.

CALIFORNIA ARTS FACTS

FOR-PROFIT & NON-PROFIT ARTS & CULTURE SECTORS REPRESENT

7.5% State's GDP **821,183** Jobs



\$289 BILLION Arts & Culture



\$124.8 B Transportation



\$48.2 B Agriculture & Forestry

The California arts and culture sector was a **\$289 billion industry** in **2023** (**7.5%** of the state's GDP), representing **821,183 jobs** (**4.34%** of California's workforce), and total compensation of **\$136.2 billion**.

Source: [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#) & [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (2025). Data collected for 2023.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NON-PROFIT ARTS & CULTURE INDUSTRY AND AUDIENCES

National

\$151.7 B Economic activity annually

2.6 M Jobs supported by economic activity

In 2022, the impact of this economic activity generated **\$29.1 billion** in total tax revenue to federal, state, and local governments.

Source: Americans for the Arts (2023). [Arts & Economic Prosperity 6](#).

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FOR-PROFIT & NON-PROFIT ARTS & CULTURE INDUSTRY

Statewide Report of **Broader Creative Economy**

\$507.4 B Economic activity annually

In 2021, the **Otis College Report** on the Creative Economy measured the size of the broader for-profit, non-profit, & gig worker economy at **\$507.4 billion**.

Source: Otis College of Arts and Design (2021). [Otis College Report on the Creative Economy](#).

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Federal Appropriation FY25 **\$207 Million**

Congress allocated **\$207 million** to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in **FY25**. This amounts to just **62 cents per capita**. Ideally, Congress should index \$1 per capita funding to the NEA.

Source: [Americans for the Arts Action Fund](#), 2025.

PUBLIC FUNDING RECEIVED FOR CALIFORNIA ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR

State Appropriation FY25 **\$32,911,591**

NEA State Grant FY25 **\$1,519,591**

344 Direct NEA Grants FY24 **\$11,938,171**

Source: [NEA](#), [NASAA](#) 2025

CALIFORNIA ARTS HIGHLIGHTS

IN THE GOLDEN STATE, THE FUTURE IS CREATIVE



Investments in Arts, Culture & Creativity fuel California's economy, forge more resilient communities and foster health and wellbeing for all Californians.

California Arts Council

The mission of the California Arts Council, a state agency, is to advance California through the arts and creativity. Since its founding in 1976, the Arts Council has awarded more than 32,000 grants with a total investment of approximately \$400 million.

Executive Director: Danielle Brazell
Chair: Roxanne Messina Captor



[Learn more here.](#)

CA for the Arts champions arts and culture as essential to vibrant CA communities through statewide programming, services, and advocacy networks that foster public awareness and generate resources to cultivate a thriving cultural sector and creative industries. www.caforthearts.org

CEO: Julie Baker
Board President: Felicia Shaw

[Learn more here.](#)
[Join here.](#)



CA Arts Advocates is a comprehensive lobbying organization for the arts, culture and creative industries, working to influence equitable and just systems change through public policy and public investment.

CEO: Julie Baker
Board President: Josiah Bruny

[Learn more here.](#) [Join here.](#)

Create CA advocates for high-quality arts education for all students by providing policy expertise and mobilizing a statewide network of advocates and allied partners.

Executive Director: Dr. Veronica Alvarez
Chair: Cyrus Wadia

Arts Now, a program of Create CA, is a statewide network of arts education advocates who participate in professional development and local arts education coalition building. The goal is to ensure all young people have access to culturally responsive arts education that reflects and affirms students' culture. There are 50 Arts Now coalitions in 29 counties in CA. [Learn more here.](#)

CREATE CA

THE ARTS ARE EVERYWHERE

- **Arts in California Parks** is a new program from California State Parks that supports artists, culture bearers, California Native American tribes, and communities in creating artwork that offers perspective on our past and present. The program will establish art installations and programming in State and local parks. This program is designed to foster vibrant community engagement, support local artists, and celebrate cultural diversity through the creation of art and culture programming in local parks. artsincaliforniaparks.org/
- Since its inception in July 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom's \$1.2 billion **Clean California initiative** has restored beauty, rejuvenated community pride and celebrated regional identities across the state. From Siskiyou and Modoc Counties in the north, to San Diego and Imperial

Counties in the south and hundreds of places in between, regional art and talented local artists have played a starring role in neighborhood transformations across the Golden State as part of Clean California. In all, the program has inspired more than 600 installed or planned public murals, mosaics, sculptures and gateway monuments. dot.ca.gov/news-releases/news-release-2024-029

- **Established with the 2023-24 state budget**, the **Creative Economy Working Group** is tasked with developing a strategic plan which will conduct a comparative analysis with other jurisdictions, evaluate existing financing models and government initiatives, identify opportunities for educational programs as well as earn and learn job training employment, detail the geographic areas with the least amount of access or opportunity for a creative economy, and analyze

existing initiatives and projects, including the role that local governments can play in creating a stronger creative economy. The strategic plan is due to the Legislature by June 30, 2025.

arts.ca.gov/programs/creative-economy-workgroup/

- **California Cultural Districts** highlight the cultural legacy of our state's most valuable resource—its diversity. From larger, urban areas to uncharted rural locations, each district helps grow and sustain authentic arts and culture opportunities, increase the visibility of local artists, and promote socio-economic and ethnic diversity through culture and creative expression. 14 districts serve as California's inaugural state designated Cultural Districts, highlighting some of the thriving cultural diversity and unique artistic identities within local communities across California. www.caculturaldistricts.org/

4/14/2025



JOIN THE ARTS ACTION FUND FOR FREE TODAY!

E-MAIL US: ArtsActionFund@artsusa.org **VISIT US:** ArtsActionFund.org

FOLLOW US:





State Arts Funding + Legislation Overview

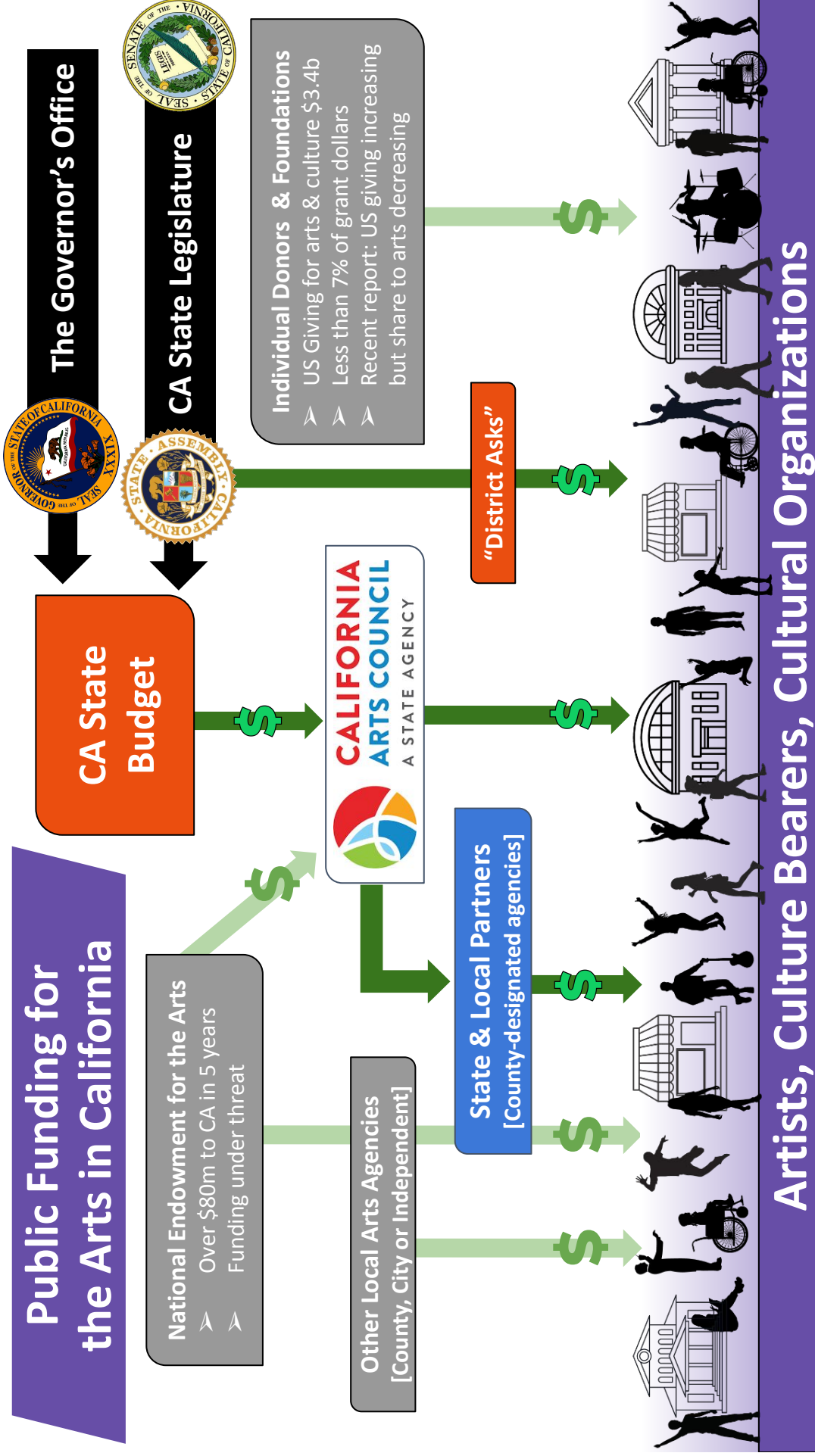
Contact:

Julie Baker, CEO | CA Arts Advocates

julie@californiaartsadvocates.org

Cell: 916-296-1838

Public Funding for the Arts in California



Context

California Arts Council Funding History

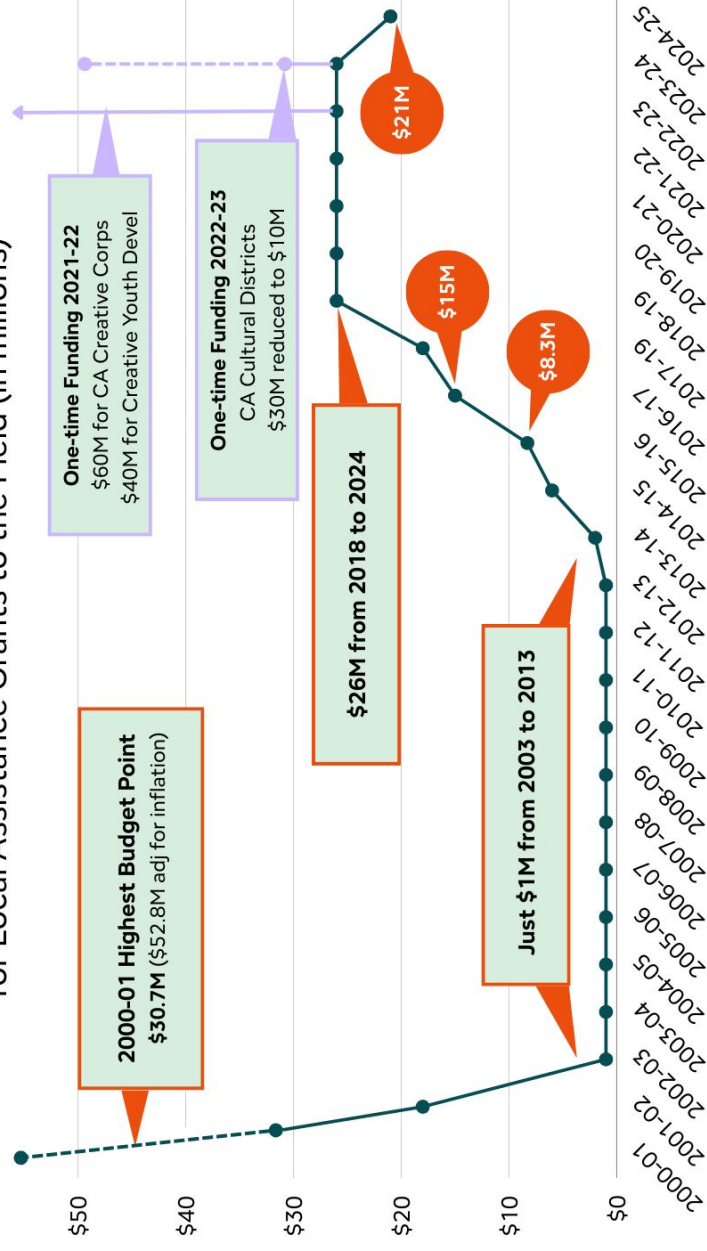
CA 35th in the Nation in per capita arts spending

- Funded at only \$1M for 10 years
- At \$26M since 2018
- Reduced to \$21m in 24-25 budget
- Total grant request: \$56m, only 33% funded

For 2025-26 go back to \$26m in baseline funding

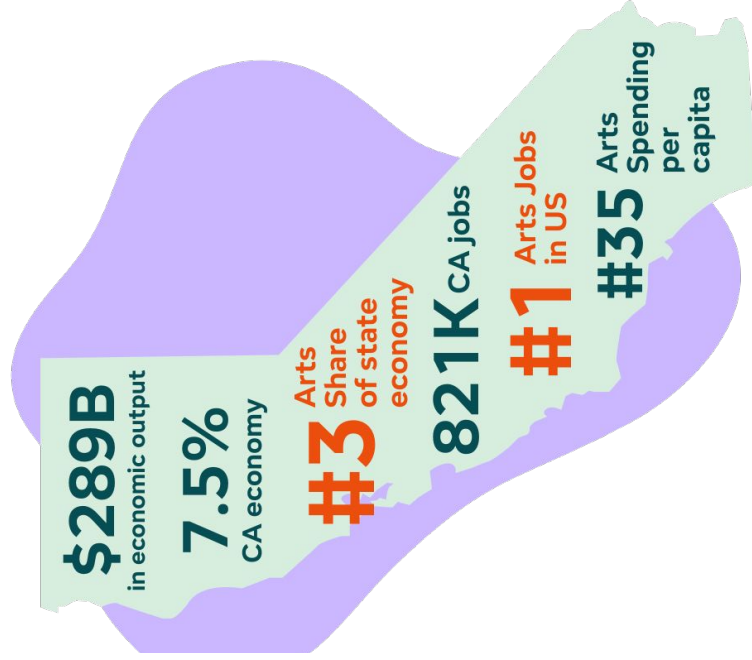
Return \$5m!

History of California Arts Council Allocation for Local Assistance Grants to the Field (in millions)



Context

CA Investment Fails to Match Impact



| Impact of Arts & Culture Industries on State Economy | | | Investment in State Arts Agencies | |
|---|------------------------|------------------|--|------------------|
| State | Arts&Culture Value Add | Share of Economy | Arts Spending Per Capita | National Ranking |
| California | \$289B | 7.5%* | \$0.53 | #35 |
| New York | \$165B | 7.6% | \$5.21 | #4 |
| Minnesota | \$15B | 3.1% | \$9.62 | #1 |
| Mississippi | \$3B | 1.8% | \$3.57 | #7 |
| ➤ US Bureau of Economic Analysis 2025 *CA dropped from 8% in 2024 report | | | ➤ National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2024 | |

Recent CA Public Funding: Over \$70 million in reductions to programs since 2023

2021-22 Relief Funding to CAL-OSBA: **Live Venues Grant** program @\$150M; **Museum Grant** program @\$50M; **Nonprofit Performing Arts** @\$49.5M; **Cultural institutions** @\$50M; **\$500k to build a nonprofit paymaser. Over \$300m in relief grants!**

2021-22 Single largest appropriation to California Arts Council – **CA Creative Corps** @\$60M; and **Creative Youth Development** @\$40M

2022-2023 **Cultural Districts Program** @\$30M; **Arts in Parks** @\$25M; **Prop 28 passes**. Historic Ballot measure to allocate approximately **\$1B to arts education annually**

2023-24 **Cultural district funding reduced** from \$30M over 3 years to \$10M for 1 year; **Creative Economy Strategic Plan** @ \$1M; **SB 1116 implementation** @\$12.5M to CAL-OSBA to implement

2024-25 **ARTS FUNDING LOSSES:** total \$45.5m **Museum Grant Program** – \$29.5 m; **Arts in the Parks** –\$11m, **CAC** – \$5m for two years

2025-26 No increased funding in January budget proposal except Film/TV tax credit
NOTE: **Federal funding threatened, current grants terminated.**

Recent CA Legislation Highlights : Arts & Culture

- 2017** AB 189 (Bloom) Established Cultural District Program under CA Arts Council (CAC)
- 2021** SB 628 (Allen) CA Creative Workforce Act of 2021
- 2022** AB 2799 (Jones Sawyer) Decriminalizing Artistic Expression Act
- 2023** SB 1116 (Portantino) The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund
- 2023** Prop 28 The Arts and Music in Schools Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act
- 2024** AB 812 (Boerner) Housing development approvals: reserving affordable units in or near a cultural district for artists
- 2024** AB 127 (Budget) Creative Economy Working Group
- In Process 25-26:**
- SB 456 (Ashby)** Community Beautification Act
- AB 1349 (Bryan)** Consumer protection: ticket sellers.
- SB 630 (Allen)** + **AB 1138** (Zbur, Bryan) Income and corporate taxes: tax credits: motion pictures
- SB 370 (Ashby)** California Music Festival Preservation Grant Program
- SB 756** (Smallwood-Cuevas) + **AB 1377** (McKinnor) Income taxes: credits: motion picture credit

2025 – 26 Policy Priorities

Budget Items CAA is advocating for:

PROTECT CULTURAL FUNDING

- ★ **RESTORE \$5 million to CAC budget** that was cut in 24–25
 - AEST Chair Chris Ward submitted [Budget Request Letter](#) with 7 sign ons
 - Action: [Send letter urging support](#) to Governor and state reps

INVEST in CREATIVE WORKERS

- ★ **RESTORE \$5 million to Cultural Districts + \$5m to agency requested by Senator Smallwood–Cuevas**
 - [CA Cultural District program](#) designated 14 districts in 2017
 - \$30m allocated in 22–23, clawed back to just \$10m in 23–24
 - CAC expanding Cultural Districts in 2025–26

BUILD our CREATIVE FUTURE

- ★ **RESTORE Museum Grant Funding** – perhaps through Climate Bond
 - \$25.5m clawed back in 24–25, even after applications submitted



2024

IMPACT REPORT
JULY 2023-JUNE 2024

*The **Fleet Science Center** is a countywide nonprofit organization with a mission to realize a San Diego where **everyone** is connected to the power of science.*

140,731

Students/youth at the Fleet
and in the community
4.5% increase over 2023



*"We love working
with Two Scientists
and the Fleet."*

– Brewery Owner

408,380

Adults, students, and youth served in in 2024
4.7% increase over 2023

*"This opportunity
meant a lot for us in
the community."*

– Art For Planetary
Health Creator



26M

People served since 1973

*"This is my third
event, and I have
had just the most
amazing, wonderful,
informative time."*

– Teacher

99.9%

of ZIP codes in San Diego County reached



*"This was an
amazing field trip...I loved
doing science with you."*

– Student
Chesterton Elementary



A decade ago, the Fleet set an ambitious goal: evolve from a museum in Balboa Park to a County-wide organization placing science at the service of community. This journey involved numerous listening sessions, collaborations, experiments, and relationship-building across neighborhoods, schools, organizations, government agencies, and businesses. Ten years later, we're seeing results. Anchored by our Balboa Park museum and renovated Heikoff Giant Dome Theater, the Fleet now:

- Extends exhibitions to library locations across the county, hosting 46 exhibitions in the last year alone.
- Leads ongoing collaborations with San Ysidro, National City, Barrio Logan, and Southeastern San Diego neighborhoods.
- Supports all 42 county school districts with in-class programs, family science nights, and teacher professional development.
- Offer summer camps in neighborhood locations as well as after-school programming at 10 school sites.
- Connects San Diegans with over 200 scientists and engineers through programs like the decade-old "Two Scientists Walk into a Bar".
- And finally, this past year, the Fleet Science Center reached children and adults from 99.9% of San Diego County residential ZIP codes.

