



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

Gavin Newsom, **Governor**  
Danielle Brazell, **Executive Director**  
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**Minutes of Public Meeting  
CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL  
Friday, September 13, 2024  
10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.  
On Location/Virtual Hybrid Meeting  
Arts Council of Kern  
1020 18<sup>th</sup> St  
Bakersfield, CA 93301**

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

**Council Members Present In-Person:**

Roxanne Messina Captor, Chair  
Messina Captor  
Council Member Clarke  
Council Member Duarte  
Council Member Duarte  
Vicki Estrada  
Council Member Estrada  
Council Member Hirabayashi  
Council Member Hirabayashi  
Council Member Miner  
Council Member Miner

**Council Members Present Remotely:**

Council Member Raynor  
Council Member Raynor  
Council Member Mercado  
Council Member Mercado  
Council Member Israel  
Council Member Israel

**Council Members Absent:**

Leah Goodwin, Vice Chair

**Arts Council Staff Present:**

Executive Director Brazell  
Brazell, Executive Director  
Chief Deputy Director, Michelle Radmand  
Deputy Director Kiburi  
Kiburi, Deputy Director  
Carissa Gutierrez, Public Affairs Director  
Programs Director Margolis  
Margolis, Director of Programs  
Kimberly Brown, Public Affairs Specialist  
Qiana Moore, Outreach & Events Coordinator

Rebecca Ratzkin, Equity Measures & Evaluation Manager  
Zachary Hill, IT Associate  
Steve Mok, Graphic Designer  
Josy Miller, Arts Program Manager  
Natalie Peeples, Arts Program Specialist

### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Messina Captor Messina Captor called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

### **2. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum**

Public Affairs Director called the roll and established a quorum, with 9 council members present.

### **3. Land and People's Acknowledgement**

Council Member Council Member Mercado read the California Arts Council's Land and People's Acknowledgement.

### **4. Opening Remarks and Community Agreements**

Chair Messina Captor Messina Captor welcomed the attendees and acknowledged the interpreters in the room including Paula DiMuro and Daniel Swartz (ASL), Darlene Rochella (captioner), Jeanette Hernandez and Aldo Renteria (Spanish/English simultaneous translation).

### **5. Welcome from Leticia Perez, Supervisor of Kern County and Karen Goh, Mayor of Bakersfield**

Welcome remarks were provided by Supervisor Leticia Perez and Mayor Karen Goh.

### **6. Welcome from Jeanette Richardson, Executive Director of CAC State-Local Partner (SLP) Arts Council for Kern**

Director Richardson of the Arts Council for Kern provided a brief welcome about the local community and the work of the SLP with the Council.

### **7. Chair Messina Captor's Report**

Chair Messina Captor read [her report](#) into the record.

### **8. Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Brazell read [her report](#) into the record.

### **9. VOTING ITEM: Minutes from Previous Meetings**

Chair Messina Captor Messina-Captor presented the council meeting minutes for both May 24, 2024, and August 1, 2024, to the council for approval. There were no objections noted by the Council thus the minutes were approved.

## **10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

Council Members Council Member Mercado and Council Member Miner of the Allocations Committee presented the Allocations Committee memo and shared a PowerPoint.

Council Member Mercado opened the meeting by expressing gratitude to the staff for their dedication in preparing for the discussion on the 2024/25 grant awards. He highlighted a \$5 million budget reduction to the CAC's Local Assistance annual appropriation for FY 24-25 and noted that the meeting's purpose was to vote on funding allocations for ten programs, including eight new and two continuing programs.

The agency received over 2,000 applications totaling \$56 million in requests. Council Member Mercado emphasized the strategic framework prioritizing geographic equity, support for small organizations, and capacity building. He discussed scenarios to honor second-year funding commitments and maximize the number of organizations supported.

The Allocations Committee presented the Decision Support Tool (DST) and reviewed the development of funding recommendations, which included public comment from the August 1 Council Meeting. Specific details were shared regarding funding levels and rankings, stating that funding was not awarded to applicants below a ranking of four. Council Member Estrada confirmed that General Operations funding only applied to Tiers 2 and 3, with Tier 1 supported through the second-year grant process.

**MOTION:** The Allocations Committee recommends Council approve the funding amounts for the following 10 programs and distribution to each grantee per the attached spreadsheets:

- \$7,747,495 – Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Support (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)
- \$3,706,200 – State-Local Partners
- \$2,252,200 – Statewide and Regional Networks
- \$2,174,420 – Impact Projects
- \$2,065,882 - Creative Youth Development
- \$894,940 – Arts Education Exposure
- \$813,376 – Administering Organizations – Folk and Traditional Arts (2<sup>nd</sup> Year)
- \$740,950 – Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Support
- \$321,907 – Arts integration Training
- \$180,000 – State-Local Partner Mentorship
- \$100,000 – Cultural Districts

- Moved by Councilmember Miner, Seconded by Council Member Mercado
- \*All funding amounts are recommended until final appropriation to the agency has been finalized and confirmed.

