



Strengthening arts, culture,
and creative expression as the
tools to cultivate a better
California for all.

Gavin Newsom, **Governor**
Danielle Brazell, **Executive Director**
2750 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 300, Sacramento CA 95833
(916) 322-6555 | www.arts.ca.gov

**Minutes of Public Meeting
CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL
Friday, June 26, 2026
10 A.M. – 2:50 P.M.
On Location/Hybrid Meeting
London Nelson Community Center Auditorium
301 Center Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060**

The members of the California Arts Council convened in Santa Cruz and via web conference to discuss and vote on various items as listed in the minutes below.

Council Members Present In-Person:

Council Vice Chair Nicola Miner
Council Member Roque Barros
Council Member Vicki Estrada
Council Member Dorka Keehn
Council Member Roy Hirabayashi
Council Member Rick Stein

Council Members Present Remotely:

Council Member Caleb Duarte
Council Member Leah Goodwin

Council Members Not Present:

Chair Roxanne Messina Captor
Council Member Alex Israel
Council Member Phil Mercado

Arts Council Staff Present:

Danielle Brazell, Executive Director
Sylvia Britt, Deputy Director
Kristin Margolis, Director of Program Services
Jonathan Estrada, Arts Program Manager
Elisa Gollub, Arts Program Manager
Josy Miller, Arts Program Manager
Megan Morgan, Race & Equity Manager
Kimberly Brown, Public Affairs Specialist
Qiana Moore, Events & Outreach Coordinator
Zachary Hill, IT Specialist
Steve Mok, Public Affairs Specialist

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Miner called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM.

2. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum

Arts Program Manager Elisa Gollub called the roll and quorum was established. Six members of the Council were present in Santa Cruz, and two Council members were present virtually on Zoom.

3. Land and People's Acknowledgement

Council member Hirabayashi read the [California Arts Council land and people's acknowledgement](#) and also recognized the Ohlone people of the Santa Cruz area.

4. Opening Remarks & Community Agreements

Vice Chair Miner led Council through the following community agreements:

- Practice listening to understand, not just hearing.
- Wait until you are acknowledged to speak.
- When it's your time to speak, state your name and intention clearly.
- Listen to others with an open mind. Try not to project your truth onto others.
- Practice both/and thinking rather than either/or thinking.
- Have a beginner's mind. Take 100% responsibility for one's own learning.
- It's okay to disagree—disagree with ideas, not with the person.

5. Welcome Remarks

The Council was welcomed to Santa Cruz by Arts Council of Santa Cruz Executive Director Jim Brown and provided a brief summary of the arts and cultural landscape of the region.

6. Chair's Report

In the Chair's absence, Vice Chair Miner referred people to the online meeting packet to read the [Chair's report](#) in its entirety.

7. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Danielle Brazell presented Council her [full written report](#) while acknowledging State-Local Partners in attendance at the meeting and recognizing the efforts and work of the CAC staff.

8. VOTING ITEM: Minutes from Previous Meetings

Vice Chair Miner then presented the minutes from [April 20](#) and [May 15](#) for approval by Council. As there were no objections, the minutes were approved.

9. PRESENTATION: Arts and Youth

Arts Program Manager Josy Miller provided a thorough [overview of the CAC Arts and Youth grant program](#), including background, details on its current iteration, and next steps. Arts Program Manager Josy Miller included information and background on Proposition 28 that is separate from CAC's Arts and Youth programming. Longtime grantee Tandy Beal & Company followed with a zoomed-in perspective on the direct impact of state funding for arts and youth programming.

10. PRESENTATION: Individual Artists Fellowship

Arts Program Manager Josy Miller provided a thorough [overview of the Individual Artists Fellowship program](#), including its background and purpose, assessment of aesthetic excellence, the history of the program, and details on the current administering organizations and regional approach. She was followed by Tamaru Liu, the grants program manager of the [Arts Council of Santa Cruz County, administering organization for the Central Coast](#) region. Liu presented information on their regional partnerships, outreach and application support, and program design for the Central Coast fellowship program. She then introduced Individual Artists Fellow alumna Adela Najarro, who spoke to the Council on the positive impact of the program to her artistic career.