These efforts represent long-term commitments that, together with our Balboa Park facility, create a robust infrastructure for county-wide STEM engagement.

With this foundation, we're positioned to develop new opportunities to expand our reach and impact. Thank you for being part of our community as we work toward a San Diego where **everyone** connects with the power of science!



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Steven L. Snyder".

STEVEN L. SNYDER, Ph.D.
President & CEO



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Co-creating with Communities

Connecting People to Science Where They Live, Work and Play

Partnering with community members and organizations to put science at the service of their communities is central to the Fleet's mission. Over the past 12 years, the Fleet has collaborated with neighborhoods to build mutual respect and trust, cultivating strong relationships with community members, leaders, and organizations while honoring each neighborhood's unique values and strengths.

Through these partnerships, we are proud to co-create programs, projects, and initiatives that respond to community needs.



NEW INITIATIVES

Art for Planetary Health

Supported by the Prebys Foundation, **Art for Planetary Health** engaged creatives to co-create projects on the topic of environmental health and its relation to human health. A ten-person selection committee of representatives from each of the Fleet's partner communities selected the five creatives.

Claudia Rodriguez-Biezunski and Barrio Logan community members co-created a tapestry from used denim, highlighting textile pollution. Yvette Roman and San Ysidro community members wrote messages on hand-made paper infused with seeds from native plants to explore their relationship with nature. Kline Swonger invited adults and children in National City to create cyanotypes, an eco-friendly contact print on rocks, to form a labyrinth.

Launched in March of 2024

7,869 Children and adults served

In Southeastern San Diego, La Raza Webb created a dialogue about hair care practices on water quality. The multi-media project StarDust, highlighted stars as the origin of elements that build our bodies, with a performance of music, rap, breakdancing, and film elements, by Founder Dawud Hasan, Co-Founder Ivan Cofey, and community members from Southeastern San Diego. All five projects were featured in the Fleet's galleries and at a special showcase event in October.





Full STEAM Ahead/Adelante STEAM in National City

Full STEAM Ahead/Adelante STEAM, supported by a grant from the Department of Navy's STEM Education and Workforce Program, expanded significantly in its second year. The Fleet and National City partners more than doubled the number of families, students, and educators engaged through in-school programs, afterschool activities, and family events.

This growth is part of a larger Collaborative that, in just a few years, has reached nearly 5,800 individuals through trusted local partnerships. By centering the learner, we've built a diverse, community-driven network that connects learning inside and outside the classroom and ensures every student can find their path.

Attendance Across Our Programs

1,653 In-school and After-school programs

93 Parent trainings

2,507 Family STEM events

19 Teacher Professional Development

OUR PARTNERS





Nano Exhibit



Fleet on the Go in Neighborhood Libraries

In its second year, **Fleet on the Go** expanded dramatically, bringing 47 exhibits to 16 public libraries across San Diego County. Hands-on interactives and engaging exhibits reached more than 25,000 community members in neighborhoods from San Ysidro to Rancho Peñasquitos and from Skyline Hills to University City.

16 Libraries

47 Installations

***25,057** Served

*5% of total library attendance.

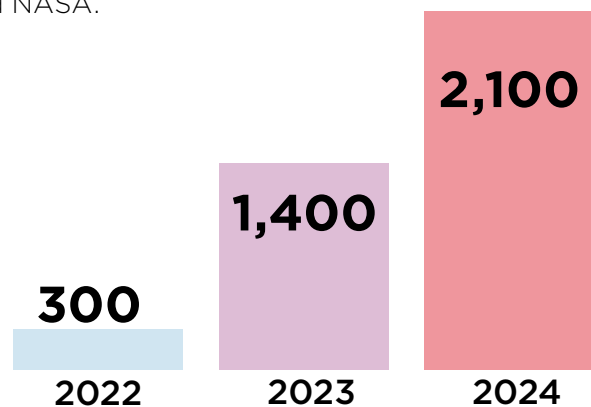


San Ysidro STEM Fair

Growing significantly for its third year, the **San Ysidro STEM Fair** welcomed a multi-generational crowd of more than 2,100 people. The Fleet worked with 35 partners to cocreate this event to engage kids students, parents and grandparents with hands-on science activities, demonstrations, a Color Run, STEM song performances and several raffles for prizes.



This year's event connected attending students to nearby peer role models from San Ysidro High School, including student volunteers from San Ysidro's robotics team, the Cougarbots. At the event, Casa Familiar's Promotoras captured more than 200 surveys, indicating strong support for community events to increase parents' connections to what STEM looks like and how to support it. The Fleet received grants of support for the 2024 San Ysidro STEM Fair from the Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) Voya Financial and NASA.





Supporting Schools

Serving schools throughout San Diego County, the Fleet connected students to science through in-school programs and field trips to the Fleet Science Center. Classroom teachers use Fleet's programs to build scientific and mathematical habits of mind and improve intrinsic motivation and foster interest in science.

390 Schools

59,832 Students



Family Science Nights

Held at schools, **Family Science Nights** bring together children, parents and teachers to experience hands-on, standards-based science investigations that are both informative and enjoyable. Bilingual materials ensure that everyone can participate.

11,933 Students and family members served in 2024

In-School Workshops and Assemblies

The Fleet brought inquiry-based, hands-on **School Workshops** for grades TK-8 on a wide variety of topics to schools throughout San Diego County. To engage larger groups of students and build science interest, the Fleet's science communicators used exciting demonstrations in the popular *Don't Try This at Home* live stage show.

9,624 Students served
28% increase over 2023



Field Trips and Access Science

As the second largest provider of field trips in San Diego County, the Fleet Science Center connects to schools in more than 40 school districts. The **Access Science** program provides Title I schools with the opportunity to have their field trip fully underwritten by Fleet contributors. The Fleet also helps teachers leverage their visit with free lesson plans, exhibit guides and documentary film guides designed to help teachers meet Next Generation Science Standards.

29,794 Students visited the Fleet on a field trip

5,696 Free student admission through Access Science

392 Schools/education providers served

57% increase over 2023



Building STEM Identity

Supporting and Celebrating Interest and Participation in Science

Studies show that the stories we tell about science influence how kids see themselves. Fostering STEM identity means building a student's understanding and belief that science is for them and something they do. Without this understanding, our youth are unlikely to believe that they could have a career STEM, or to feel empowered to use science to address their community's issues.

As a cultural organization, the Fleet Science Center is in a unique position to support narratives that are inclusive of the wide diversity of people and cultures of San Diego. By connecting our youth to STEM professionals and celebrating the STEM identities of all San Diegans, the Fleet is investing the future of our community, the future of our workforce and the innovations that will come from new voices, ideas and insights.



SciTech

In 2024, the Fleet Science Center doubled the number of schools served by the **SciTech** program, an interactive after-school program for girls in grades 4–6. The program is in high demand, so this year 10 schools were chosen to participate, which increased the number of students reached in the 2023–24 school year.

SciTech culminates in the schools coming together at the Fleet Science Center for a Tech Challenge. In 2024, the SciTech girls worked in teams to design, build and test a Mars Rover. At the Tech Challenge, judges from the community watched as the girls' rovers were dropped from a height of 8' and deployed upon landing.

3,935 Hours of after school project-based learning

4-6 | **151**
Grades | Students

2023–24 **SciTech** Schools

- *Bostonia Global Academy, El Cajon*
- *Avondale Elementary, Spring Valley*
- *Logan Memorial, Logan Heights*
- *Bayside STEAM Academy, Imperial Beach*
- *Palomar Elementary, Chula Vista*
- *Vista Grande Elementary, Canyon Hills*
- *San Miguel Elementary, Lemon Grove*
- *Cherokee Point Elementary, City Heights*
- *Washington STEAM, Downtown San Diego*
- *Los Altos Elementary, Otay Mesa West*



BE WiSE (Better Education for Women in Science and Engineering)

BE WiSE engages young women to build STEM identity, offering STEM learning experiences in collaboration with the region's research, industry and academic institutions.

This spring the Fleet welcomed its newest class of seventh and eighth grade girls who will be a part of the BE WiSE program until they graduate from high school. Many alums of the program stay involved as volunteers and mentors for years to come.

In 2023-24, the girls participated in 47 engagement opportunities including workshops, volunteer/community activities, and networking events. New this year was the opportunity to volunteer along with local scientists to bring hands-on science activities to visitors of farmers markets in Cardiff, Ramona and Vista.

47 Companies/organizations hosted workshops

7-12
Grades

700
Students

Companies/Organizations that hosted BE WiSE workshops

| | |
|---|--|
| Aequor, Inc. | Native Poppy |
| Allgire General Contractors | Our Genetic Legacy |
| Bristol Myers Squibb | Salk Institute |
| Carollo Engineers | San Diego State University Electron Microscopy Facility* |
| Civile Apparel | San Diego State University Rocket Club |
| EcoLogik* | Steinmetz Lab, UC San Diego |
| FBI San Diego | UC San Diego Center for Empathy and Technology |
| Girls Who Click | UC San Diego Department of Astronomy & Astrophysics |
| IF/THEN Ambassadors | UC San Diego Gender Minorities in Bioengineering Club |
| MANA San Diego* | |
| Materials Research Science and Engineering Center | |
| Nano Pharma Solutions | |
| National Marine Mammal Foundation* | |

"I have the Fleet Science Center to thank. It's programs like Be WiSE and memories like those at the Science Center that I can now see were the stepping stones to me becoming an engineer. Kids need programs like these and locations like the Fleet to experience the world of science and engineering."



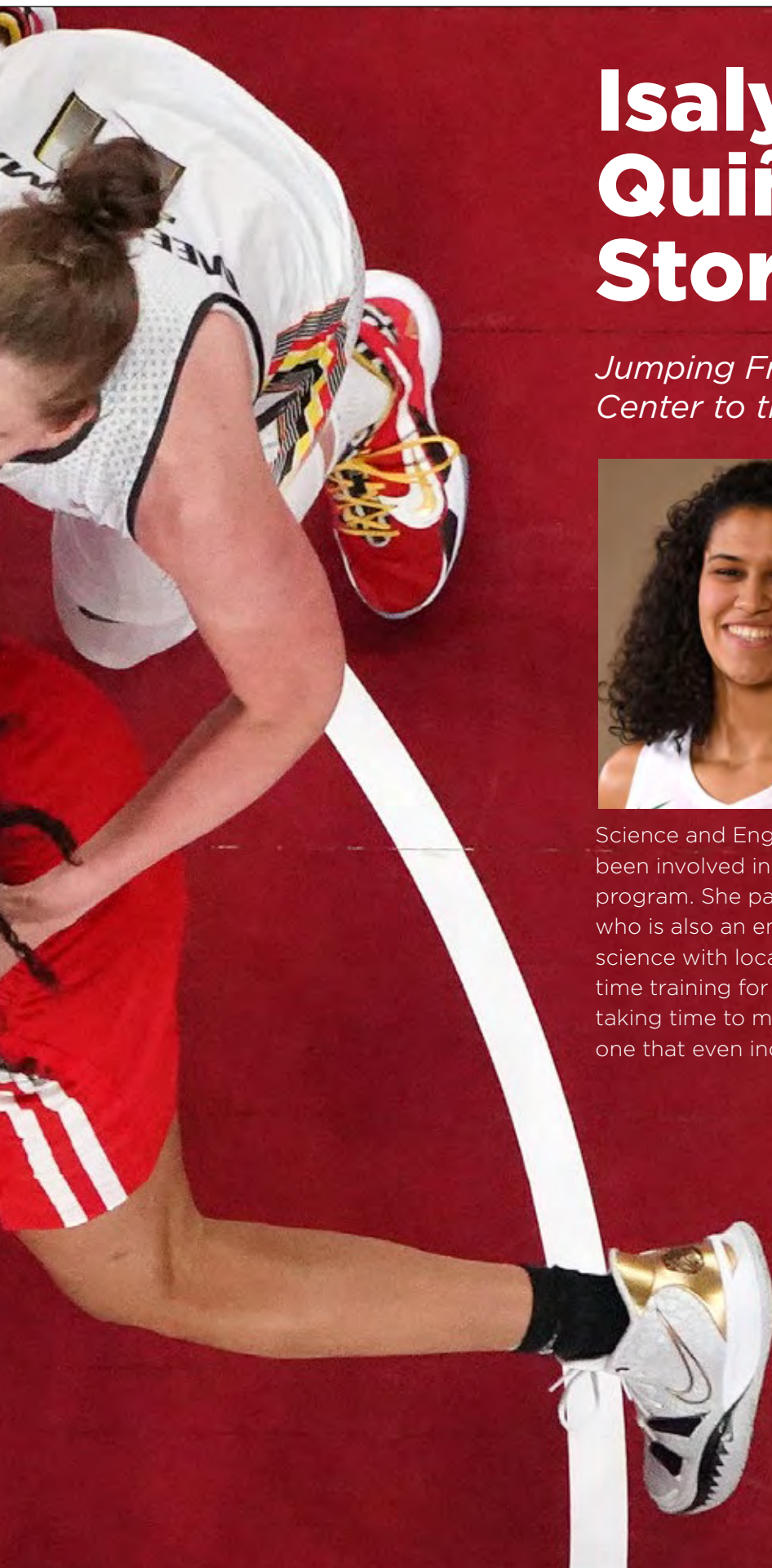
Isalys Quiñones' Story

Jumping From the Fleet Science Center to the Olympics



Two-time Olympic athlete and environmental engineer Isalys Quiñones remembers growing up at the Fleet Science Center with her family using their annual passes to come frequently on weekends. When they were in middle school, Isalys and her sister joined the BE WiSE (Better Education for Women in

Science and Engineering) program. Most recently, Isalys has been involved in the Fleet's Two Scientists Walk into a Bar® program. She participates with her mom Frances Quiñones, who is also an engineer, and they start conversations around science with locals in an open and fun setting. During her time training for the Paris 2024 Olympics, Isalys appreciated taking time to meet people and talk about a range of topics, one that even included if aliens are real.





NEW INITIATIVE

IF/THEN® Ambassadors

BE WiSE girls and the public were invited to the Fleet Science Center to meet six San Diego scientists and engineers who were named **IF/THEN** Ambassadors by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Life-sized 3D printed statues of each ambassador were part of a collection of 125 statues representing female STEM innovators and high-profile role models for girls. After traveling around the country, the statues of the six San Diegans were displayed at the Fleet Science Center throughout the year to inspire the next generation of scientists!

Saturday Science Clubs for Girls

5-8

Grades

9

Workshops

162

Total
attendance

This monthly public program is offered on the weekend at the Fleet Science Center. Girls can participate in sessions geared specifically for girls, and in the co-ed sessions. In these workshops, students in grades 5-8 dive into hands-on activities from diverse fields of science and meet with local scientists. The club's goals are to nurture a positive enthusiasm for science, boost confidence in participating in scientific activities, and promote understanding of STEM professions and connections with STEM role models.



Youth Development

Research shows that hands-on, free-choice experiences play an important role in a child's development. The Fleet Science Center looks to expand every child's ability to connect with science through programs—clubs, camps, scouting badge workshops, career fairs—that reach across age, time and space.

Junior Science Club

9 Sessions

1-4
Grades

369
Students

The monthly **Junior Science Club** weekend workshops always fill quickly with students in grades 1-4, who are eager to explore everything from biology basics to planets and stars. This program is designed to nurture a positive enthusiasm for science, boost confidence in participating in scientific activities and foster an understanding of STEM professions.

Young Scientists

8 Sessions

3-5
Grades

228
Students

The **Young Scientists** program offers parents and their 3 to 5 year-old children a series of engaging sessions that provide developmentally appropriate, informal learning experiences that support and enhance exploration, create excitement and facilitate scientific discoveries.



STEM Camps

21,064 Hours of science-rich experiences

792 Total attendance (TK-8)

The Fleet's **STEM Camps** have always been a popular choice for kids and parents looking to find a fun and meaningful way to spend a school holiday. This past summer, our camps' popularity reached a new high with every one of our Balboa Park camps sold-out, and every available room in the building full.

Increased demand over the last few years has prompted the Fleet to offer off-site camps, as well. This past year, the Fleet offered camp experiences during the summer, fall, winter and spring break periods at four sites across San Diego County.