### **Public comment**

Transcriptions of live public comment and written submissions are attached at the end.

### **Council discussion**

The council received over 2,000 applications, recommending only 653 applications. Notably, all 53 applicants from SLP received funding, while all 376 General Operating (GenOps) applicants were supported. A discussion ensued about reallocating funds from programs with fewer applicants, such as Folk and Traditional Art.

Council Member Miner highlighted that funding had been shifted to prioritize GenOps. Council Member Raynor emphasized the challenge of balancing geographic diversity with support for smaller organizations, questioning if decisions relied solely on scoring.

Executive Director Brazell addressed potential biases regarding geographic equity, advocating for regional funding. Programs Director Margolis confirmed outreach efforts to assist low-scoring grantees.

Deputy Director Kiburi stressed the need for transparency in decision-making. Council Member Raynor expressed concern for smaller organizations lacking grant-writing skills and suggested revisiting prioritization of small organizations.

Council Member Clarke pointed out the need for accurate financial data to understand the impacts of funding distribution. Chair Messina Captor concluded by acknowledging the committee's difficult work and expressed a desire to focus future funding more on individual projects rather than General Operations.

**MOTION:** Motion was read into the record by Public Affairs Director Gutierrez.

Moved by Council Member Miner, Seconded by Council Member Mercado

### **VOTE:**

- YES: Council Members Messina Captor, Clarke, Duarte, Estrada, Israel, Mercado, Miner, Raynor

- NO: 0
- ABSTAIN: 0
- RECUSED: Council Member Hirabayashi

**With 8 Yes votes and 0 No votes, the motion PASSED.**

## **11. Working Lunch**

### **12. VOTING ITEM: Extend the FY 2024-2025 Grant Period to 2 Years**

Council Members Clarke and Duarte presented recommendations on whether to extend the FY 24-25 grant period to 2 years. They noted that the Council approved guidelines for a one-year grant activity period, but the Chair Messina Captor proposed extending this to two years. After multiple discussions, the committee concluded that extending the grant period would compromise equitable access and transparency for organizations statewide. They noted that applicants were eligible for 2024 and projects were expected to complete within one year. Suspending grantmaking for a year could jeopardize the council's standing. The focus remained on SLPs, as extending their grant period aligns with strategic priorities and ensures consistency in funding.

**MOTION:** The Programs Policy Committee recommends that Council vote to maintain 2024 grant activity periods at one year, except for the State-Local Partnership (SLP) Program.

- Moved by Council Member Clarke, Seconded by Council Member Duarte

Chair Messina-Captor requested if anyone needs to recuse themselves. Council Member Hirabayashi recused himself.

#### **Public comment**

Transcriptions of live public comment and written submissions are attached at the end.

#### **Council discussion**

Chair Messina Captor opened the meeting and asked if any members needed to recuse themselves. Council Member Hirabayashi declared a conflict of interest and recused himself.

Discussion:

- Council Member Estrada expressed her interest in understanding the rationale behind the proposal to extend grant periods. She acknowledged the potential impacts on smaller organizations.

- Chair Messina Captor explained that the intent behind considering two-year grants was to allow organizations to utilize funds more effectively over an extended period, benefiting both the community and artists.
- Council Member Miner shared her support for two-year grants, questioning why this change wasn't implemented this year, as it could be beneficial for arts organizations.
- Council Member Duarte noted the accelerated pace of time post-COVID, emphasizing the need to consider the implications for new organizations entering grant cycles and navigating the language involved.

Chair Messina Captor clarified that the motion was to maintain a one-year grant period, with the exception for SLPs, and sought further elaboration on the decision not to implement two-year grants, aside from budgetary constraints.

- Council Member Clarke responded, highlighting that grant guidelines had already been published. Changing the rules now would lack transparency and could disadvantage organizations that had planned to apply based on the existing guidelines. He referenced data indicating that many applicants had scored high (12 at 100%, 33 at 90% or more), suggesting that a two-year grant could reduce workload for both CAC and SLPs in the future. Council Member Clarke expressed openness to revisiting this issue for next year's grants, indicating that understanding the field's response would be crucial for future applications.

**MOTION:** Motion was read into the record by Public Affairs Director Gutierrez.

- Moved by Council Member Clarke, Seconded by Council Member Duarte

**VOTE:**

- YES: Council Members Messina Captor, Clarke, Duarte, Estrada, Israel, Mercado, Miner, Raynor
- NO: 0
- ABSTAIN: 0
- RECUSED: Council Member Hirabayashi

**With 8 Yes votes and 0 No votes, the motion PASSED.**

Deputy Director Kiburi confirmed that 2024 funding levels will determine SLP allocations, with potential adjustments based on rankings in subsequent years.

**13. VOTING ITEM: Change the Council Vice and Chair Messina Captor Position Terms to 2 Years**

The Governance Committee presented their recommendations to change the Council bylaws and make the chair and vice chair terms 2 years.

Council Member Estrada proposed extending the chair and vice chair terms to two years for efficiency, noting that it takes time to understand issues. Council Member Israel clarified that any extension would require amending bylaws before the December elections.