12-12:30 WORKING LUNCH

11. PRESENTATION: General Operating Support (GenOps) Consolidation

Equity Measures and Evaluation Manager Rebecca Ratzkin provided an overview of [General Operating Support, Statewide and Regional Networks and Cultural Pathways programs consolidation](#), including background and context, program review, details around the 2025 decision for consolidation, and reflection and next steps.

Council members Miner and Keehn requested comparison data across years and across programs, given local assistance budget fluctuations, and which grantees received the awards.

Council member Rick Stein and Roy Hirabayashi expressed support for individualized programs such as cultural pathways and not consolidate the program under the General Operating Support program. Council member Roque Barros asked what components are needed for a healthy arts and culture ecosystem.

Council member Leah Goodwin noted that prior council meetings and programs policy committee meetings and recommendations discussed consolidation prior to budget cuts and that the budget consolidations were not the reason for consolidation.

Council member Vicki Estrada noted that Equity Measures and Evaluation Manager Rebecca Ratzkin did a great analysis of the data, but asked “what is next?” Executive Director Danielle Brazell responded that staff presented analysis following council requests to support council members with programs policy discussion at the next council meeting.

Executive Director Brazell informed Council members that CAC staff would return in August with more data and potential recommendations regarding the future of SRN, Cultural Pathways, and GenOps programs, including the possibility of reinstating distinct funding streams and technical assistance.

13. General Public Comment

This item was moved ahead of item 12 on the agenda. All public comment listed at the end of these minutes.

12. DISCUSSION: FY26-27 Allocations

Vice Chair and Allocations Committee member Miner presented [considerations for the Council to](#)

[discuss regarding FY26-27 funding allocations](#). The Allocations Committee will use feedback from this discussion to develop recommendations for the final allocations vote at the August 14, 2026, public Council meeting.

Council discussed whether to maintain a balanced approach between operating support and project-based grants, with a question raised about potentially limiting organizations to one grant per agency, though the current system allows organizations to apply for both general operating and project-based grants.

Council members expressed interest in multi-year grants and requested multi-year scenarios.

Executive Director Danielle Brazell affirmed the Council's priorities in supporting more GenOps allocations for optimal field stabilization.

Council member Dorka Keehn raised concern on how effective the funding is if the awardee receives less than 40% of the budget requested.

14. Committee/Ad Hoc Updates

Council member Stein briefed Council on the [Legislative Committee report](#). Council member Hirabayashi provided the [Equity Committee](#) update. Council member Goodwin reported on the [Ad Hoc 50th Anniversary Arts Awards Panel Committee](#).

15. In Memoriam

Council member Goodwin led a tribute honoring individuals who passed away in April and early May of this year:

- David Hockney, painter/printmaker/photographer
- Reginald Ray Savage, dancer and educator
- Clive Davis, executive and record producer
- Dee Palmer, keyboardist and composer

16. Open Council Discussion

No discussion. Council moved to the next agenda item.

17. Closing Remarks

Vice Chair Miner notes two items that Council members called to be added for future agendas: Equity Committee presentation at the December meeting, and a discussion of arts awards at the August meeting. Council Member Keehn requested an update on the California Creative Economy work. Council member Goodwin asked for information to be shared about the agency's Arts in Corrections program. Executive Director confirmed that an Arts in Corrections presentation is slated for the December meeting.

Vice Chair Miner adjourned the meeting at 2:54 PM.

Public Comment

CAC PUBLIC COMMENT SUBMISSIONS PRE-COUNCIL MEETING JUNE 26, 2026

- **Patrick Brien (He/Him/His)**
Arts Orange County, Orange County
Current or Former Grantee: Individual Artists Fellowships; Local Impact; State-Local Partnership; Veterans in the Arts; JUMP StArts

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment. Second, I am writing in regard to Item 12, the Allocations Committee recommendations. I urge Council's support for flat funding of the State Local Partners, rather than the tiered approach that has previously been used. The variation in funding that occurs in this program can make it extremely challenging for SLPs, which are expected to do the work and to represent the CAC at their local levels regardless of the amount they receive. This is work that we, as an SLP, cherish doing. I can say that the same is true for every SLP leader that I know. However, when a score dictates a lesser funding amount from one year to another, planning becomes difficult. SLPs are the micro to the CAC's macro. We are the eyes and ears throughout the state. I ask that you, as the Council, grant us even funding. This will allow us to do the work intended by the SLP program better. Also, I must add that it is all too often the smallest SLPs who end up getting dinged by panels who may not understand the mechanics of rural agencies. They are least able to afford funding reductions due to scoring fluctuations. Thank you for your time.