SURVEY QUESTIONS:

Why did you choose the Fleet Science Center for Camp?
(choose all that apply)

Our child(ren) expressed an interest in science camps

71%

We wanted to increase STEM exposure to our child(ren)

62%

We were familiar with Fleet and wanted to try camp

56%





A Place of Inspiration

Creating Transformational Moments at the Fleet Science Center

Since 1973, the Fleet Science Center's flagship experience in Balboa Park has been a place of hands-on experimentation, exploration and inspiration. In the galleries, the Heikoff Giant Dome Theater and the learning labs, "ah, ha!" moments happen every day that can change someone's understanding of science and even influence their future.

Home to the world's first tilted dome planetarium and giant dome IMAX® theater, the Fleet has welcomed more than 26 million people and served multiple generations. It has become a place where scientists and engineers connect with the public and where families build community around science.

Studio X

Makerspaces are all about community—they help you learn how to work together and complete a project while creatively experimenting with different techniques. **Studio X**, the Fleet’s makerspace facilitated hours and was open to visitors for free on most days in 2024. Studio “eXperts” provided tools and materials to help bring projects—inspired by our exhibits and visitor imaginations—to life.



Sharp Minds / Senior Mondays

In 2024, the Fleet welcomed 857 seniors at a special discounted rate for an engaging lecture on fascinating scientific topics, followed by a show in the Heikoff Giant Dome Theater. These **Sharp Minds** lectures on the first Monday of the month, featured local scientists as they discussed their latest research and discoveries in a friendly, inviting environment.



Accessibility Mornings

On the third Saturday of each month, the Fleet hosts visitors who benefit from low sensory experiences for **Accessibility Mornings**. This program includes free admission for one guest and one chaperone, quieted exhibit galleries and a documentary screening with the lights on and a lower soundtrack volume.



Community Mornings

To thank the Fleet’s communities of focus during the organization’s 50th anniversary, the Fleet hosted 533 people at **Community Mornings**. Residents of San Ysidro, National City and Southeastern San Diego enjoyed the Fleet Science Center complimentary and as a community, each on a specific Saturday morning starting one hour before the Fleet opened to the public. Multi-generational families from each community were welcomed with breakfast snacks and a special film screening. The Fleet also provided free round trip bus transportation from their neighborhoods.



Heikoff Giant Dome Theater

The Heikoff Giant Dome Theater brings science to life through breathtaking IMAX® documentaries. As the world's first tilted dome theater and San Diego's largest screen, it immerses audiences in stunning landscapes, groundbreaking discoveries, and inspiring human achievements. Each screening fosters curiosity, deepens understanding, and connects viewers to the wonders of our planet and beyond.



Top grossing theater for *Deep Sky*

98,747 Attended
Documentary Films



Exhibits

The Fleet Science Center's exhibits turn curiosity into discovery through hands-on, immersive experiences. From engineering challenges to explorations of the natural world, our exhibits inspire all ages to engage with science in meaningful ways. Through innovation and community partnerships, we expand access to interactive learning, ensuring every visitor experiences the wonder of science and its power to shape the future.



347,143

Visitors from every city in San Diego County and every state in the United States

DESIGN ZONE

What does it take to design a roller coaster, mix music, or build a video game? In **Design Zone**, explore how creative professionals use math to solve real-world challenges through hands-on activities in art, music, engineering, and design.





Based on the bestselling book series, **The Worst-Case Scenario: Survival Experience** drops you into real-life emergencies with hands-on challenges, puzzles, and survival training that build problem-solving, calm under pressure, and creative thinking skills.



Color in a New Light explores the science of color—seen and unseen—through hands-on exhibits like a walk-in kaleidoscope, anti-gravity mirror, and super-black paint. Discover how we perceive color and what lies beyond vision.





The STEM Professional Next Door

Connecting Scientists and the Community

San Diego has a remarkable population of scientists and engineers—more than 20% of jobs in our community are based in STEM disciplines—many of whom are eager to engage with the public and to give back by volunteering.

Leveraging our deep connections to the community, the Fleet Science Center has developed a portfolio of initiatives to connect this vast reserve of STEM experts with the community.



Two Scientists Walk into a Bar®

What started as part joke part experiment, ten years later is a powerful and popular way for the science community and the public to connect. In addition to sending 50 scientists into 25 bars on the same evening once a quarter, the Fleet celebrated **Two Scientists Walk into a Bar** with a 10th Anniversary party at Barley & Sword Brewing. Volunteer scientists and engineers who have participated in the program came together to lift a glass of the specially brewed Thirst for Knowledge Festbier crafted by Barley & Sword in partnership with scientists who are part of the Fleet's program.



200 Volunteer Scientists and Engineers

73 Bars and Brewery Partners

Science Communication Training

The Fleet increased **Science Communication Training** in 2024 by developing and providing training as part of UCSD MRSEC (Materials Research Science and Engineering Center) National Science Foundation funded efforts. Working with undergraduates, graduate students, and post-docs, the Fleet helped them shape their communications with the public as part of their Broader Impact requirements from the NSF.

To increase awareness of the Fleet's ability to support Broader Impact efforts and train faculty and students on science communication, Fleet staff presented at SDSU and were also invited to speak to UCSD NSF career grant applicants.



The Fleet at Comic-Con International: San Diego 2024

2 Panel Discussions

700 Served

Fleet had two panels at Comic-Con 2023, which used pop culture topics to engage sold-out crowds with meaningful science content. For Ms. Marvel and the Power of Representation, seven scientists focused on the significance of this series' representation of Muslim-American girls and touched on themes of inclusion, intersectionality, and diversity in STEM fields. Our second panel discussion, Dr. Evil: Scientists as Villains in Pop Culture, explored the reasons behind the typical portrayal of scientists as villains.

San Diego STEM Ecosystem

The Fleet serves as the facilitator and Central Project Office for the **San Diego STEM Ecosystem**, a collaboration among 232 local nonprofit, businesses, schools and community groups focused on building a stronger STEM learning system for all San Diego County.

Number of **STEM Ecosystem** member organizations by sector:

| | |
|--|--|
| 15 Schools/School Districts | 12 Professional/Trade/Student Associations |
| 48 Afterschool/Out-of-School Time Providers | 2 Curriculum Providers |
| 32 Museums, Science Centers and Zoos | 30 Colleges, Universities, and Certificate/Credential Programs |
| 38 Business/Industry | 22 Community-based Organizations, Family/Parent Organizations, Youth Organizing & Advisory Groups |
| 27 Advocacy, Philanthropy and Government | |
| 6 Libraries | |



The Fleet Community

Celebrating Fleet Trustees, Staff and Sponsors

The Impact of the Fleet Science Center's efforts depends entirely on the talents, passion, and strength of its Volunteers, Staff, Advisors and Trustees. Their success and dedication are essential to the organization's future and the change we strive to create. The Staff and Board of Trustees are grateful for their commitment and support, as we work together to realize a San Diego that is connected to the power of science.

LEADERSHIP

FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

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Director of Institutional
Engagement

Paul M. Siboroski

Director of Special Projects,
Interim Director of Exhibits



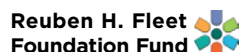
Special Thanks to the Fleet's
Advisory Council and Volunteers
for their generous contributions of
time, talent and support.

SPONSORS

FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024

The Fleet Science Center is grateful to our Corporate, Foundation and Organization Partners for their generous donations, which support the Fleet's programs, initiatives and exhibitions. The following partners made contributions between July 1, 2023 and December 31, 2024.

RHODIUM LEVEL (\$50,000 AND ABOVE)



County of San Diego
Neighborhood
Reinvestment Program

PLATINUM LEVEL (\$25,000 - \$49,000)



Rice Family
Foundation



Ripples Forever
Foundation

GOLD LEVEL (\$10,000 - \$24,999)



City of San Diego
Public Utilities
Department



Solar Turbines
A Caterpillar Company



Beyster Family
Foundation Fund IV



SILVER LEVEL (\$5,000 - \$9,999)



The Paul Bechtner
Foundation

City of San Diego
Community Projects,
Programs and Services

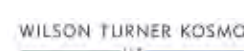


BRONZE LEVEL (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

The Downing
Family Foundation

**MIT Club of
San Diego**

The Eli and Pauline
Nierman Family Fund



TITANIUM LEVEL (\$1,500 - \$2,499)



The Joseph and Anna
Gartner Foundation

Strauss Family
Foundation



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California Arts Advocacy Field Survey

2024



November, 2024

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Established 1996: A comprehensive lobbying organization for the arts, culture and creative industries, working to influence equitable and just systems change through public policy and public investment. www.caartsadvocates.org



Established 2007: Champions arts and culture as essential to vibrant CA communities through statewide programming, services, and advocacy networks that foster public awareness and generate resources to cultivate a thriving cultural sector and creative industries. www.caforthearts.org

On Front Page:

Advocates at the 2024 Advocacy Day Rally.
Photographed by Alan Scheckter

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Executive Summary

CA for the Arts' last field-wide survey was conducted in 2020 during the early stages of the global crises caused by COVID-19. The 2024 California Arts Advocacy Survey report finds that while most of the acute impacts of the pandemic have receded, there is the sense that the arts ecosystem has been reshaped by corresponding economic and social forces as well as by the awakenings to inequity and injustice provoked by recent social movements.

Through the 2024 survey, we sought to understand how members of California's creative community are experiencing and defining this emergent world, what conditions they are working within and what solutions they have created or are seeking. The report that follows reflects what has been learned from the insights, challenges, adaptations and aspirations shared by the arts workers and representatives of cultural organizations and creative businesses that participated in the survey. This data offers facets of their collective experience and point to directions in which the field is headed. They also reveal patterns of opportunities and challenges that delineate the systems of support needed for the field to thrive in this changed landscape.



Key Findings

California's creative community is in a "new normal," facing tremendous pressures and meeting these challenges with creativity - leaning into collaboration, adaptation and reinvention. But they are overwhelmingly ready to advocate for a new social contract that embeds the arts in civic priorities, that provides needed infrastructure and produces the necessary conditions to sustain their work and ensure a just distribution of resources in their field.

-  California arts workers and organizations are facing precarity, putting the state's creative economy and cultural identity at risk. **Both organizations and individuals report they are affected by long term underinvestment and impacted by external pressures from rising property, employment and operational costs that aren't matched with comparable increases in wages or revenues.** These pressures are destabilizing organizations and threatening to displace artists from their communities and even the state.
-  There is a "new normal" – an emergence from the pandemic to a state of fluid responses to pressure points and opportunities in the arts ecosystem. While 8% of respondents report that COVID continues to have a direct impact on their operations or livelihoods, almost all participants report their world has been remade in some way by both long term and emerging challenges and by the opportunities they created or accessed in response to the pandemic.
-  Creativity, innovation and resourcefulness are the hallmarks of how the cultural community responded to the impacts of the pandemic on their operations and livelihoods. **85% of organizations and 67% of individuals report they've developed new ways of working the past three years, with many of their pivots becoming permanent practices.** And they want to build upon the innovations spurred by COVID relief programs and cross-sector funding opportunities.
-  Social justice and equity movements continue to reshape the values and practices of the field. Members of the field are committed to advancing equity, representing the diversity in their communities and employing inclusive and accessible practices. **Equitable outcomes still need to be championed and realized through action and allyship.** The field is requesting knowledge-sharing and resources as well as support in self-defining practices and outcomes based on more localized conditions.
-  Respondents express an urgency to create change. California's creative community has identified insufficient funding for the arts and culture sector as their top challenge. While less than 20% of participants self-identify as advocates, 82% say they are likely to advocate for increased funding to California Arts Council, the state arts agency, with 55% being "very likely." And the field is ready to advocate for cross-sector programs that provide jobs that position arts workers as solutions partners in addressing civic issues.
-  The emerging future features collaboration and support infrastructure. As they reflect on their challenges and opportunities, California creatives are building and reaching for new systems. **They are seeking support for collaboration in the field and for cross-sector partnerships that support arts jobs while demonstrating the value of arts and culture.** And they are seeking material support systems – or creative economy infrastructure.

On Opposite Page:

Program Director NeFesha Yisra'el with CA for the Arts Board Member Lyz Luke at 2024 Advocacy Day rally. Photographed by Alan Scheckter.





Sharmi Basu, Executive Director of Vital Arts, speaking on the Arts and Housing/Work Space panel at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid

Top Challenges Impacting the Creative Community



Sacramento-based artist Janine Mapurunga at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid

Individual Perspective

- #1 Insufficient public funding
- #2 Challenges in engaging patrons
- #3 Access to affordable housing or work space
- #4 Lack of support systems for the self employed

Organization Perspective

- #1 Insufficient public funding
- #2 Rising Operational Costs
- #3 Existing grant opportunities not applicable
- #4 Engaging or increasing patrons



Panelist Tiara Amar with attendees at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid.

Key Recommendations

1

Build critical infrastructure.

Arts workers and cultural organizations identified the need to build critical infrastructure – the physical, material and social systems that they need to sustain or grow their practices. They seek affordable housing and space, access to capital, business development resources, self-employment social safety net support systems and arts services organizations to provide critical programs and services.

2

Increase investment in collaborations.

This year's survey found that California's creative community views collaboration and cross-sector partnerships as critical opportunities.

They define it in three distinct ways:

- 1) Collaboration within the field
- 2) Cross-sector collaborations
- 3) Coalition-building within the creative economy sector

Increasing public and private investments in any of these collaboration modalities, such as providing technical support, facilitating partnerships or direct funding, would leverage the creativity of the field, reinforcing its sustainability and accelerating its innovation.



3

Increase funding for arts jobs.

The California creative community identified the pressing need to increase funding to the California Arts Council (CAC) and to diversify sources of funding for arts jobs through policies or programs that develop the creative workforce or produce cross-sector initiatives. Increased funding to the CAC would allow the agency to expand its grant programs to meet the needs and accelerate the potential of the field. Increasing and diversifying sources of funding for cross-sector programs supports arts jobs while positioning artists and cultural organizations as go-to partners in state and local priorities.

4

Maximize field building potential.

Survey respondents want to maximize building the field of arts advocacy by focusing on building trust through racial and cultural equity, removing barriers to participation, building networks through affinity groups and coalitions, and developing resources to support local advocacy. Resources for unifying and mobilizing members of the field will increase their capacity to affect change on the state and local levels while continuing to educate both established and emerging policymakers on the issues impacting the arts.

The 2024 California Arts Advocacy Survey Report offered us an opportunity to listen and understand the field. We learned from survey participants about their **current conditions** and how they are defining this new era by building upon the **pivots** they made during the pandemic and responding to the **pressure points** they are currently experiencing.

The challenges and solutions shared by the respondents help define a set of support systems – **creative economy infrastructure** – that need to be built or strengthened to ensure the future of the field. Arts workers and organizations are laying the foundation for that future most effectively through collaboration.

The forms of collaboration they are seeking to expand include **working together** to meet needs within the field, developing **cross-sector partnerships** to **diversify revenue streams** and **coalition-building** to **build collective power**. And we learned that individuals and organizations have an appetite to advocate and affect change and are seeking resources in order to do so.



About the Survey

As a comprehensive statewide advocacy organization, CA for the Arts conducts surveys, polls and focus groups and hosts “Regional Conversations” and convenings throughout the state. This ongoing feedback and listening are instrumental to helping us understand the conditions and needs impacting the field and forms the basis for the programs and resources that CA for the Arts offers. This exchange also guides the state policy strategies developed and championed by our sister lobbying organization, CA Arts Advocates. The 2024 California Arts Advocacy Report is based on a field survey that was conducted in early 2024. Along with offering guidance to our two organizations, this report is intended for all who are seeking to understand and strengthen California’s arts and culture ecosystem.

CA for the Arts’ last field-wide survey was conducted in 2020 and formed the basis of advocacy for reopening guidelines and relief programs during the height of the global crises caused by COVID-19. For the 2024 California Arts Advocacy Survey, we started with two questions: “If the most acute and disruptive aspects of the pandemic have receded, what is the ‘new normal’ in which our field is functioning?” and “what is the future they are building and what is needed to get there?” Our goals were to understand how members of the creative community are experiencing and defining this new normal, what conditions they are working within and what solutions they have created or are seeking.

Most importantly, we wanted to learn from them in their own words. To this end, the survey was structured to elicit insights through a qualitative approach, primarily using ranked multiple choice and open ended questions. In order to surface what we didn’t know, almost all of the questions had an “Other” option or asked for a narrative response. This helped us to collect a diverse range of perspectives and arrive at a multifaceted understanding of the conditions, pressures, challenges and solutions discussed in the survey (read more about the methodology in the appendix).

We received over **1,680** responses from members of the arts and cultural community across California, including **1,076 individual arts workers** from **54 counties** and **607 people representing organizations or businesses** from all **58 counties**.

The 2024 California Arts Advocacy Survey Report that follows reflects what we’ve learned about the current conditions of the field – the pressures members are facing and the pivots they are making. In synthesizing the insights, challenges and solutions shared, the report offers an articulation of the emergent future that the field is both building and calling for: support for collaboration and creative economy infrastructure. The report then offers recommendations. These include seven State policy priorities for CA Arts Advocates to champion as our sister organization and the comprehensive lobbying group for arts, culture and the creative economy. There are five additional recommendations for how CA for the Arts could advance building the field of arts advocacy in the state through its programs and resources and its communications.

Additionally, the findings and recommendations contained in the report will be valuable to funders, policymakers and arts service organizations who are looking to meet the needs and advance the potential of California’s arts workers, cultural organizations and creative entrepreneurs. The survey also provides casemaking data and stories that members of the field can use to advocate for change in their communities.

Current Conditions

New Normal

Just 8%
of California arts
workers report
that COVID is still
impacting their
operations or
livelihoods

Our findings mark a significant change from our 2020 field survey (CA for the Arts 2020). Currently, just **8% of California arts workers report that COVID is still directly impacting their operations or livelihoods**. There are other tremendous pressures threatening California's cultural ecosystem. The state's arts workers are meeting these challenges with creativity - leaning into collaboration, adaptation and reinvention. The field has also been reshaped by the wider awakening to inequity, racism, sexism and prejudice prompted by social movements such as Black Lives Matter, Me Too and advocacy for the dignity and rights of indigenous, Hispanic, AAPI¹, LGBTQIA+² and disabled communities.

According to survey respondents, we appear to be in a new era – a more fluid time where earlier pivots are becoming permanent and where unique pressures are requiring new solutions. In the following section we detail the responses of California creatives to questions about how they are working now, in 2024, and the emerging trends and adaptations that define their current operations. These include technology adoptions, advanced DEIA initiatives, and an increased appetite for collaboration and collective action.

