

## **Response Summary**

### **Community Listening Sessions: 2020-21 Grant Programs + COVID-19**

**July 8-9, 2020**

#### **Introduction**

Out of 411 total registrants for the Community Listening Sessions that took place via Zoom on July 8-9, 2020, 116 individuals gave comments. Originally three sessions were scheduled; however, due to high response rates, a fourth session was added.

Sessions were designed to expand upon the CAC's public input process, as encouraged by the CAC's Strategic Framework. Participants were encouraged to consider specific questions in response to the current economic and public health crisis as part of their comments:

- What are your hopes for the next round of Arts Council grant funding?
- What is the most needed grant type for you at this time: general operations, project support, or a combination of both?
- Are there any unique challenges facing your local community that the Council should consider?
- Do you anticipate any unforeseen barriers to applying for an Arts Council grant in the coming year?
- Have you experienced any barriers to applying for an Arts Council grant in the past?

#### **Key Themes**

##### **Gratitude**

In general, respondents from the community expressed gratitude to the CAC for funding support, flexibility in final reporting, and providing a way for them to communicate their feedback via the Zoom listening sessions. Some commented that it was comforting to hear similar struggles and suggestions from their peers across the state. They felt encouraged by the fact that they were not alone in experiencing dramatic shifts due to the impact of COVID-19.

##### **Uncertainty**

Respondents' comments frequently expressed a deep uncertainty about the future due to the closure of venues and learning centers, cancellation of programs, loss of revenue and matching funds, and an overwhelming reliance on technology. For example, the abrupt pivot to delivering programs online required teaching artists and participants to learn virtual meeting platforms, many without adequate training and internet access. These factors continue to create the need for a different kind of support than in the past.

##### **Funding Need: General Operations**

The majority of requests were to increase the opportunity for general operating grants to allow financial flexibility in order to sustain their organizations and communities they serve.

### **Barriers: Application Process**

Another area of comments focused on the barriers of the CAC’s grant application process. Small and emerging organizations face barriers in applying for certain programs due to the 50% total operating revenue threshold in grant guidelines or the 2-year programming history requirement. Other barriers include:

- technological challenges and internet access
- the great amount of time needed to submit their online materials vs. lack of staffing and technical support
- and the majority of one-year project grants vs. the limited availability of multi-year, general operations grants in the current portfolio.

### **Vulnerable Communities**

Responding to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on particularly vulnerable communities across the state ([COVID-19/Race-Ethnicity.aspx](#)) and the absence of other available funding resources, a number of respondents challenged the CAC and Council to meaningfully address racial equity and needs of communities of color; the needs of rural areas; and the deepening technological/digital divide across all demographic intersections.

- **Racial Equity:** Some respondents speaking to racial equity encouraged the CAC to consider representation in the board and staff leadership of applicant organizations identifying service to communities of color -- emphasizing the importance of organizational leadership reflecting the communities they serve.
- **Rural areas:** Some respondents speaking on behalf of rural communities cited the lack of available private or public funding in their regions and challenges including geographic inaccessibility, income inequality, and access to resources.
- **Technological/digital divide across all demographic intersections:** Respondents from a variety of communities, both urban and rural, spoke to the challenges of moving programming online, including the lack of accessibility to program participants, the need for specialized training and technology equipment, increased costs, and concerns for access by individuals with disabilities.

### **Community Listening Sessions by the numbers:**

#### **Number of participants who commented:**

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Total
Wed 7/8 4pm	Thur 7/9 10 am	Thur 7/9 1pm	Thur 7/9 4pm	
22	23	31	40	<b>116*</b>

*\*2 comments were submitted and accepted via email. Both respondents were present during a session. For one respondent, technical difficulties prevented comment during the live broadcast; the other respondent wished to remain anonymous.*

<b>Response Themes</b>	<b>Sum</b>	<b>%</b>
Total number of commenters	116	
<b><u>Greatest challenges</u></b>		
Technology/Digital Divide /Internet access for programming, including teaching artists and participants	22	18.9%
Difficulty with CAC grant application system (time-consuming, short-staffed, varying technical knowledge, etc.)	13	11.21%
Loss of revenue, including loss of matching funds	7	6.03%
<b><u>Greatest needs and aspirations</u></b>		
<b>Grants for General Operations Support</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>47.41%</b>
Streamline/Simplify Application Process	46	39.65%
Remove matching funds requirement	14	12.07%
Grants for both General Ops <i>and</i> Projects	14	12.07%
Grants for project Support	1	0.86%
Individual Artist Support	2	1.72%

Other	44	37.93%
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## Demographic Information

Of those who self-identified their engagement with CAC:

- 78% Current or past grantees or applicants
- 19% New/never applied to the CAC

See the attached chart for a summary of represented regions and the total commenters from each region.

## Audio Recordings

Recordings of each session can be accessed on the CAC website at the links below.

### July, 8 at 4pm

[http://www.arts.ca.gov/files/CAC\\_CommunityListeningSessions\\_07-08\\_4pm.mp3](http://www.arts.ca.gov/files/CAC_CommunityListeningSessions_07-08_4pm.mp3)

### July, 9 at 10am

[http://www.arts.ca.gov/files/CAC\\_CommunityListeningSessions\\_07-09\\_10am.mp3](http://www.arts.ca.gov/files/CAC_CommunityListeningSessions_07-09_10am.mp3)

### July, 9 at 1pm

[http://www.arts.ca.gov/files/CAC\\_CommunityListeningSessions\\_07-09\\_1pm.mp3](http://www.arts.ca.gov/files/CAC_CommunityListeningSessions_07-09_1pm.mp3)

### July, 9 at 4pm

[http://www.arts.ca.gov/files/CAC\\_CommunityListeningSessions\\_07-09\\_4pm.mp3](http://www.arts.ca.gov/files/CAC_CommunityListeningSessions_07-09_4pm.mp3)

<b>County/City</b>	<b>Total Comments</b>	<b>%</b>			
			Lake County	1	0.86%
			Lancaster	1	0.86%
Alameda	1	0.86%	Livermore	1	0.86%
Bay Area	1	0.86%	Long Beach	1	0.86%
Berkeley	2	1.72%	Marin	1	0.86%
Butte County	2	1.72%	National City	1	0.86%
Calaveras	1	0.86%	Nevada County	1	0.86%
Chico	1	0.86%	Oakland	12	10.34%
Culver City	2	1.72%	Pacifica	1	0.86%
Contra Costa	1	0.86%	Palo Alto	1	0.86%
East Bay	2	1.72%	Pasadena	1	0.86%
Fresno	2	1.72%	Placer	2	1.72%
Glendale	1	0.86%	Plumas County	1	0.86%
Grass Valley	2	1.72%	Redding	1	0.86%
Half Moon Bay	1	0.86%	Richmond	1	0.86%
Hayward	1	0.86%	Riverside	1	0.86%
Imperial County	1	0.86%	San Benito	2	1.72%
Los Angeles	25	21.55%			

San Bernardino	2	1.72%
San Diego	8	6.90%
San Jose	2	1.72%
Santa Ana	1	0.86%
Santa Barbara	3	2.59%
San Francisco	9	7.76%
Santa Cruz	2	1.72%
Valencia	1	0.86%
Vallejo	1	0.86%
Ventura	2	1.72%
Visalia	1	0.86%
Yolo	1	0.86%
Yuba City	1	0.86%
Declined to state	4	1.72%
New York	1	0.86%