- **Anonymous**

How can a community find out if all of its K-12 schools are in compliance with providing Arts curriculum for each Student who is enrolled in every school?

- **Mary Ponder**
I am a volunteer and facilitator for Safe Black Space, Sacramento County

I am in support of allocations that effect the Folk and Traditional Arts, that lead us in Cultural Pathway against racism and inform our Black community of the availability of healing. I am speaking for Safe Black Space, that have a curriculum and utilize the Folk and Traditional Arts to teach their program and implement on a monthly basis, an awareness, including the Arts, and the Traditional ancestral African Lifestyle and customs, that portrait our people. We need a stand-alone program to capture and recognize the cultural ways, Language, and support of family dynamics.

- **Stella Adelman (She/Her/Hers)**
Dance Mission Theater, San Francisco County
Current or Former Grantee: Artists in Communities; Arts & Cultural Organizations
General Operating Relief; Artists in Schools; Creative California Communities; Creative Youth Development (formerly Youth Arts Action); Impact Projects; Local Impact; Statewide and Regional Networks

Please bring back State and Regional Network Funding! Please bring back Artists in Schools. These two granting programs are crucial!

- **Akib Rahman (He/Him/His)**
California Humanities
Current or Former Grantee: Statewide and Regional Networks

California Humanities appreciates the opportunity to comment on the impacts of the California Arts Council's consolidation of the Statewide and Regional Networks grant program into General Operating Support.

California Humanities is the statewide affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the only nonprofit devoted to promoting the humanities throughout California. Through grantmaking and public programming, we help Californians connect to ideas and to one another, understand our shared heritage and diverse cultures, and strengthen public participation across the state.

For several years, from 2017 through 2024, California Humanities routinely received SRN support from the California Arts Council. That funding helped us support arts and culture organizations throughout California. SRN support also helped advance our Humanities for All Arts & Humanities Quick Grant program, which was designed to reach new applicants and reduce barriers for smaller organizations, rural communities, and groups that may not traditionally see themselves reflected in state arts funding opportunities.

The elimination of SRN as a distinct program has had a direct impact on California Humanities. Since SRN was removed, we have had to apply through the General Operating Support program. We applied last year and were declined, and our current application for FY26-27 funding is pending. This shift has made California Humanities less likely to receive CAC support, not because the need has diminished, but because the current structure does not adequately recognize the role of statewide and regional service organizations.

The issue is structural. Under General Operating Support, organizations like California Humanities are now competing for funds against the same organizations we are trying to serve, support, and make awards to. This places statewide networks and intermediaries in an inappropriate position and weakens the broader ecosystem. It also makes it difficult for reviewers to fairly compare organizations whose core role is field building, grantmaking,

technical assistance, convening, and statewide cultural infrastructure with organizations seeking direct operating support for their own programs.

General Operating Support is important, but it is not a substitute for SRN. The GEN program prioritizes smaller organizations, which is appropriate for that category, but it means statewide organizations that support smaller organizations are less competitive. The maximum award amount is also lower than SRN, reducing the scale of support available for statewide network-building work.

California Humanities strongly urges the Council to restore the Statewide and Regional Networks program as a distinct grant category, or at minimum create a clearly defined SRN track within General Operating Support. SRNs play a unique role in California's cultural ecosystem. They expand the reach of public investment, support organizations across regions, strengthen capacity, and help ensure that arts and humanities resources reach communities that are often under-resourced, rural, emerging, or outside traditional funding networks.

- **Gustavo Herrera (He/Him/His)**
Arts For LA, Los Angeles County
Current or Former Grantee: Statewide and Regional Networks

On behalf of Arts for LA, we appreciate the opportunity to submit this comment regarding the impacts of the California Arts Council's decision to consolidate the Statewide and Regional Networks grant program into General Operating Support.

Arts for LA works across Los Angeles County to strengthen the region's arts and culture ecosystem. We serve artists, culture bearers, creative workers, nonprofit arts organizations, and community partners across one of the largest and most diverse regions in California. Our work is not limited to our own organizational programming; our role is to support, connect, advocate for, and build capacity across the broader field.