This section also details the acute pressure points of our community. California creatives report they are overwhelmingly ready to advocate for a new social contract that embeds the arts in civic priorities, that provides needed support infrastructure and produces the necessary conditions to sustain their work and ensure a just distribution of resources in their field.

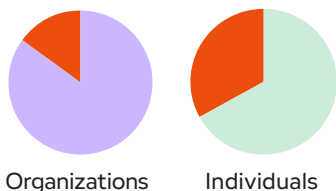
Pivots Made Permanent

Creative Adaption

Creativity, innovation and resourcefulness are the hallmarks of how the cultural community responded to the impacts of the pandemic on their practices and livelihoods.

"I've encouraged my organization not to be beholden by what has been "historically" the way, as that history is rife with inequity and/or doesn't apply anymore."

For many, how they responded to COVID led them down the path to developing new partnerships, new business models or even new roles for the arts in their local communities.



85% of organizations and 67% of individuals report they've encountered new ways of working the past three years.

¹ AAPI stands for Asian American and Pacific Islander, and is an umbrella term used to describe people of Asian or Pacific Island descent or ancestry.

² LGBTQIA+ is an acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual. The plus sign (+) represents the many other identity terms that are not explicitly included in the acronym, but are still part of the LGBTQIA+ community

"Our organization went from "performing arts festival" to "artist and venue advocates" as we worked with our venues and artists to knowledge share on COVID-19 grants and program [which] then led our organization to help building advocacy ... Having these open conversations with our entire ecosystem was a shift, and one that has opened doors for our organization we couldn't have imagined as a purely creative organization before."



Technology adoption

The creative community has leveraged new and old technologies – from digital tools to social cooperation – to sustain or grow their practices or businesses. Many remarked that adopting virtual tools removed spatial barriers, helping them to connect with new patrons, build new regional collaborations or access national and international networks. These tools included but are not limited to virtual platforms and incorporating AI into creative practices.

Several artists reported investing in new technology – from adopting digital producing methods to building home-based media studios to embracing new mixed-media practices – that helped them reinvent their artistic practices or their business models. For some, these adaptations were made to address constraints like material costs and or space limitations.

"We in far Northern California are spread very far out, the new familiarity with Zoom has been wonderful for connecting our community and revolutionized the way I work."

"I've started working in different media to adapt to a smaller workspace which has led them to think a lot about how to make my art accessible to different levels of income."

Advancing diversity, equity inclusion and accessibility

Work for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) is being woven into the fabric of many organizations. Several respondents commented that adopting DEIA principles helped them pivot and reinvent. Some that had been doing this work before the pandemic reported that their existing practices made them especially ready to effectively adapt and serve.

"[Because of our] understanding technology and disability justice & accessibility... we could easily develop COVID safety protocols ... which came from who our organization serves and our commitment to removing barriers so that EVERYONE can participate."

The wider awakening to racism and inequity that arose in response to the murder of George Floyd initiated a period of internal focus, with many organizations examining their hiring, hierarchy and culture. Organizations are expanding their DEIA practices to focus externally on how they can more holistically serve communities. Some are deepening long-held practices, some are expanding their programs or business lines and some are meeting community needs beyond culture to provide social services or serve as community organizers. Others are reimagining leadership and power structures, serving as laboratories and models for the field.

"Adapting indigenous first values into our praxis allows us to not perpetuate colonial dynamics at gatherings, positively impacting our organizational culture and programming toward equity and harmony. Our ED is developing frameworks to share with other orgs"

Others shared that they need more resources and support in defining their goals and developing their practices related to DEIA. And several expressed that the field as a whole must continue to prioritize defining and achieving tangible outcomes.

"I have seen progress in these areas in my community, but I think keeping it at the forefront of any decision-making can only develop deeper meaning in our arts."

Collaboration as the new normal

From space-sharing to forming local mutual aid responses to joining forces to advocate for funding, artists and organizations found new ways of working together and new methods of sharing resources that are enduring.

"Native-led orgs and artists are working more together, collaborating and aligning toward the greater good."

"There has been a renewed sense of collaboration between organizations that would have otherwise tried to segregate resources."



Collective action got results

Many remarked on the successes they found in putting competition aside and coming together to advocate for resources and policies to address the impacts of COVID. In forming alliances and building relationships with elected officials, our field found new lines of funding and new cross sector partnerships on both the local and state levels.

"Each of the five members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors earmarked a portion of discretionary funds to the arts during the pandemic. Hopefully, this practice will continue in the future."



While less than 20% of participants self-identify as advocates, 82% say they are likely to advocate for increased funding to the California Arts Council, with 55% being "very likely."

CEO Julie Baker with advocates at the 2024 Arts Advocacy Rally. Photographed by Alan Scheckter

Appetite to Advocate

Respondents express an urgency to create change. Their choices for the top four policy priorities reflect why. They see a need to increase and diversify funding for the arts and a drive to address foundational economic problems associated with the high costs of living and lack of safety nets for the self-employed. And some see advocacy as a way to support the arts as a whole.

"I'm mad and struggling. I've seen what other countries and cities do for their arts. ...We deserve to make more than we are. We deserve space to create. We deserve to be a part of society because we are instrumental in improving it."

"I don't personally have the means to provide a large financial contribution to artists so my advocacy means that much more to me. It's another way I can contribute."



Advocates at the 2023 Arts Advocacy Day Rally

Pressure Points

California arts workers and organizations are facing precarity, putting the state's creative economy and cultural identity at risk. Survey responses tell the story of a field under tremendous pressures with insufficient public funding for the arts and culture sector as the top community challenge for California artists and cultural organizations. Long term funding scarcity and mounting external pressures from high costs are destabilizing the viability of creative practices and cultural organizations. These pressures also cause issues that may impede efforts to unify the field to address these challenges.

Funding Scarcity

Survey participants perceive a scarcity in the funding options available to them. Both individuals and organizations identified insufficient public funding on the local, state and federal levels as the number one challenge currently facing the creative community.

"Zero funding sources for most arts orgs - foundations only funding new projects, community foundation does not fund arts at all, county has no arts council, government requirements are too difficult... We need a reliable funding opportunity that rewards orgs who pay a living wage plus health benefits to artists and administrators."

There are historic dynamics in the funding ecosystem that contribute to this perception. On the state level, California invests much less than other states with comparably-sized arts and culture economies. In the 2024-25 budget, California apportioned \$21 million to the California Arts Council (CAC) to distribute to the field as local assistance grants, investing just 56¢ per California resident. In contrast, New York ranks just below California in arts and culture production's share of

the state's economy but invested almost \$102 million, or roughly \$5.21 per capita in 2024 (US BEA 2024).³ In the budget crisis of 2002, funding to the CAC was decimated to just \$1 million annually and remained at that level for ten budget cycles (Carnwarth 2022). In its 2023-24 grant cycle, the CAC was only able to support 4.3% of the state's arts and culture organizations (CAC 2024).

Funding for the arts in general relies heavily on US tax policy. Rather than establishing consensus on the public value of the arts through direct investment, the US tax code incentivizes indirect private investment through tax deductions. This system has historically led to public dollars (what would have been tax revenue) being channeled into privately preferred cultural nonprofits concentrated in urban areas, leaving out direct funding to individual artists, for profit enterprises and informal community groups (Feld 1983).⁴ A 2022 field study conducted by the CAC found that private funding is not equitably distributed to BIPOC-centered and rural organizations.

Only 11% of the total dollar amount awarded by private foundations to arts nonprofits in California go to BIPOC-centered organizations while they represent 18% of all arts nonprofits. Similarly, rural organizations receive 3.5% of foundation grant dollars while comprising 9% of the arts nonprofits in the state (Carnwarth 2022).

This reliance on private funding is proving to be destabilizing. A report on the history of arts funding published in 2018 found that "support for arts and culture appears to represent a diminishing priority among foundations and an uncertain priority among corporations," while government support was also declining (Lawrence 2018). Survey responses reflect these points. Numerous respondents also shared that they are losing funding due to donor fatigue or shifts in the priorities of private funders away from arts and culture.

Additionally, earned revenue options are limited for those working to create access to the arts through free and low-cost programs. This is especially true for those serving marginalized communities. For many California organizations, the enduring lack of funds and the barriers to accessing them lead to working with unsustainable business models. This can mean overly relying on volunteer or underpaid staff, or not having the capacity to invest in leadership transitions or organizational growth.

"We need a paid staff. For 22 years we have operated with an all volunteer team. Our growth is tremendous and the [community] need is great but without a paid staff, it is very challenging to accomplish certain goals"

Rising Costs

Rising costs is one of the top challenges facing the field. Arts and culture organizations are particularly vulnerable to this issue, due to the aforementioned inequities and long standing issues with undercapitalization⁵— or not having the needed financial assets to weather change. Organizational responses in the survey indicate that inflation, rising rents, and other pressures are increasing operating costs and are affecting their ability to sustain programs or even remain viable.


Wildfires, flooding and other disasters caused by climate change are also impacting organizations who are experiencing closures and damages or being subjected to drastic increases in insurance costs.

"There have been dramatic increases in the cost of doing business: rent has gone up almost 20% in the last 2 years...the cost of goods remains often double or triple what it was pre-pandemic, and employment costs have skyrocketed... Our audiences cannot absorb the cost of these

³ According to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2022 arts & culture production contributed 8% of California's economy, the highest percentage in the nation. The second highest share in New York, where arts and culture contributes 7.4% of the state's economy (US BEA 2024).

⁴ The authors of the seminal 1983 book, *Patrons Deserve Themselves: Taxpayers and Arts Policy*, found that government tax deduction policy essentially, "permits private donors to decide which arts activities merit government support." (Feld 1983)

⁵ Grantmakers in the Arts defines capitalization as "the accumulation of the resources an organization needs to fulfill its mission over time." To address issues of capitalization in the nonprofit arts sector, GIA initiated the National Capitalization Project (NCP) in 2010. To learn more, visit <https://www.giarts.org/arts-funding/capitalization>.



increases in our ticket prices -- and we wouldn't want them to. But trying to find private donors and foundations to cover these costs is very difficult."

Performing arts organizations report they feel especially endangered by a combination of the rising costs associated with inflation and complying with changes in employment law, matched with the continued costs of COVID safety protocols and even closures due to infection. These are in addition to challenges that existed prior to COVID in which organizations faced "declines in subscribers, corporate donations, and grants—coupled with ever-increasing costs to produce shows," as reported in a recent study by the National Endowment for the Arts (Spingler et al, 2024).

"Performing Arts are suffering, costs are escalating, and audiences are not coming back in the same pre-covid numbers. Our live theater venue is losing significant amounts of money."

Individuals report they are profoundly impacted too, in their case by the compounding issues of rising costs of living and the lack of access to affordable housing. These issues exacerbate the challenges arts workers already face in accessing living wages and benefits and intensify the economic uncertainty of self-employed artists. Artists are fearing or facing displacement from their communities, which can sever them from essential personal and professional networks, jobs and opportunities. Several respondents shared that they left the state or that they feared this was their only option.

"Cost of living, access to affordable housing and healthcare, lack of foundational support force artists to leave the industry +/- or move out of the area."

These issues also threaten to decrease the diversity of the field, as workers who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC) are already underrepresented in California's arts sector (Yang et al. 2021), and BIPOC-led organizations often have lower revenues and less assets (Skinner 2020). Accessing jobs, career-making opportunities and prestige in the sector often require costly investments in education and training that are likely to be met with unpaid internships, lower wages or the instability of self-employment. Rising costs and stagnating revenue heighten these barriers, increasing the risk that arts workers with low economic means or those that face bias and prejudice will be pushed out of the field due to competition for roles with low and moderate wages.


"More diversity, equity and inclusion practices [are needed in the field]. A lot of those who are financially secure seem to thrive without much resistance with artistic businesses. Members of underrepresented communities will always have to work harder."

Disruptions in Business Methods

Changes in technology have had profound impacts on the creative sector. Survey responses indicate that evolutions in digital production tools and in the marketing of cultural products continue to disrupt their methods of creating and their revenue streams. Some participants express feeling threatened or left behind by advances in 3-D printing or digital design as well as by changes in digital media marketing or by the tectonic changes in distribution brought by music and movie streaming.

Many noted they want protections from the potential threats that artificial intelligence poses to their livelihoods or intellectual property rights.

Top Challenge response: "Companies purposely downsizing their creative teams while replacing us with technology like AI and overseas workers, all while the cost of living is incredibly high."



Changes in state policy have had unintended consequences that are forcing rapid transformation as well. The 2020 employee classification law AB5 (Mele 2021) has drastically increased payroll and operations costs for mid to small sized performing arts organizations. Arts advocates in California continue to work for solutions to address this, including the passage of the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (SB 1116, Portantino)⁶ and other measures. In 2022, voters in California passed Proposition 28, the 2022 ballot measure that established permanent funding for arts instruction in public schools. While this is injecting much-needed substantial funding into arts education, the statute stipulates that 80% of those funds should go to hiring certified arts teachers (CDE 2024). This has the potential to disrupt the business lines of arts nonprofits that have been traditionally providing those services to California schools.

"We are working on developing possible shifts in programming if schools cannot or will not hire us for arts education programs."

The decline in attendance of live events—from sports to concerts to ballet—was evident before the pandemic, but seems to have accelerated because of it (Zara 2024). And these issues are further exacerbated by the dismantling of arts journalism and the atomizing of media and news sources in general (Jaakkola 2023, Jang 2023, Abelman 2024). Survey participants express that they can't reach their audiences – or find new ones – in this media atmosphere.

"The lockdown damaged live music culture into the future, and social media has now become so commonplace that would-be supporters and audience members are disincentivized to go out in public to arts and music venues."

And California arts workers are finding that moving to more affordable communities in the state is disrupting their professional networks and income streams, especially as they move to more rural areas that are severely lacking funding and other needed infrastructure.

"Migration patterns within the state have displaced artists from cities into suburban/rural counties surrounding the cities. These counties offer little public funding to artists who are often no longer eligible to apply for city funding, even if they are producing work in the cities."

Fissures in the road to Diversity, Equity Inclusion and Accessibility

As articulated in our *"Vision 2030 Strategic Plan,"* CA for the Arts sees itself as a bridge between public policy and the arts and culture sector as we advocate for equitable public funding with racial and cultural equity⁷ being foundational to our work in the field. We are interested in understanding and addressing issues that might impede our efforts to engage and unify the field in this work. While survey responses indicate evidence of collective growth in expanding and deepening DEIA practices, there are some notable fissures in how members of the field are perceiving their place in this ecosystem.

Comments by survey participants that identify as BIPOC or that serve BIPOC communities indicate they feel they are continuing to carry a disproportionate share of the burden of advancing this work. They are seeking allyship and substantive changes in access to resources and power.

"Teach allyship to the well established and well funded groups. It's really unfair for those representing BIPOC communities to bear the brunt of advocacy efforts (the energy and resources to organize, deal with blowbacks) over and over again."

6 The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (SB 1116, Portantino) was passed into law in 2022 and funded in the 2024-25 California budget at \$12.5 million. SB1116 is an example of a promising and innovative policy solution that California Arts Advocates along with many coalition partners and grassroots advocates worked to see implemented. See Appendix C for more information.

7 CA for the Arts pursues "racial equity," as defined by Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), as a state when race can no longer be used to predict life and define outcomes as outcomes for all groups are improved. As per CA for the Arts' strategic plan, "we advocate for cultural equity as the redistribution of power and resources so all of California's diverse communities have the autonomy to thrive, hold and share joy, exist in physical spaces, guide public policies and secure investments to contribute to the state's civic and cultural life." (Vision 2030, 2024)

Others shared that they would like to see a more explicit inclusion of disabled and trans/nonbinary arts workers in targeted efforts which would “address a greater swath of historically excluded people,” as stated by a respondent.

There were also comments from practitioners of art forms rooted in classical European traditions who feel that their work is assumed to be serving only a narrow privileged audience, or that their cultural form itself is elitist or “upholding white supremacy values,” as one participant shared.

“It sometimes feels like we aren’t valued or wanted in collective action efforts or as advocacy partners or seen as worthy recipients of public funds.”

Several people who are doing equity-focused cultural work in conservative regions in the state report that they are being targeted publicly and, in some instances, vilified for their efforts. This is creating difficult circumstances for individuals and organizations, threatening livelihoods and local funding. One survey comment thoughtfully captures the complexity of these issues in a state as vast as California:

“It’s important that we understand the divisions within the A&C field, so that we can discover policies that address all our needs. Diversity and inclusion mean that all are welcomed, but we may need different approaches to ensure fairness, equity, and prosperity for differently-situated people and institutions.”

Obstacles to Building The Field

Survey responses indicate there are three significant obstacles to unifying the field:

1. Competition for limited resources
2. Lack of time in strained lives
3. The lack of funding for advocacy



Scarcity of funding is impeding coalition building. There is a perception shared across a spectrum of survey participants that the limited grant funds that are available go to a narrow sector within the arts. Commenters shared that they perceive bias in funding patterns in preferences for certain art forms, in racial or regional priorities, or in too-narrowly defined types of eligible organizations. It’s hard to advocate for others in the sector when individual artists and organizations feel they are in a competitive environment fighting for limited resources.

“I’m thrilled there are people out there doing [advocacy] but it is hard for me to see the impact in my community, in my organization, on me. Every day is a challenge to survive with us. It is hard to parse out energy to something that isn’t very real to me.”

The greatest barrier to participation – time. The struggle to survive, the juggling of work, family and creative practices have left people strapped, with many noting that their most precious and finite resource is time.



On Opposite Page:

Economic Justice & Power Building panelists at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid

Advocacy requires resources. The work that it takes to bring people together and organize efforts - the time, planning, relationship building, coordinating and other activities required to deliver and sustain true collective impact - is not adequately valued or resourced in the state. There are many California communities lack a coordinating entity that has the purview or capacity to bring people together to advocate. Survey responses indicate people feel like they are on their own. Others mentioned they would consider leading efforts in their communities if they could be compensated - this is especially important for artists or those who are economically disadvantaged.

"Honestly, I usually feel pretty exhausted and demoralized and it keeps me from doing things like [advocacy]."