For that reason, the SRN program has been deeply important as it plays a distinct role in California's cultural infrastructure. These organizations are not simply individual arts nonprofits seeking general operating support. They are networks, conveners, advocates, technical assistance providers, and field-builders. They help ensure that artists and organizations, especially smaller, under-resourced, emerging, and historically excluded groups, can access information, funding opportunities, policy spaces, and statewide advocacy conversations.

The elimination of SRN as a distinct grant category has had a direct and significant impact on Arts for LA. We did not receive a General Operating Support grant this year, and that loss deeply impacted our fundraising efforts and organizational planning for the year. In a region like Los Angeles County, there is no way to adequately serve the community with State-Local Partner support alone. LA is vast, complex, and home to an extraordinary range of artists,

cultural workers, arts organizations, and community-based groups. The scale of need requires dedicated investment in regional infrastructure.

We believed that the California Arts Council understood the unique value of SRNs in building a statewide arts movement. SRNs help connect local needs to statewide advocacy, translate policy and funding information for the field, organize coalitions, and ensure that the voices of artists and cultural organizations are represented in public decision-making. Not funding SRNs represents a step back for the State of California and weakens the infrastructure needed to build power across the arts and culture sector.

Despite the loss of SRN funding, Arts for LA has continued to spend significant time advocating for increased funding for the California Arts Council and for the broader arts and culture field. We do this because we are responsible for the field and because we believe deeply in the importance of public investment in arts and culture. However, it is important to name the reality that the funding available to support this essential advocacy and movement-building work is decreasing at the same time the need for it is growing.

We respectfully urge the California Arts Council to restore the Statewide and Regional Networks program as a distinct grant category. At a minimum, we ask the Council to create a clearly defined SRN track within General Operating Support with dedicated review criteria, appropriate funding levels, and recognition of the unique role regional and statewide networks play.

- **Laurie Livingston (She/Her/Hers)**
Tuolumne County Arts Alliance, Inc., Tuolumne County
Current or Former Grantee: State-Local Partnership

In our rural county, we work hard to support our community. For 50 years, (we were incorporated in 1978), there has been a mere three years of support from our local county Board of Supervisors. Ten years ago, an arts and cultural strategic plan that had been in place, was dropped. These unfortunate realities have severely limited our stability and our reach. The CAC support that has been proposed such as multi-year funding and consistency in grant allocation would be our footing to build capacity. Several of my colleagues have no staff or if they do, the boom or bust nature of being able to “afford” staff is daunting, and damaging. I am in full agreement with the idea that flat, fully funded SLP’s for a longer cycle will significantly change our position to consistent growth, continuity of programming, and building trust within our arts and cultural eco-system. Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns and excitement about the opportunity to become a more robust, integrated, and stable arts organization that seeks to serve a population of 55,000 people in the Sierra Nevada Foothills.

- **Gloria Oster (She/Her/Hers)**
California Lawyers for the Arts, Los Angeles County
Current or Former Grantee: Statewide and Regional Networks

Grant consolidation has had a significantly negative impact on California Lawyers for the Arts and other arts service organizations around the state. The inherent conflict of service organizations competing for funding with the organizations we directly serve is just the beginning. While reductions in general operating support create an immediate budget shortfall, the longer-term consequences are even more damaging. Flexible operating funds provide the foundation that allows arts service organizations to maximize every other investment in the sector. When those funds are reduced, we lose far more than dollars.

First, diminished operating support weakens our ability to leverage additional public and private funding. Many funders look to stable operational support as evidence of organizational capacity and sustainability. A reduction in core funding makes it more difficult to secure matching funds and complementary investments that multiply the impact of every state dollar.

Second, cuts significantly reduce our capacity to undertake critical activities that rarely receive traditional program-specific funding but are essential to organizational effectiveness. These include data collection and program evaluation, community outreach, new program development, advocacy, staff support, and professional development. These functions strengthen organizations, improve services, foster innovation, and ensure accountability, yet they are often the first to be deferred when unrestricted funding declines.