"My willingness [to advocate] mostly has to do with time: the time it takes to participate in campaigns, but also the time it takes just to educate myself on issues to feel like I have a decent grasp to talk to other folks about issues."

"Compensating neighborhood advocacy organizers or anyone participating in advocacy as consultants could be transformative."



The Emerging Future

What emerges from the survey responses, as they reflect challenges and pressures or opportunities and adaptations, is a composite picture of systems that the field is building or is reaching for. These systems can be grouped into two categories: **relational systems** - or collaboration, and **support systems** – or infrastructure.

Collaboration Systems:

- Shared Business Models
- Shared Marketing Platforms
- Cross-Sector Economic Solutions
- Coalition Building
- Collective Advocacy

Support Systems:

- Access to Capital
- Business Development Resources
- Affordable Housing and Space
- Self-Employment Safety Net
- Art Services Organization

Survey participants provided significant insights into the dimensions of these two systems. What follows is a breakdown of specific forms of collaboration that the field is leaning into as well as the components of creative economy infrastructure that they are calling for.

Laying the Foundation: Collaboration

Survey responses indicate that members of the field are increasingly turning to collaboration to meet needs and build new systems, in some cases involving arts service organizations and in others developing new more informal networks where this type of infrastructure does not exist. This is the horizon that California's creative community is pointing to and they are seeking to build that future in three distinct ways: collaboration within the field, cross-sector collaborations and coalition-building. Survey respondents are calling for financial and technical support to more fully realize these possibilities.

Individuals

Financial and technical support for local collaborations (art and public health, tourism, climate activism, community revitalization, etc.)

Organizations

Shared marketing platform that promotes all arts and cultural activities in my region

Collaborations Within the Field

Collaborations that developed in response to COVID have taken many forms and members of the field are seeking resources to initiate or expand ways to share knowledge and pool resources. As one respondent said, they want help building “anything shared, anything where each individual tiny organization does not have to invent its own interpretation of The Wheel for every single thing it needs.” By looking at the survey responses on this topic collectively, we see a base of options that could be implemented more holistically throughout the sector.

There is a call to build networks that foster information sharing on both the local and state level. Participants are asking for centralized clearing houses for finding resources, grant opportunities and support services. One of the highest priorities mentioned is creating shared communications and marketing platforms, and increasing funding for arts media.

“Traditional media is dying out, so artists are finding and creating new ways to publicize their efforts and reach out to the community. If there was more support for this, artists could commit more of their own resources to their art.”

Other survey participants are advancing the field by seeking to develop what one described as, “Solidarity Economics principles for the creative sector.” Survey participants are asking for support for cooperative property buying, collaborative funding, collective impact networks or developing land trusts.

“I have seen in neighboring states... multiple mutual aid and collaborative funding groups that are successful in pooling efforts to share funding. Smaller organizations can benefit from this and it would be great to see the synergy of this supporting cultural arts groups.”

The field is also seeking resources for developing shared business models or space sharing agreements. A report by Grantmakers in the Arts finds that some California-based BIPOC creatives are already leading in this solidarity economy⁸ work and recommends making strategic investments in incubation and start-up capital (Linares 2021).



From L-R: Megan Van Voorhis, Dir. of Convention & Cultural Services; Carissa Gutiérrez, Dir. of Public Affairs, California Arts Council; Ron Muriera, Dir., Arts Industry Support, Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs, City of San José; Jason Jong, Cultural & Creative Economy Manager, City of Sacramento; Shaun Burner, Sacramento-based artist and advocate. Photo by Doug Cupid

Cross-Sector Programs Diversify Resources

Respondents believed the following cross-sector programs support arts jobs while demonstrating the value of arts and culture: **Arts on Prescription, Creative Corps, Creative Youth Development, and Cultural Districts.**

Cross-sector collaboration is another key theme that emerged from the data. Arts workers are calling for “a new WPA,” as one response stated, and organizations and artists are seeking resources to develop these partnerships. 70% of organizations said that diversifying and increasing sources of state funding for the arts through cross-sector initiatives is a top policy priority.

“These [cross-sector] initiatives focus on community and collaboration, workforce development and create a sense of pride.”

Cross-sector programs support arts jobs while positioning artists and cultural organizations as go-to partners in their local communities, helping them to forge new relationships and leverage other types of funding. Many groups in the state have been doing cross-sector work for a long time, proactively responding to the needs of the community and adapting entrepreneurially.

“Creative Youth Development organizations are constantly evolving their arts and wellbeing work. Since Covid they've added mental health supports, academic supports, food security and housing, and youth led movement building.”

Recent cross-sector policy innovations are proving to be transformative.⁹ There were a multitude of comments requesting the continuation of programs such as the Caltrans’ Clean California Local Grant Program and the Arts in California Parks program offered in partnership with the California Arts Council (CAC) and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Survey participants involved in the California Creative Corps (CCC) program had a lot to say about the positive impact the program is having on the livelihoods of artists and the sustainability of organizations. Recently launched by the CAC as a one year pilot program, CCC distributed a total of \$60 million across every region in the state, funding arts nonprofits to partner with social service organizations and employ local artists to produce civic projects that advance public health, civic engagement and climate resilience. People also mentioned wanting more direct linkages between providers of arts activities that promote health and wellbeing with the healthcare system, like “arts on prescriptions” programs (Golden 2024) in the state.

“Creative Corps pilot is working! [Civic organizations]are recognizing the value and innovation that comes when working with an artist. Artists are learning new ways of partnering and promoting their work. Worthy of continued funding!”

There is also widespread demand for the funding and expansion of the CAC’s California Cultural Districts. The program launched as a five year pilot in 2017 with fourteen designated districts that stretch across the state. Legislator engagement with the districts led to the passage of AB 812 (Boerner)¹⁰, California’s first and only affordable housing policy for artists that intends to address artist displacement. The survey response below best sums up the power of the program.

9

For more information on the programs mentioned in the following paragraphs please see Appendix C.

10

Passed in 2022, AB 812 (Boerner) grants local governments the authority to set aside affordable housing units for artists in cultural districts. See Appendix C for more information.

“Cultural districts started as a way to promote tourism but they have become grass-roots community planning organizations that go beyond attracting tourists and transactional relationships to more deep engagement and long-term planning and advocating for affordable housing and other urgent needs for their respective communities.”

The survey finds that the field wants more of these programs, recognizing their potential to provide new sources of funding while also transforming relationships with policy makers. They also want support in developing their own cross-sector partnerships. They are seeking tools and resources to better understand the sectors they see themselves working with and they want to be able to speak about what they do in the languages of those sectors, whether in terms of economic impact or positive health outcomes or climate resilience. Creatives are producing these impacts and need the bridging support to make their case, form partnerships and tap new funding sources.



Coalition-Building to Raise and Share Power

Coalition-building is another form of collaboration that the creative community is actively engaged in and is seeking to expand. Survey participants view coalition-building as an effective way to raise visibility and increase support. There is a desire to unify voices and call for the coordination of efforts.

“We have advocated on our own in the past, and it always felt like our efforts were not heard. It would be wonderful if art organizations could partner to advocate for the arts together at the same time. Our voices would be louder.”

Members of the field commented on building regional coalitions across counties to address the lack of funding in rural communities or building solidarity amongst groups that share identities or affinities. Or they are building alliances between practitioners of specific disciplines to help meet gaps in the field.

"[We should be] identifying those fields (e.g. jazz) that don't have service organizations and convene practitioners and adjacent arts leaders to encourage the formation of coalitions to promote their interests. There are unaffiliated artists all over the state."

Coalition-building requires sustained coordination and communication and this relational, systems-building work is rarely funded. Investments are needed in this effort and in growing the leadership capacity of advocates who wish to serve as coordinators and facilitators. Compensation is also needed in order to ensure equitable participation in advocacy leadership so that skill-building and network formation is accessible to all of California's creative communities.

"[We are] putting competition behind us to acknowledge the power of organizational alliance. Now we need funding resources to staff and initiate an organized campaign!"

What is needed for sector-wide coalition-building is a vision for establishing solidarity across the various disciplines and differences in the field. Allyship, or exercising one's power to lift others who may have less, could provide the foundation for that solidarity. Developing a theory of how to exchange forms of power and practices of collective allyship in arts advocacy could be an evolutionary step in both advancing equity and building influence as a sector.

The Power of Collaboration

Collaborations leverage the creativity and resourcefulness of members of the field, they reinforce sustainability by increasing or more efficiently using resources, and they can accelerate innovation by bringing people together to solve problems. Investing resources into any of these collaboration modalities, whether through funding or the development of supportive programs and tools, has the potential to catalyze significant positive change.

Building Blocks : Creative Economy Infrastructure

What also emerges from the survey results is an articulation of what constitutes creative economy infrastructure - the physical, material and social systems that arts workers and cultural organizations need in order to sustain or grow their practices. A contemporary definition of the economics term has expanded to include both hard infrastructure and soft infrastructure considerations. Members of the creative community are seeking affordable housing and space, access to capital, business development resources and self-employment support systems. Additionally, arts services organizations should be seen as critical infrastructure by providing much needed programs and services for artists and cultural groups.

Access to Capital

Survey participants provided valuable insights into the barriers they face in accessing capital, which, in the context of the arts, can include grants, donations, investment pools, loans or other financial resources. They highlighted critical gaps and issues in the grant funding landscape, as well as ideas for grant making processes and improving funding options.

Numerous respondents, particularly individual artists and smaller community organizations, noted that they are ineligible for or too small to compete for existing grant opportunities. This tracks with the 2022 California Arts Council field study which found that 67% of California arts nonprofits have budgets of \$50,000 or less, and 92% of those have never received a public or

private grant (Carnwath 2022). Arts funding is very rarely offered to individual artists, for-profit entrepreneurs or community based organizations (CBOs). That same report also notes that, prior to the 2020 COVID emergency relief program and the reinstatement of the Individual Artists Fellowship program in 2021, California artists have not had direct support from the state arts agency since 2002.

"Our CBO has never been able to qualify for Arts grants. A prejudice against Native American culture as art?"

Those who are eligible commented that the complexity and labor demanded by grant applications are too burdensome to undertake, especially for artists, smaller organizations or creatives from under-resourced communities. These processes privilege "people who know how to navigate the system" as one respondent observed, *"and this disadvantages artists who didn't have the same exposure or life experiences in know-how to navigate the system to obtain support."*

"Unrestricted funding for artists should be made available regularly for more stability."

"The shift to unrestricted funding (general operating support) has been very helpful. Organizations should also be able to take fallow times to rest from constant programming and have time to reflect, plan, and strategize new ways of moving forward."

"Funders are demanding insane reporting and applications, but not willing to pay for any administrative work, only program work."

Some potential solutions mentioned by survey respondents include getting support for developing service contracts with local governments, or using "first step" grant processes where applicants submit an initial inquiry and only those that are really eligible are asked to submit full applications. Others suggest demanding that funders turn the grant support process inside out to learn about accessibility from the field.

"Without public funding, theatre in LA County is an absolute abject disaster. I managed to make a LIVING doing live performance for six years straight before Covid."

"We recently signed with CalPayArt for payroll services. This was a very practical resource for us as a small arts organization that suddenly needed to comply with AB 5 requirements. More practical resources like this are helpful."

"DEIA is about more than granting money and resources to historically underfunded and underrepresented groups, it's about making applications accessible to these groups. Rather than making zoom meetings to share with artists how to apply for grants, make them for granters on how to make their application criteria, questions, and selection processes more DEIA."

Organizations in the survey are requesting multi-year grants which would lessen administrative labor and help stabilize budget planning. They are also seeking funding that covers operational costs or offers flexibility like the small business grants offered in response to COVID.

"The CAC [California Arts Council] Operating Support grant has been a massive game-changer – allowing our organization to do the critical planning we need to secure a new venue and reach more schools in marginalized communities."

Survey respondents commented that the freedom to use COVID relief funding at their discretion, whether as individuals or organizations, allowed them to make strategic investments in technology, in expanding programming or updating their business models. A small number of organizations reported that they are in their strongest financial position ever. Others commented that they

would like to see the California Arts Council prioritize the Individual Artist Fellowships program or see the return of other forms of direct funding for artists.

Performing arts organizations and workers report that their sector needs support to innovate and they are seeking policy solutions and funding to adapt to their new normal. An example is the recently launched CalPayArt program, the performing arts nonprofit paymaster service enacted to help cut down on administrative costs incurred in complying with employment law. Several expressed that their number one policy priority is to expand and extend investment in the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (SB 1116), which is only funded for a pilot year that will launch in 2025¹¹.

Business Development Resources

Like members of most industries, artists, cultural non profits and arts entrepreneurs are seeking resources to help them strengthen or innovate their business practices. Both individuals and organizations who participated in the survey point to needing technical support in business development strategies, entrepreneurship training or board development resources. Unlike other industries, these types of services are not often readily available to members of the creative community.

"There is inadequate advisory and organizational support in the community – a feeling that one is on one's own in terms of figuring it all out."


Small business centers don't have programs designed with our sector's specific needs, markets or funding mechanisms in mind or they don't serve nonprofits or the self-employed. One participant commented that there is a "lack of straightforward pathways for artists to start a small business (licensing, taxes, permits, etc)." And access to training is limited.

"My company is run by someone with a PhD in theater and someone with an MA in performance," says one respondent, "at no point in our collective training did either one of us learn how to create a business plan or read a P&L spreadsheet."

Another key business support service needed is the monitoring of legislation and regulations that impact the creative community and lobbying for regulatory fixes. The California legislature considers roughly 2,500 bills a year and while California Arts Advocates does monitor and lobby—as do a few other California arts service organizations—the effort is costly and complex. There were many respondents who shared that they want help protecting their intellectual property or revenue streams against advancements in artificial intelligence. Others noted that they've experienced barriers to participating or succeeding in cross-sector partnerships due to regulatory requirements that are meant for other industries and don't fit what arts providers produce or how they work.

The creative field is also seeking support for technology adoption. Our field has been highly impacted by changes in technology which have disrupted the means of creative production (digitization, AI) or altered our markets (music and entertainment streaming). For many survey respondents, the low cost and ease of use that allowed them to embrace virtual tools during the pandemic produced positive outcomes and permanent changes. Others remarked that they need support and training in adopting new technologies or staying up to speed with advancements in social media and digital marketing.

"Our film festival went online but discovered that lack of broadband in our community made it difficult for locals to watch."



Access to high speed internet is also an important issue, as our field increasingly relies on computer and internet technology. Several survey participants remarked that poor internet in their neighborhood made it hard for them to leverage tech opportunities. Others expressed concerns over increasing high speed internet access in their community to help bridge the digital divide and increase media literacy.

Access to Affordable Housing & Space

When asked which policy development area would have the biggest impact on supporting arts workers, individuals' top response was access to affordable housing and/or workspace. The housing affordability crisis is affecting arts workers in unique ways. Some who have been pushed out of expensive urban markets are finding their funding streams have been disrupted or the networks they depend on dissolved. Many mentioned facing displacement and some have had to leave the state.

"Artists will leave if there's no sustainable way to live here"

Stable housing is foundational to personal security and wellbeing. Access to adequate and appropriate workspace is essential to supporting artistic production and creative careers. Survey participants highlighted their challenges in accessing space to develop and produce work, such as studio and rehearsal spaces, as well as spaces to present work, such as galleries, music venues and performing arts facilities. There were comments that galleries and brick and mortar spaces for arts programs are "disappearing" in their communities.

"My number one challenge as an artist is having to limit my creativity due to the amount of space available to me and many artists like myself who live in housing that doesn't allow for much creative expression"

And while several people commented on their success in utilizing alternative spaces like pop-up venues, the creative community is calling out for long term space solutions to stabilize costs, invest in their practices and cultivate the networks and patrons needed to sustain their operations. Respondents are seeking resources for developing space sharing or cooperative buying agreements, for developing cultural trusts or advancing policy tools that local governments can use to incentivize long term leases at affordable rates for cultural organizations and arts businesses.

Self-Employment Safety Net

As we know from lived experience and recent studies, arts workers are more than three times as likely to be self-employed than other workers and that status leaves them particularly susceptible to economic insecurity (Yang et al. 2021). *"Our work is piecemeal and we don't live from paycheck to paycheck because there's no such thing, it's gig to gig economy, a very different way of thinking and being,"* described one survey taker. Additionally, much of the time and labor that goes into developing art works or cultural experiences, such as rehearsing, creating models and sketches, experimenting with processes, curating, marketing or networking, goes uncompensated. The lack of safety nets for the self-employed deeply affects artists as well as administrators of small organizations that cannot offer benefits.

"I have a BA in English Education, and MA in Interdisciplinary Arts and an MFA in creative writing... I have been a devoted arts educator (poet teacher) in SFUSD schools for over 35 years. Because I have worked as an independent contractor in SF since 1984, I receive no pension... I am 70 but cannot afford to retire."

These issues are compounded for artists from economically or racially marginalized communities. *"Without financial security, artists will not be able to thrive in the extreme financial inequality that exists in America today,"* asserts a survey taker, *"we need to level the playing field so that*

artists that come from economic strife can compete with artists who are of means.” Collectively, individuals who took the survey identified that the lack of social safety nets for the self-employed is one of their biggest challenges. There was overwhelming consensus that they are seeking policy solutions to address housing or child care costs or programs like Guaranteed Basic Income, unemployment insurance, retirement options and portable benefits.

Respondents also want to lean into community organizing to build on the mutual aid and sharing economy resources that were developed in response to COVID. As one survey participant described, arts workers want to see, *“mutual aid to support emergency funds for health and transition related expenses in self-employed/gig communities —such as having children, care leave, transitioning jobs, major health issues, etc.”*

“Advocating for the arts is important to me. Advocating for affordable or subsidized health care and affordable or subsidized day care for working families are my priority at this time.”

Arts Service Organizations

Arts workers and cultural organizations are also calling for entities in their communities that can serve as centralized hubs for information sharing, resource development and advocacy coordination. One survey taker envisions “a robust, centralized, and energetic arts coalition that reduces organizational redundancies in the metropolitan area while establishing and analyzing the diverse funding needs of active artisans in the area.” California Arts Council programs such as **State and Local Partners** and **Statewide & Regional Networks**, as well as other local arts councils, discipline-specific support organizations or artist networks serve as critical creative economy infrastructure by providing funding and technical support, communicating opportunities to their constituents or coordinating collective action or impact.

“The support of arts service organizations should be recognized as essential to a healthy arts and culture ecosystem, but it is not prioritized by funders or valued.”

Service organizations can play a critical role in helping their constituents access capital. Some act as fiscal sponsors for artists or other small nonprofits. One individual shared, *“If I didn’t have a fiscal sponsor I would not have the ability to survive as an artist.”* These groups can also stimulate resource development through coordinating local advocacy. Or they can take the lead on fostering cross-sector partnerships, answering the call from the field for *“support in terms of employment, training, funding, placement for arts workers across sectors,”* as one survey respondent described. Arts service organizations have also provided COVID relief programs or are leading disaster response or in their communities.

“In an effort to support our artist member base, we used a portion of our budget, typically allocated for in-person events, and offered 12 one-time micro grants for artist members to continue creative projects in their newly restricted settings.”

Service organizations can also be key drivers and supporters of cross-sector collaborations. They can play the bridging role of bringing different partners and funders together and in linking members of the field to those opportunities. The **California Creative Corps** pilot program leveraged arts service organizations to do just this. The fourteen administering organizations fostered and funded regional collaborations between artists and civic organizations working in public health, social justice, climate change and more.

The presence of these service organizations is uneven across the state and funding to support their operations is scarce. These groups are especially needed to help underserved groups or marginalized communities access resources. One participant explained that while larger organizations have the capacity to compete for grants, *“smaller arts groups (formal or informal) either bootstrap their cultural productions through personal or crowdfunding, relying on all-volunteer workers,”*

leaving them ultimately on their own in a local ecosystem that has, "*many silos, very little cross-communication; no centralized resources hub for events, opportunities, or skills training.*" Arts service organizations can convene and connect members of the field, locate and leverage resources and provide services that reduce costs and barriers for the networks they serve.



Our 2024 Field Survey findings illustrate two entwined systems of support, one **collaborative** and **relational**, and the other the **infrastructure** or **scaffolding** upon which to grow a stronger field. In examining survey respondents' feedback, and their reported needs, challenges and opportunities in both of these areas, several main policy areas of focus began to emerge. In order for the artists and arts organizations of California to thrive in this "new normal", there are steps we can take to ensure their chances for success. The following section lays out seven main policy areas as priorities at the State level, and outlines steps to increase participation in field building and advocacy efforts to help accomplish these goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

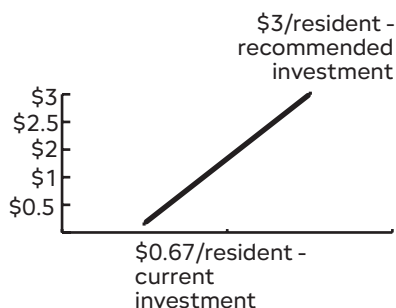
CA Arts Advocates: Recommended State Policy Priorities

As a comprehensive lobbying organization for arts, culture, and the creative economy, **CA Arts Advocates** is working to influence equitable and just system change through public policy and public investments. The following constitutes recommended priorities, based on the survey results, for state-level policy change that **CA Arts Advocates** and its partners and other groups could advance through its lobbying work, policy writing and grassroots advocacy campaigns.

1 Increase funding to the California Arts Council (CAC)

Increasing and sustaining adequate investment in artists and organizations through the state arts agency is essential to undoing the impacts of the chronic funding scarcity that plague our sector and threaten California's creative identity and economy.

California needs a robust and comprehensive state arts agency that has the capacity and resources to address its diverse needs, to provide equitable access to funding to more parts of the ecosystem and to meet the demand for arts and culture throughout the state. The current funding levels represent a profound underinvestment in the field. In its 2023-24 grant cycle, the CAC was only able to support 4.3% of the state's arts and culture organizations (CAC 2024).



An increase in the CAC budget to \$120 million, or \$3 per resident, would move California from 27th to 9th in the nation in per capita spending on the arts. Being home to 25% of the nation's creative workforce, California should rank among the top ten states investing in their creative communities.

With sufficient funding levels, more of the state's cultural organizations could stabilize and innovate to sustain jobs, leverage other resources, and make catalytic investments in their growth or programs. Additionally, this would provide arts workers access to thriving wages, helping artists sustain their creative practices while making creative careers accessible to a more diverse pool of Californians. Increased funding will also help ensure that more of California's residents have equitable access to creative expression and cultural participation in their communities.

2

Diversify and increase funding for arts jobs

Developing and expanding cross-sector initiatives, via policies or programs that employ the creative workforce and embed artists or organizations in projects advancing civic goals, will diversify sources of funding, build strategic partnerships and position the creative sector as a solutions-partner

- Secure state policies and funding sources that include other state agencies. Successful efforts will integrate the arts into a wider range of state priorities, strategically positioning artists and cultural groups as partners in the state's success. Diversifying the portfolio of state funding sources also has the potential to help the field better weather budget deficit years and changing political landscapes.
- Secure ongoing funding to continue the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (SB 1116) beyond its pilot year, sustaining jobs in smaller organizations while investing in the cultural infrastructure of California communities
- Secure ongoing funding for proven cross-sector programs and support the development of new initiatives. Policy innovations such as CA Creative Corps, Clean CA, Creative Youth Development Grants and California Cultural Districts provide jobs for arts workers and help to sustain cultural organizations. These programs also increase the visibility and value proposition of their work in their communities and stimulate partnerships that increase the likelihood of local investment and future collaborations.
- Advance "Arts on Prescription" as a state priority by initiating pilot programs or developing state policies to support the intersection of arts in health as a means to address epidemics of mental health, isolation and loneliness. On the federal level, work with partners to establish access to arts and culture as a social determinant of health, and access to arts to be covered as a 1115 demonstration amendment waiver for Medicaid and MediCal.
- Expand state legislation monitoring and lobbying to identify and advance cross-sector possibilities for the field.
- Track state legislative efforts to mitigate or address climate change that have public education or public will building components and either lobby for artists or cultural organizations to be eligible for funding or continue to educate lawmakers on the role that the arts can play in advancing these issues.

3

Increase access to affordable housing and/or work spaces

- Develop or sponsor state level policies that have the potential to protect creatives from displacement, preserve existing or produce affordable housing for arts workers. This could mean passing legislation like AB 812 that gives local governments tools or authority to include eligible artists in preferential access to affordable units.
- Identify and promote to state and local policymakers potential financing tools for investments in cultural districts such as special assessment districts, tax increment financing or Transient Occupancy Tax options (Arroyo 2020).
- Research and develop a well-outlined method for how cities or developers might arrive at an inclusive and locally-informed definition for determining "artist" eligibility.
- Continue convening the Artists Housing Working Group, a CA for the Arts task force established in 2023 that brings together leading organizations and affordable housing experts in the field.

4

- The group is helping to build a knowledge base of the issues, advising on advocacy resources and potential policy solutions and will help mobilize the field during advocacy efforts.
- Build coalitions with other housing groups to advocate for state or federal level policy solutions, including increasing federal funding for affordable housing and expanding Section 8 provisions.

Develop social safety net programs and business development resources

- Support or sponsor state policies that advance protections and support systems for self-employed workers, including Guaranteed Basic Income, unemployment insurance, portable benefits, child care programs, etc.
- Build coalitions with the larger network of organizations and unions working on anti poverty policies and programs.
- Advocate for the addition of creative economy experts or creative entrepreneurship training offered through the network of California's Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs).
- Advance state-level programs that provide entrepreneurship training specifically to creative entrepreneurs.
- Monitor licensing, permitting and other state regulations that may impact arts workers.
- Increase access to high speed internet, especially in rural and marginalized communities.
- Partner with marketing agencies such as Visit CA or tourism boards to feature arts and culture in their materials.

5

Advocate to funding agencies for programs that will increase access to capital

- Advocate for flexible funding programs for artists and organizations that allow them to self-determine where to direct investments, such as grants for operations, small business grants, micro-loans or low-cost loans.
- Build support for direct funding to artists through fellowships or professional development grants.
- Advocate for improvements to grant-making processes such as simplified applications, multi-year funding cycles or reporting tools that recipients can repurpose for fundraising and advocacy.
- Advocate for funding for arts service organizations or networks that focus on capacity building for their constituents through technical support, information sharing, collective marketing or advocacy coordination.
- Advocate to funders to invest in solidarity economy practices (Linares 2021), especially those being developed in under-resourced and BIPOC communities, by providing incubation and start-up capital or ways to support cooperative business models.



RECOMMENDATIONS

CA for the Arts: Recommendations for Field Building

CA for the Arts works to build the field by responsively and authentically representing its interests, increasing participation in advocacy, growing a network of networks and developing a shared knowledge base. Findings from the survey indicate that CA for the Arts could advance its field building goals by focusing on trust, removing barriers to participation, building networks through affinity groups and coalitions, developing resources to support local advocacy and activating partnerships with private philanthropy.

Top Motivations to Participate in Advocacy

#1

The policy change directly affects by work or livelihood

#2

When a trusted colleague / friend asks me to advocate

Trust is the essential ingredient to participation.

Survey respondents report that their top motivation for participating in advocacy is when a policy change is relevant to their work or livelihood. We can expect folks to take action when something is directly impacting them. But their second highest motivation is when a trusted colleague or friend asks them. This points to the social dimension of advocacy, where trust creates assurance that the action will advance shared values. People need to see their interests are being addressed in the advocacy – relationships and representation matter. Increasing trust also addresses the greatest barrier to participation - the lack of time people have - by collapsing the need for someone to do all the background research themselves. Trust is built through reciprocity, transparency and effectiveness.

"When I receive letters to take action. I want to know who that request is coming from, what do they do, and do they have the interests of my community at heart. If I can't establish those things (preferably quickly), I am less likely to act."

"Policy and advocacy efforts need to move beyond including some BIPOC voices that are treated as 'minorities' so that members of these communities can help to re-shape and build a much richer arts environment"

Trust building as an organizational focus will lead to more authentic representation and overall effectiveness. CA for the Arts can further establish these conditions by:

- Continuing to provide programs and resources that reflect the needs and aspirations of the field and that respond to emerging needs.
- Ensuring diverse voices and perspectives are involved in developing programs, communications and resources.
- Partnering with networks serving communities not adequately reached or represented, convening them to identify opportunities for reciprocal engagement.
- Identifying opportunities to demonstrate and model allyship with those who are marginalized and most impacted by resource scarcity.
- Developing a web-based central statewide clearing house of field opportunities such as grant programs, job postings, requests for proposals, artist fellowships and residencies.
- Sharing internal decision-making processes and providing timely reporting on the results of programs and advocacy campaigns.

Accessibility is the key to capacity.

Providing tools that are easy to use and engagement opportunities that are accessible to people at different experience levels would greatly increase the capacity for the field to participate in advocacy. Increasing accessibility - and inclusion - also means extending resources to meet those who are underrepresented where they are at. Economically disadvantaged groups, advocates in rural communities and artists are asking for tools to help them participate.

"Just show me where/how through clear emails with short instructions. Clear Subject lines like 'Please help Advocate for XYZ' will help, and click through links are effective. In person activities should have as much lead time as possible - I will go out of my way to prioritize."

"I sometimes feel that the language used to reach out to artists seems more directed at administrators. People who understand the complex language of navigating these programs. I end up feeling a bit alienated by my ignorance in regards to this language."

"We need more immediate and accessible ways to engage cultural workers and practitioners in advocacy who have not participated in the past. Rural and suburban communities need more voice. We need more foot soldiers in those communities which means more trained advocates outside urban communities."

"Compensating neighborhood advocacy organizers or anyone participating in advocacy as consultants could also be transformative."



CA for the Arts can make advocacy participation more accessible by:

- Making complex issues digestible through clear language and graphics, including an advocacy dictionary of technical terms to arrive at accessible shared terminology that is reflective of the communities the policies are intended to serve.
- Sustaining relationships with constituents by scaffolding engagement – providing points of entry for beginners and supportive touch points for continued participation that increase confidence and competency.
- Promoting campaigns that offer simplified communications and easy-to-use actions that can be accomplished on the participant's own time.
- Developing funding strategies or compensation models for arts advocacy.
- Leveraging member support to keep programs free and accessible to all.



Sacramento-based advocates Adam Foster, Roshawn Davis, and Can Foster at the 2023 CA Arts & Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid

Building a network of networks

CA for the Arts should continue to build the field by expanding and connecting the community of organizations and individuals working together to create systems change. Field building should include a focus on addressing regional and socioeconomic gaps in advocacy participation, developing knowledge exchanges with underrepresented groups and leveraging the bonding and bridging principles of social capital¹² to ensure reciprocal engagement and to build a diverse and inclusive coalition.

"I am willing to advocate and would be more motivated if others in my sphere were to do the same. It's a long way to victory and without full participation it can get lonely."

"We have found racial affinity groups to be very beneficial both within our organization and with partner groups we work with. Regional racial affinity groups could be a powerful way to advance DEIA work across the sector."

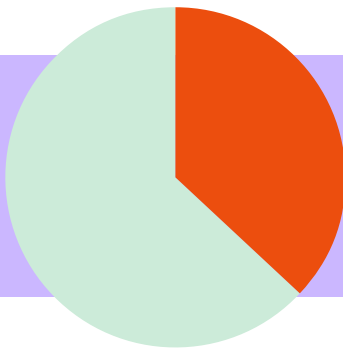
"[Increase] local communication, conversations and feedback that filter into statewide efforts. Folks in the rural areas do NOT feel represented in state efforts and strategies."

12

As Robert Putnam puts it, "bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40" in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Putnam 2020).

It is recommended that CA for the Arts work with funders and regional partners to:

- Stimulate network creation in areas that lack advocacy coordination - building on the Regional Advocacy Infrastructure Network (RAIN) and the Grassroots Artists Advocacy Program (GAAP) pilot programs¹³.
- Offer programs that catalyze connectivity on regional levels, whether virtually or in-person.
- Establish a network of outreach partners and provide easy-to-use tools for leaders to engage their communities.
- Support affinity groups in order to both deepen their bonds and uplift their shared experiences.
- Work to build field solidarity by promoting allyship as a value and create opportunities to increase individual stakes in collective successes.
- Conduct further research to understand what is needed to bridge differences and build solidarity and allyship within the field.
- Advocate for continued funding for arts service organizations and state/local networks, who are often overlooked in their essential roles as connectors between artists and advocacy efforts and the organizations which hire artists.



Over 37% of organizations named **"advocacy training and coordination to increase local funding"** as one of their top service needs.

Building a knowledge base for local advocacy

There were a number of requests for specific resources that, if offered, would put tools in the hands of advocates that empower them to pursue policy change in their communities and on their terms. Over 37% of organizations named **"advocacy training and coordination to increase local funding"** as one of their top service needs. There is a call for localized data and casemaking tools and for resources to help them build relationships with elected officials and form cross-sector partnerships. And many of the policy issues affecting the creative community, such as housing, land use planning, economic development or accessing small business support, are addressed at the local level.

"There is more funding opportunity at the local level than at state and national levels. I'd like to see more support for advocacy at the local level."

"I find direct relationships with government representatives to be the most effective form of advocacy. Building those relationships throughout the year seems an essential part of the work."

"Bringing together arts advocacy with other advocacy efforts for purposes of winning campaigns and legislative goals. This requires expanding the tent and being knowledgeable on the intersections that exist."

It is recommended that CA for the Arts adapt or expand its programs to include the following resources to help unlock local partnerships and funding:

- Offer an annual advocacy calendar with monthly tips on sustaining year-round engagement with policymakers on the state and local levels.
- Produce local advocacy toolkits that include guidance on activations like press conferences, public comment, proclamations and local elected official engagement.
- Help develop a cost-effective way for advocates to access local economic and social impact data to make their cases more relevant to decision makers in their communities.
- Develop tools that assist local advocates in embedding arts and culture priorities in local planning such as affordable housing/workspace and cultural districts in local land use and economic development planning.
- Create a toolkit that compiles and shares information on different forms of regional marketing and communications platforms - what they offer, how they are funded and what partnerships made them happen.
- Provide resources that advance affordable housing access such as toolkits that address particular opportunities or by sharing information on models such as land banking, cooperative buying or space sharing agreements.
- Offer trainings on how to access capital beyond grants through programs offered by lenders or state and federal agencies in addition to arts agencies.
- Advance the development of solidarity economy models within the cultural community by uplifting research and case studies and facilitating information-sharing.

Activating Public-Partner Partnerships to Accelerate Change

- As a bridge builder, CA for the Arts could play a role in stimulating partnerships between funders and arts service organizations. The following activities could accelerate change and meet the needs of the field:
- Uplift the work and impact of arts service organizations in communications to the field.
- Continue to share research findings and information on best practices published by funders.
- Promote to funders and government agencies the field's demand for support in developing cross-sector partnerships and continue to educate on the field's ability to advance the goals of funders and civic leaders.
- Promote to funders the need for lower cost methods for gathering localized data on economic and social impacts that could help members of the field to measure and tell the story of their work.
- Explore opportunities for how the arts ecosystem could develop financial models that allow for greater use of self-funding to increase resilience and self reliance.

These recommendations offer guidance to CA for the Arts and its arts advocacy partners across the state as they seek to increase advocacy capacity in members of the arts community and to build connectivity and effectiveness across the field.

Conclusion

The **2024 California Arts Advocacy Survey Report** reflects the insights, aspirations and challenges reflected in the contributions of over 1,000 members of the state's creative community to a field wide survey conducted by CA for the Arts in January and February of that year.

The report finds that while the acute impacts of COVID-19 have receded, the conditions in which the field is functioning continue to be shaped by the social and economic forces set in motion by the pandemic as well as by the movements for social and racial justice. Funding scarcity and rising costs are creating tremendous pressures and precarity for many arts workers and organizations, especially those from marginalized communities. At the same time, the resourcefulness and creativity with which the field met the challenges of COVID and the innovations spurred by various relief programs have led to new ways of working and pathways of collaboration that the field wants to expand upon. The insights that survey respondents shared outline the systems of support that they need to meet these challenges and build on the possibilities they are fostering. To sustain their practices and create a thriving future, they are seeking access to capital, affordable housing and space, business development resources, social safety net programs for the self-employed and the support of arts service organizations. And to build strength and resilience, they are seeking resources to support collaboration within the field, cross-sector partnerships and coalition-building.