Third, the impact extends beyond any single organization. Arts service organizations rely on one another to deliver collaborative programs that expand geographic reach, leverage specialized expertise, and serve broader and more diverse constituencies. When operating support is reduced across the field, these partnerships become more difficult to sustain, limiting the collective capacity of the entire arts infrastructure.

Taken together, these losses have a compounding effect. They diminish the ability of arts service organizations to provide the legal, business, workforce development, educational, and advocacy services that artists and arts organizations depend upon. As the backbone organizations supporting California's creative sector, weakened capacity at the service level translates directly into fewer resources, fewer opportunities, and less resilience for the artists and cultural organizations that drive our communities and economy.

- **Mr. Javon'e Armada (He/Him/His)**
DALiBOY CREATIVE STUDIiS / Campbell Hall Episcopal school, Los Angeles County

Hello, and thank you for the opportunity to address the Council. I am here to advocate for and defend visual art as an academic discipline.

My name is Mr. Javon'e. I am an LA based visual artist, founder of DALiBOY Creative Studios, We are an organization that offers drawing lessons and

partner with schools and community organizations to build creative infrastructure and experiences for the youth. In addition to this work, I am a STEAM Specialist teacher at Campbell Hall Episcopal, a K through 12 independent school in Studio City. Through the school's Episcopal identity and Public Partnerships Committee, I founded a Youth Visual Arts Residency, a summer fellowship uniquely designed to support Title I student artists.

My framework is called Art is a Sport. It is about giving young artists the same structure, investment, and opportunity we see in youth athletics.

Today I want to highlight three barriers facing young visual artists in Title I high schools.

1. Identifying talent: As a nation, we have built an ecosystem that can identify every promising basketball player in every state. These athletes are recruited as early as middle school and provided a pathway to higher education, even with no guarantee of reaching the NBA.

Yet the kid gifted in drawing and painting is rarely recruited, sought after, or given the equivalent promise of attending college to pursue fine art.

In the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics, art was an official Olympic event. We must rethink how high school artists participate in the discipline, not just through a lottery of art calls and submissions, but through real, state supported competition.

2. Unequal classroom resources: After visiting these Title I schools, I find it unjust that these students are expected to build portfolios from traditional desks and compete for college admission without proper studio space or quality materials.

Finally, 3. The financial barrier to higher arts education: We had a brilliant student complete our residency and build a strong enough portfolio to earn admission to Otis College of Art and Design this fall. Yet despite doing everything right, she and her family could not afford the tuition to attend. This fall, instead of sitting in a college design studio, she is pursuing an internship with a local tattoo shop in efforts to continue creating.

In the words of Langston Hughes, "What happens to a dream deferred?"

Private programs like ours can only fill the gap so far. It is a profound injustice that students from low-income communities, who are denied basic access to materials and studio space, and are expected to pay the exact same price for college as those who are financially stable.

As you look at the Arts and Youth agenda today, I ask the Council to invest in dedicated scholarships for Title 1 low-income visual artists and assist organizations who build sustainable pathways for art not simply a hobby but an academic discipline for high schoolers.

Kind thoughts,
Mr. Javon'e

- **Anh-Tuan Le (He/Him/His)**
Bowers Renaissance, Orange County

It was my first attendance at a CAC Board meeting, which was informative and inspiring. I appreciate CAC's mission and found staff to be helpful while our team was preparing the Impact Grant application submitted in April, 2026. We intend to apply for the 2027 grant cycle - Impact Grant or Arts and Youth. The Board meeting also allowed me to hear Board member Rick Stein comment. As a result, I reached out to ArtsOC to seek their support for our discussions at the City of Santa Ana to update a 1987 planning study of the formation of a Museum District anchored by the Bowers Museum and the Discovery Cube. Such district formation did not materialize due to the State's abolition of Redevelopment. The area has many cultural and arts education assets, like the Wooden Floor Dance Academy, and the Orange County School of the Arts among others. We will advocate for a City ordinance to develop a Cultural District, one that would be eventually certified by the CAC. One of our partners is CSU Fullerton, a member of our task force is Prof. Natalie Tran, Interim Dean of CSU Fullerton School of Education. A takeaway from the Board meeting was the low 11% Prop 28 compliance reported, due to the lack of certified teachers. I will bring that up with Natalie and see if we can do something about that -- possibly incorporating such teacher training and certification into our next grant application in 2027. Thank you.