Members of California's creative community are poised to advocate for increased public investment in the arts, for programs that support the creative workforce and for a new social contract that creates economic security while embedding them as partners in achieving the civic goals of the state and their local communities. CA for the Arts can build on these possibilities by developing a knowledge base and removing barriers to increase participation in advocacy on the state and local levels, by cultivating regional and statewide networks and by spurring partnerships with private philanthropy. And its sister lobbying organization, CA Arts Advocates (CAA), can work to advance the field by continuing to champion increased investment in the California Arts Council and in other programs that support arts jobs. To help stabilize and sustain the field, CAA can advocate for policies and programs that increase access to capital and business development support, that provide affordable housing or space and that advance the development of social safety net programs.

We hope that the findings in this report express both the urgency and potency of this new normal and that arts advocates galvanize around achievable goals that they can realize through partnerships and policy changes in their local communities and at the state level.



**The future
of California
is CREATIVE**



Appendix A: Methodology

"In Their Own Words"

Our goals for this year's survey were to gain an understanding of how members of the creative community are experiencing and defining this post-pandemic "new normal", what conditions they are working within, and what solutions they have created or are seeking. And we wanted to learn from them in their own words.

To this end, the survey was structured to elicit insights through a qualitative approach, using ranking multiple choice and open ended questions. In order to surface what we didn't know, roughly 80% of the questions had an "Other" option or asked for a narrative response, helping us collect a diverse set of perspectives. This approach did lengthen the time it took to take the survey and we received some feedback that it was too long. We recognize that having time to devote to taking a long survey is itself a privilege and sacrifice. We thank everyone who took the time to participate.

We chose not to rely on a statistical weighing of the responses because we anticipated that our sample will likely not represent the full breadth of the creative community. While CA for the Arts has a database of 25,000 contacts, we know our most active constituents tend to be mid-sized to large organizations concentrated in urban areas. To ensure we were able to include diverse voices, we conducted targeted outreach with the help of partners to reach individual artists, communities of color, and rural regions. Additionally we convened three Regional Conversations and six meetings with members of the field representing diverse voices.

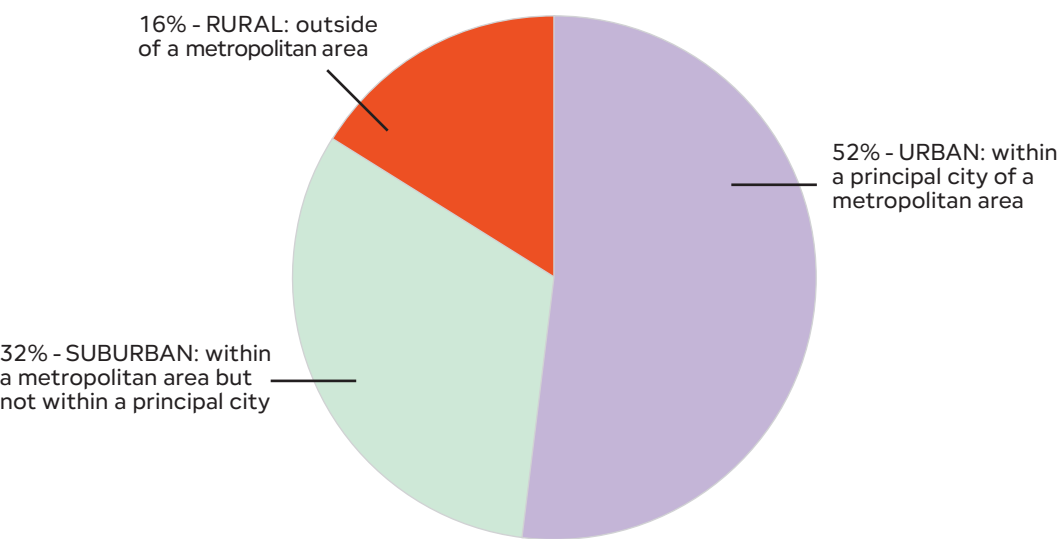
All quantitative data was tabulated in the survey instrument and confirmed through spreadsheet calculations. The qualitative data captured in the open ended questions were coded in Microsoft Excel under common themes through an inductive process where we reviewed the text and identified emerging themes (Braun et al., 2006). Frequently mentioned topics then started to emerge more clearly with this clustering method as a way to find commonalities within the participant responses (Lex, et al., 2010). Clustering allowed us to identify the main themes across the survey as they arose in the data. We then scanned the narrative responses to identify insights and voices that expressed sentiment behind the themes or added dimension and perspective to the findings.

The report is a synthesis of these patterns and themes, offering multiple perspectives on how members of the arts community have adapted over the past few years, what challenges and opportunities they see, what practices, policies or programs they would like to see expanded or initiated and what support they need to participate in advocacy.

Appendix B: Who We Reached

The **2024 California for the Arts Field Survey** was open for responses from January 15 to February 22nd. We received over 1,680 responses from members of the arts and cultural community across California. 1076 individual arts workers representing 54 counties and 607 people representing organizations from all 58 counties took part in the survey.

Community Type



In comparison, 94% of Californians live in an urban area (Cox 2023) and less than 6% live in a rural area (Johnson 2024).

We had individual responses from 54 of the 58 counties and organizational responses from all counties. The table compares these responses to California County data found on the World Population Review website (WPR n.d.).

| Top Counties by Percentage of California Population | | | | | |
|---|--------|------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Individual Responses | | Organization Responses | | California Counties ¹⁴ | |
| Los Angeles County | 32.13% | Los Angeles County | 29.44% | Los Angeles County | 24.70% |
| Alameda County | 12.07% | San Francisco County | 11.51% | San Diego County | 8.39% |
| San Francisco County | 10.12% | Alameda County | 9.54% | Orange County | 8.03% |
| Sacramento County | 8.64% | San Diego County | 9.54% | Riverside County | 6.46% |
| San Diego County | 7.80% | Santa Clara County | 4.93% | San Bernardino County | 5.65% |
| Santa Clara County | 5.57% | Orange County | 4.77% | Santa Clara County | 4.83% |
| Orange County | 5.11% | Sacramento County | 4.28% | Alameda County | 4.16% |
| Contra Costa County | 4.64% | Riverside County | 2.80% | Sacramento County | 4.07% |
| Marin County | 4.55% | Nevada County | 2.47% | Contra Costa County | 2.96% |
| Nevada County | 3.81% | Ventura County | 2.47% | Fresno County | 2.62% |

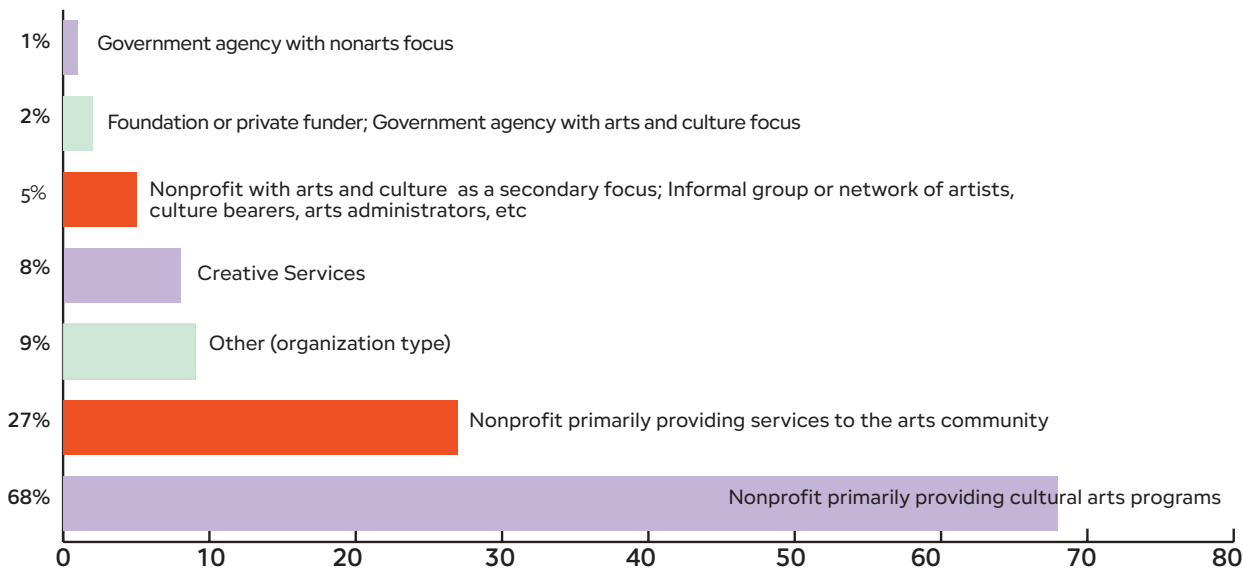
¹⁴ From: World Population Review. (n.d.) California counties by population. [worldpopulationreview.com https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/california/counties](https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/california/counties)

Organizations - Types & Areas of Practice

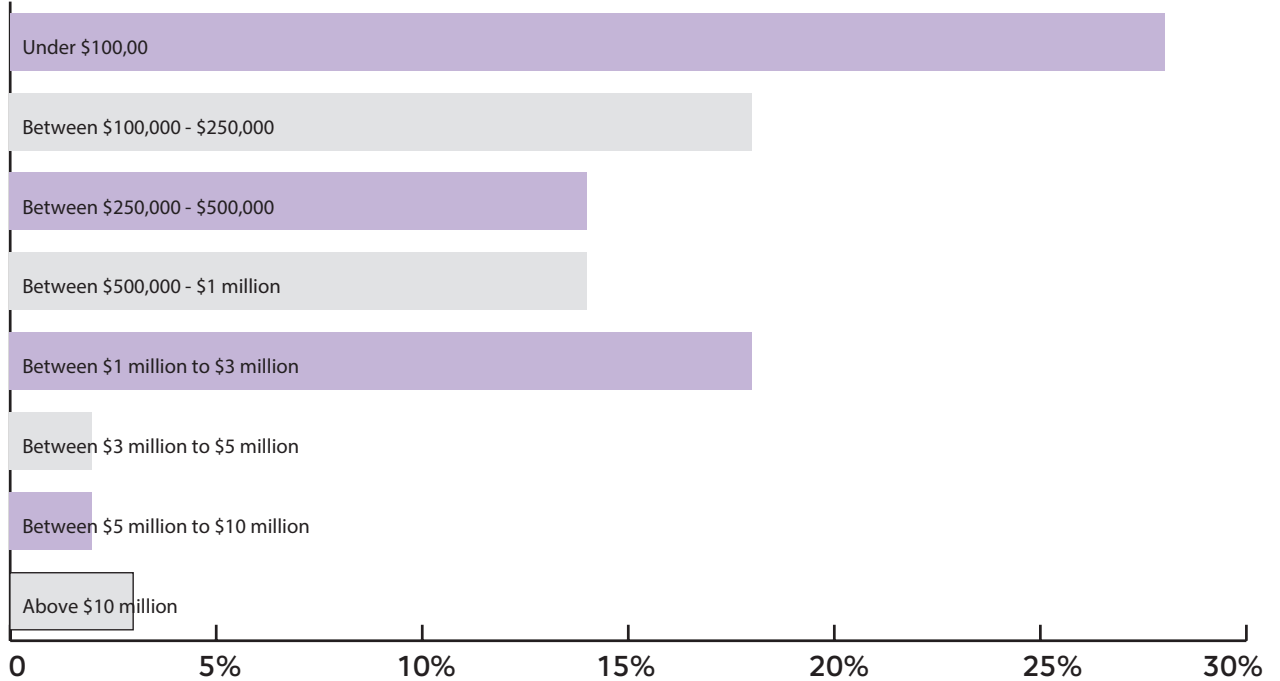


Arts for LA team at the 2024 Arts Advocacy Day rally. Photographed by Alan Sheckter.

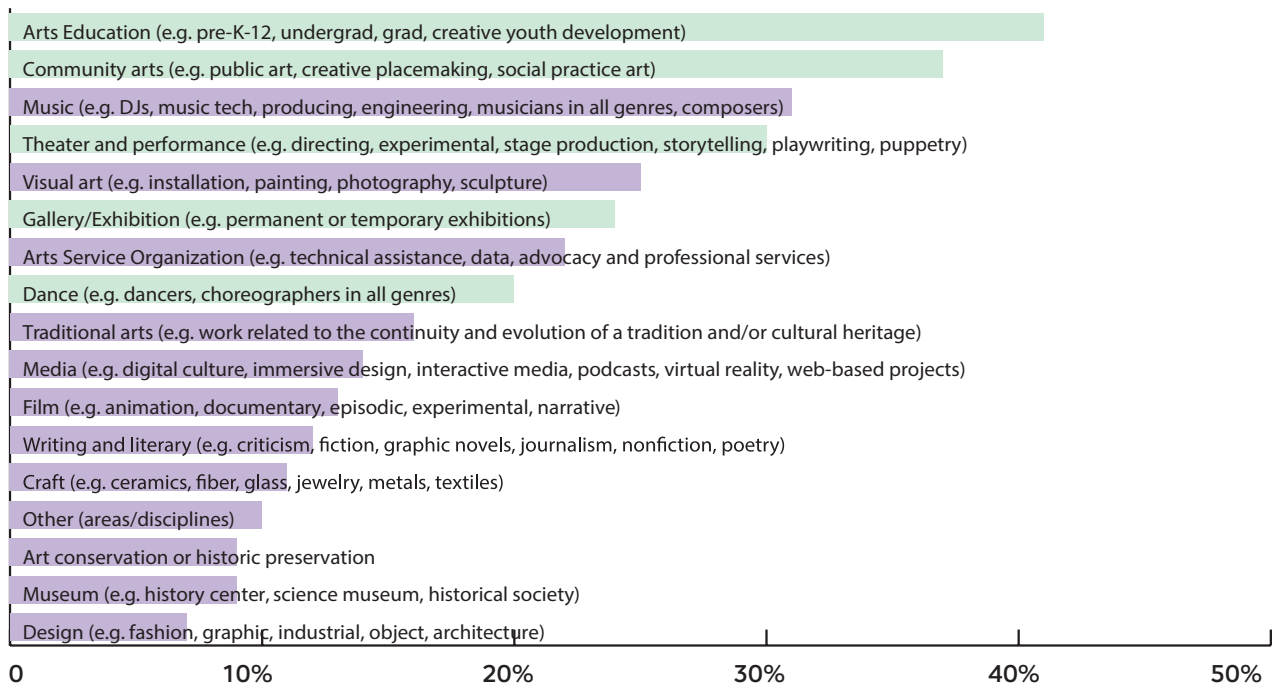
Types of Organizations Represented



Operating Budget Size



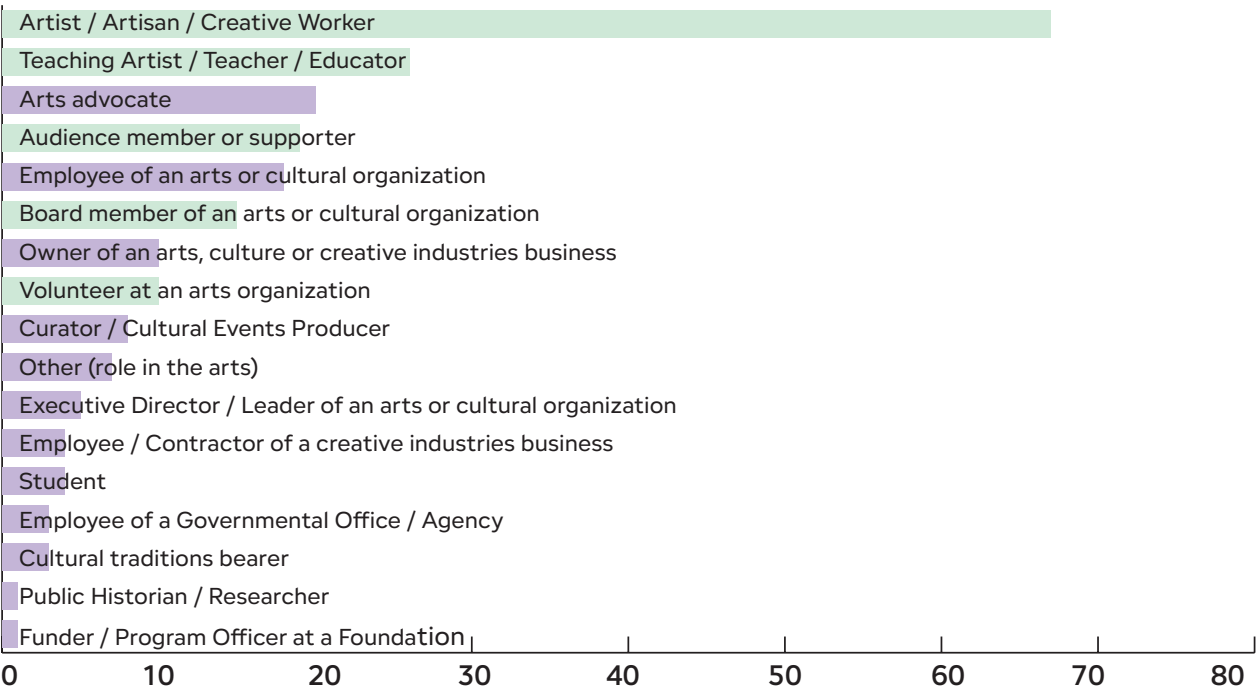
Areas / disciplines that best describes your organization or business' field of practice - could select multiple



Individuals - Roles & Areas of Practice

Understanding that individuals often have multiple roles in the arts ecosystem, as well as different business lines, we asked participants to identify their top 3 roles. 67% of individuals identify as an artist/artisan/creative worker, 26% as a teaching artist /teacher /educator and 20% identify as an arts advocate. 23% are employed by a nonprofit, 24% volunteer in a non-profit and 14% own or are employed by a creative business, with 17% reporting a blend of those roles.

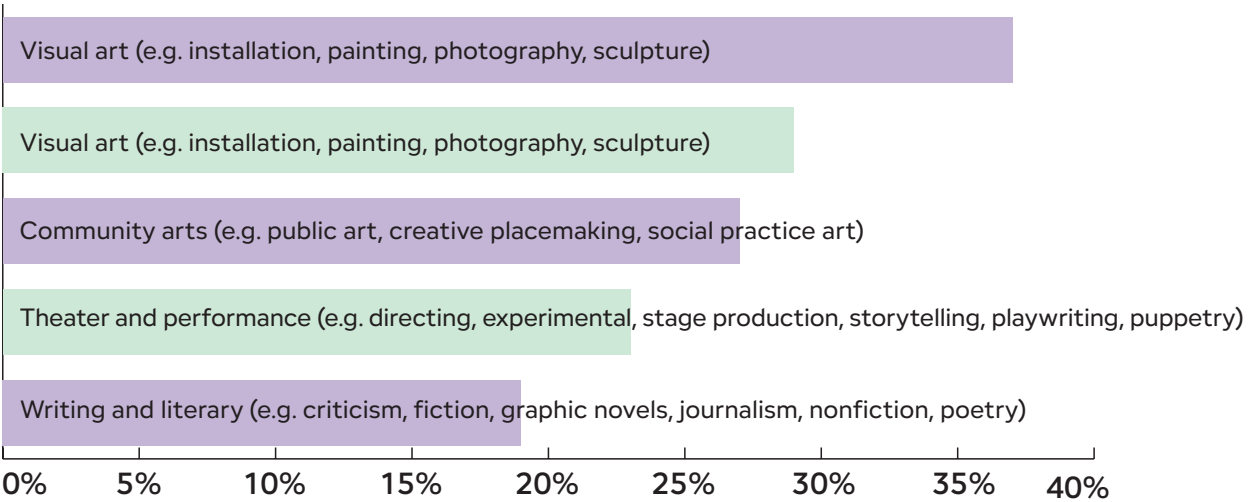
What is/are Your Role(s) in the arts and cultural ecosystem? (please select up to 3)



Area of Practice

Individuals reported participating in 58 areas of practice, either creative disciplines or services to the field.

The top five:



Demographics

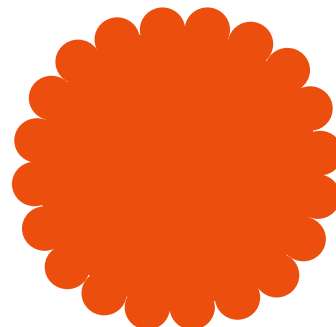
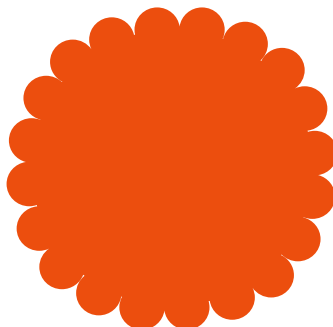
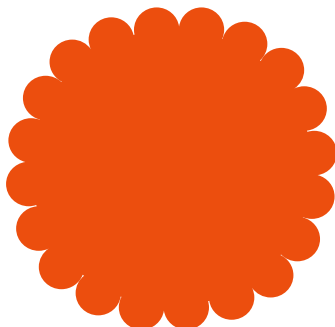
While this study was intended to focus on the perspectives and experiences shared by survey respondents, we included demographic questions to assess who we were able to reach. 53% of survey respondents opted to answer the demographics questions. While we received feedback in the comments that the survey itself was long, we are pleased that this many chose to answer demographics questions which were positioned at the end of the survey¹⁵. Both the demographic data and the responses by county give CA for the Arts valuable insights into who the organization is reaching and where it needs to direct efforts for more inclusive and representative engagement.

The survey respondents' selections for Race/Ethnicity and Age are presented in comparison with the demographic data provided in the "**Arts Workers in California**" report which studied the characteristics of both California arts workers and the full California workforce found in American Community Survey (ACS) data estimates between 2014-18 (Yang et al. 2021). These are not direct comparisons, as the demographics questions asked in our survey do not exactly match the ACS questions.

Race/Ethnicity

Racial Identities that respondents selected (they could select all that applied):

| Race/Ethnicity | Survey Participants | CA Arts Worker | CA Full Workforce |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| Multiracial | 11.2% | 3.7% | 2.8% |
| White Only | 66.1% | 60.5% | 40.3% |
| Black or African American | 4.9% | 4.6% | 5.4% |
| Latino/a/x or Chicano/a/x | 13.3% | 17.7% | 36.1% |
| Asian American or Pacific Islander | 9.4% | 13.3% | 15.1% |
| Native American or Indigenous | 4.2% | 0.2% | .3% |



Age

| Age | Survey Participants | CA Arts Worker |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 65 or above | 31.3% | 9.2% |
| 45-64 | 42.9% | 31.5% |
| 25-44 | 25.0% | 48.3% |
| Under 25 | .9% | 11% |

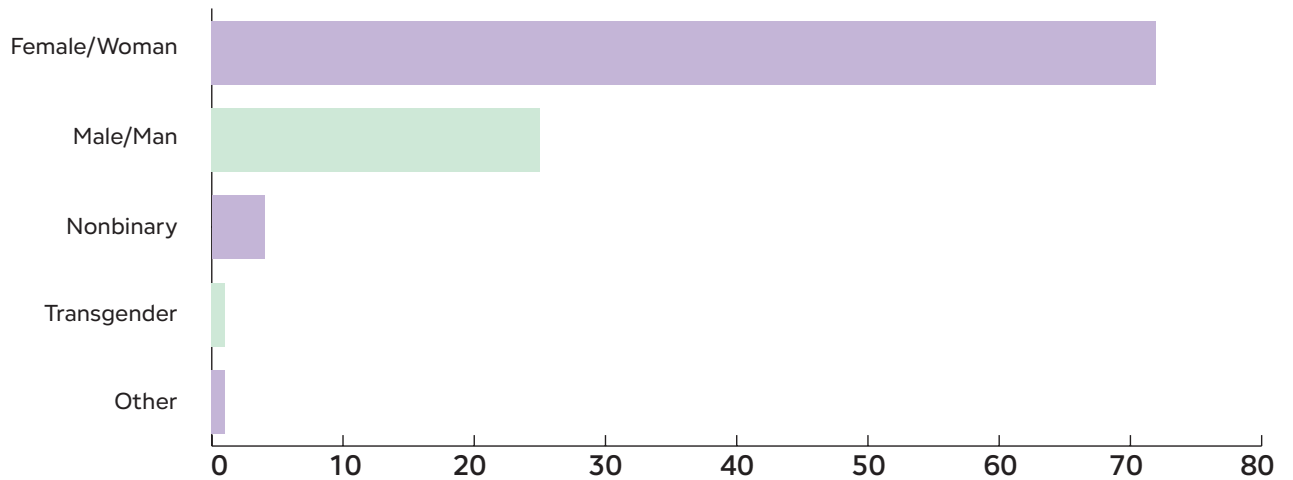
While the ages of our survey participants trends higher than the CA arts workers studied in that report, they are in line with the findings of a 2017 Americans for the Arts Baseline Demographic Survey. This alignment likely reflects the reach and similarity of the networks of the surveying agencies; Americans for the Arts and CA for the Arts both being advocacy organizations whose members trend older. The gender and education levels are also comparable. That report found that the median age of respondents was 12 years older than the US median age, that women participants outnumbered men 3-to-1 and that 54% of participants had earned an advanced degree (Lord 2017).



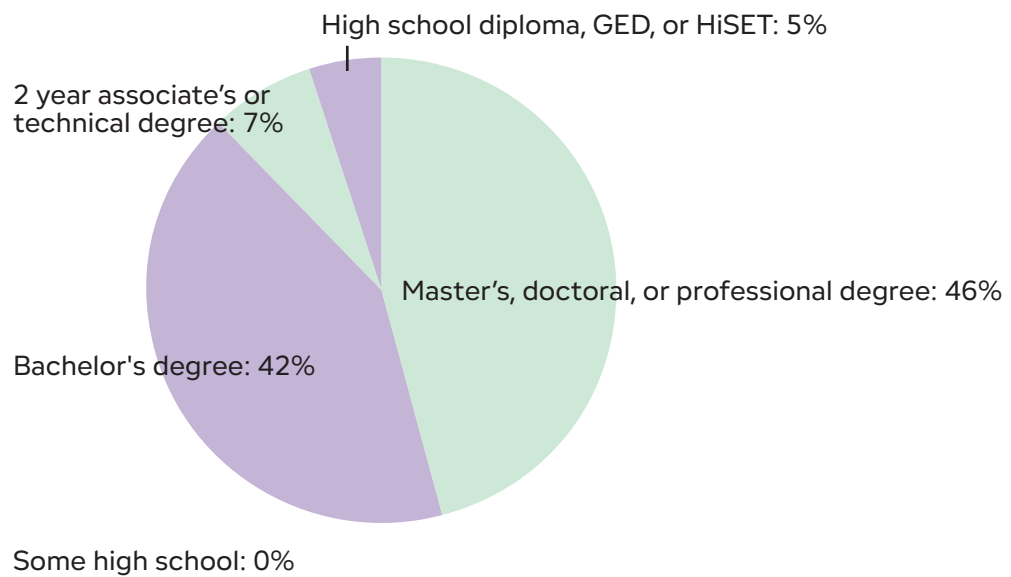
David Mack, Managing Director of The African American Art & Culture Complex and Bernard Brown, Artistic Director of Bernard Brown/bbmoves in Los Angeles at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid.



Gender



Education Level



On Opposite Page:

Jennifer Andrea Porras at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid.

Art work
real work



Appendix C: California Programs & Legislation

Below are short descriptions of the various California programs and legislation referenced throughout the report, accompanied by links for more information.

Arts in California Parks program

California State Parks, the California Arts Council, and Parks California launched a new Arts in California Parks grants program – the Local Parks Grant Program. A total of \$8 million in grants was available to local non-profit and community organizations to support art and cultural programs in local communities across the state. Awardees were to be announced in September 2024.

The Local Parks Grant Program, managed by Parks California, intended to create local community connections to California's rich and diverse cultural history and natural areas outside of California's state park boundaries.

[Link to Source](#)

AB 5 – California Assembly Bill 5

California adopted a new law aimed at combating the misclassification of workers. The legislation, Assembly Bill (AB) 5, took effect on January 1, 2020. AB5 adopts the "ABC" test that has been used by courts and government agencies to determine employee status. Under this test, workers can only be classified as independent contractors when a business demonstrates that the workers fit within set conditions.

[Link to Source](#)

AB 189 - Arts Council: California cultural districts (Assem. Richard Bloom, 2015)

This bill authorized the California Arts Council to establish criteria and guidelines for state-designated cultural districts as well as a competitive application system for certification. The bill also established that certification as a state-designated cultural district would be effective for 5 years, after which the district may renew certification every 3 years.

[Link to Source](#)

AB 812 – California Assembly Bill 812, Reserving affordable units in or near a cultural district for artists (Assem. Tasha Boerner, 2023)

This bill authorizes a city or county that requires, as a condition of approval, that a certain percentage of units of a residential development be affordable housing, as specified, to reserve for artists up to 10% of those required affordable housing units, except as provided, if certain conditions are met, including that the units reserved are located within or within one-half mile from a state-designated cultural district or within a locally designated cultural district, as specified

[Link to Source](#)

Arts on Prescription

Originating decades ago in the UK, social prescribing allows healthcare providers to refer patients not only to conventional treatments, but also to a breadth of local resources that can support health and wellbeing. Referrals are made to services like food banks, exercise programs, educational opportunities, and housing assistance—as well as arts, volunteering, gardening, and more.

The aim is to better address “social drivers of health”—the many factors beyond medical care that drive health outcomes.

[Link to Source](#)

In 2024, CA for the Arts hosted a webinar series titled “Arts & Health.” The four part series featured panel discussion and was sponsored by Music Man Foundation. Recordings are available in the video library.

[Access the Video Library](#)

California Creative Corps

The 2021 State Budget included \$60 million one-time General Fund allocation for the California Arts Council (CAC) to implement the California Creative Corps pilot program, a media, outreach, and engagement campaign designed to increase: (1) public health awareness messages to stop the spread of COVID-19; (2) public awareness related to water and energy conservation, climate mitigation, and emergency preparedness, relief, and recovery; (3) civic engagement, including election participation; and (4) social justice and community engagement.

The CAC awarded fourteen administering organizations to direct investments into every county across the state. As of October, 2024, the administering organizations are submitting reports to the CAC. The link below is to the grant program information page. A google search for “creative corps” will list the program pages of the administering organizations, which will provide access to a sense of the scope, scale and impact of the CA Creative Corps.

[Link to Source](#)

California Cultural Districts

Originating with the adoption of Assembly Bill 189 in 2015, authored by Assemblyman Richard Bloom, the California Cultural Districts program aims to leverage the state’s artistic and cultural assets. Aligning with the mission and values of the California Arts Council, the districts will celebrate the diversity of California while unifying under an umbrella of shared values—helping to grow and sustain authentic grassroots arts and cultural opportunities, increasing the visibility of local artists and community participation in local arts and culture, and promoting socioeconomic and ethnic diversity. Currently there are fourteen state designated cultural districts.

[Link to Source](#)

Caltrans’ Clean California Local Grant Program

Trash has plagued California’s streets and highways for decades. Clean California makes significant investments in litter collection, community engagement and education to ultimately transform unsightly roadsides into spaces of pride for all Californians. This is truly a statewide effort with potential projects in all 58 counties and with nearly a third of the funds going directly to cities, counties, tribes and transit agencies to clean local streets and public spaces.

[Link to Source](#)

Creative Youth Development Grant

The Creative Youth Development program is rooted in the CAC’s belief that arts learning is an essential tool for healthy human development and that it should be available to all young people throughout California, including but not limited to those whose lives have been impacted or interrupted by the justice system. The CAC envisions that all of California’s young people are provided with meaningful, culturally responsive arts-learning experiences so that they can

reach their full potential. All projects may occur during or outside of traditional school hours and should take place at arts and culture venues, community centers, court/school sites, juvenile halls and camps, county-operated correctional facilities, social services agencies, and other youth-oriented settings.

[Link to Source](#)

Grassroots Artists Advocacy Program (GAAP)

The Grassroots Artists Advocacy Program (GAAP) is a cohort-based fellowship program for artist advocates that live or work in Oakland or San Francisco. Artist Advocates include diverse artists, culture bearers, and creative workers with a dedicated and committed artistic or cultural practice who directly engage in advocacy and policy development to advance the holistic well-being of the field. GAAP is part of CA for the Arts' Regional Advocacy Infrastructure Network (RAIN), which seeks to reinforce advocacy capacity and efficacy at the local, state and federal levels by designing new models of collaboration at the local (county and municipal) level. In 2024-25, the program will support two cohorts of arts advocates beginning in November.

[Link to Source](#)

Individual Artist Fellowships program

Through a network of regionally-based Administering Organizations (AOs), the Individual Artists Fellowship (IAF) program will continue to recognize, uplift, and celebrate the excellence of California artists practicing any art form. In doing so, the CAC will showcase the centrality of artists' leadership in guiding the evolution of our traditional and contemporary cultures.

[Link to Source](#)

Prop 28 – California Proposition 28, Arts and Music in Schools Funding

On November 8, 2022, California voters approved Proposition 28: The Arts and Music in Schools (AMS) Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act. The measure required the state to establish a new, ongoing program supporting arts instruction in schools beginning in 2023–24.

The legislation allocates 1 percent of the kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) portion of the Proposition 98 funding guarantee provided in the prior fiscal year, excluding funding appropriated for the AMS education program. Local educational agencies (LEAs) with 500 or more students are required to ensure that at least 80 percent of AMS funds to be expended are used to employ certificated or classified employees to provide arts education program instruction. The remaining funds must be used for training, supplies and materials, and arts educational partnership programs, with no more than 1 percent of funds received to be used for an LEA's administrative expenses.

[Link to Source](#)

Regional Advocacy Infrastructure Network (RAIN)

RAIN is a CA for the Arts program that strengthens, trains, and empowers emerging local arts advocacy networks, catalyzing constituent-driven regional policy change and local investment while building more effective and sustainable cultural advocacy infrastructure for California. Supported by Music Man Foundation as a pilot program worked with two advocacy organizations in 2023-24: the Sacramento Arts Regional Alliance (SARA) and the San Diego Regional Arts and Culture Coalition. RAIN is currently in the planning phase for further expansion.

[Link to Source](#)

SB 1116 - California Senate Bill 1116, Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (Sen. Anthony Portantino, 2022)

The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund was allocated \$12.5M in the 2024-25 California state budget. It is currently under development in partnership between CA for the Arts and the California Office of Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA) and will launch in early 2025.

The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund was established to help small nonprofit performing arts organizations address the financial challenges presented by ever increasing payroll expenses. Small Nonprofit Performing Arts Organizations (SNPAOs), defined as those with annual budgets of less than \$2.5 million. Eligible SNPAOs can apply on a quarterly basis for reimbursement of a percentage of payroll expenses, including wages, workers compensation insurance, health and retirement benefits, and payroll processing fees. The percentage is based on budget size, with the smallest organizations receiving the largest percentage of reimbursement.

[Link to Source](#)

SB 628 - California Creative Workforce Act of 2021 (Sen. Ben Allen, 2021)

The California Creative Workforce Act is the first legislation in the nation to establish creative arts workforce development as a state priority. Signed by Governor Newsom on October 9, 2021, the bill directs the California Arts Council to work with the California Workforce Development Board to create a program that promotes employment and “earn and learn” job training opportunities for creative workers. The bill requires the council to consult with local government, community nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions, among others, in this effort.

[Link to Source](#)

State and Local Partners Grant Program

The State-Local Partners (SLP) is a program of the California Arts Council that provides general operating support and technical assistance for county-designated local arts agencies. The purpose of the program is to foster cultural development on the local level through a partnership between the State and the counties of California. The nature of this partnership includes funding, information exchange, cooperative activities, and leadership. The partnership enables individuals, organizations, and communities to create, present, and preserve the arts of all cultures to enrich the quality of life for all Californians.

[Link to Source](#)

Statewide & Regional Networks Grant

Program The Statewide and Regional Networks (SRN) is a program of the California Arts Council. The grant program contributes to the health and vitality of the creative workforce in California by creating a resilient network of arts service organizations and artists. Applicants must be arts services organizations with statewide or regional reach.

[Link to Source](#)

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Thank You

From the team at CA for the Arts and CA Arts Advocates

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