**MOTION:** The Governance Committee recommends that the Council vote to change the Chair and Vice Chair from 1 year to 2 in the Council bylaws, effective December 2024 and require that any Council member who runs for the Chair or Vice chair position have two years left in their Council appointment term.

- Council Member Estrada motioned for this consideration, and Council Member Israel seconded the motion.

### **Public comment**

Transcriptions of live public comment and written submissions are attached at the end.

### **Council discussion**

Chair Messina Captor opened the meeting by asking for any conflicts of interest; none were reported. Council Member Duarte noted that the proposed two-year service term for council members would begin in February 2025 after the December elections. Council Member Mercado raised concerns about limiting the pool of candidates for leadership positions with shorter terms.

Council Member Estrada acknowledged the pros and cons of this approach. Council Member Mercado suggested an amendment allowing candidates with only one year remaining in their term to request an extension from the Governor's office. Council Member Raynor proposed a two-year commitment for the Vice Chair Messina Captor, with the first year focused on learning and the second year transitioning to Chair Messina Captor.

Deputy Director Kiburi pointed out that extending terms would require vetting for feasibility. Programs Director Margolis mentioned that term limits might prevent extensions but suggested an amendment for one-year terms for candidates with only one year remaining. Executive Director Brazell reminded that any proposed amendments require a second for discussion.

Council Member Hirabayashi expressed concerns about the vice chair serving a two-year term concurrently with the chair, suggesting staggered terms instead. Executive Director Brazell confirmed that a vote was needed on the proposed amendment.

**AMENDMENT/ SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** Council Member Raynor moved to "establish a system where the Chair and Chair-Elect are elected, with the Chair Elect serving as vice

chair in the first year and chair in the second.” Council Member Estrada seconded the motion.

Council Member Israel raised concerns regarding the potential lack of roles for individuals wishing to support rather than lead. Council Member Mercado recommended maintaining the current system and allowing those interested in a second term to run for re-election, ensuring flexibility for those who prefer the vice chair role.

The discussion continued around the proposed amendment, with emphasis on the importance of clear leadership roles and term structures.

Chair Messina-Captor called for a vote on the amendment.

**AMENDMENT/SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** Council Member Raynor moved to “establish a system where the Chair and Chair-Elect are elected, with the Chair Elect serving as vice chair in the first year and chair in the second.” Council Member Estrada seconded the motion.

**VOTE:**

- YES: Council Member Raynor
- NO: Council Members Messina Captor, Clarke, Duarte, Estrada, Hirabayashi, Israel, Mercado, Miner
- ABSTAIN: 0

**An amendment requires a 2/3 vote.**

**With 1 Yes votes and 8 No votes, the motion FAILED.**

The Council returned to the initial motion on the table.

Council Member Israel initiated a discussion on the benefits of longer officer terms and suggested that further discussion on the motion should occur before considering any amendments.

Council Member Miner expressed that while a two-year term is ideal, the practicalities of council term limits pose challenges.

Council Member Council Member Estrada clarified that the motion does not guarantee the vice chair will automatically become chair. She outlined key points supporting the motion, emphasizing the need for greater leadership efficiency and onboarding, which requires time to implement projects effectively.

Council Member Israel raised a concern about whether council members would need a year on the council before running for office, to which the Chair Messina Captor



responded that term lengths vary. Executive Director Brazell noted that council terms could be two, three, or four years.

The Chair Messina Captor concluded by emphasizing that voting on the motion does not preclude further discussions on the topic, even if the motion does not pass.

**MOTION:** The Governance Committee recommends that the Council vote to change the Chair and Vice Chair from 1 year to 2 in the Council bylaws, effective December 2024 and require that any Council member who runs for the Chair or Vice chair position have two years left in their Council appointment term.

- Council Member Estrada motioned for this consideration, and Council Member Israel seconded the motion.

**VOTE:**

- YES: 0
- NO: Council Members Messina Captor, Clarke, Duarte, Estrada, Hirabayashi, Israel, Mercado, Miner, Raynor
- ABSTAIN: 0

**With 0 Yes votes and 9 No votes, the motion FAILED.**

Council Member Clarke inquired whether the current bylaws permit the chair and vice chair to run for a second year. Chair Messina Captor confirmed that they do.

**14. VOTING ITEM: Council Attendance Procedure**

The Governance Committee emphasized the need for a majority present in person to achieve quorum and proposed amending the bylaws to allow council members to request attending meetings remotely. This change would ensure future quorums are met. An official vote on the bylaw amendment is scheduled for November. Council

**MOTION:** The Governance Committee recommends that Council members vote to revise the bylaws to include a procedure for Council members to request attending an in-person meeting remotely so that the Council Chair can ensure quorum.

- Member Council Member Estrada motioned and Council Member Israel seconded.

**Public comment**

Transcriptions of live public comment and written submissions are attached at the end.

**Council discussion**

Council Member Clarke inquired about potential revisions to the proposed procedure. Council Member Estrada responded that the committee is still in the planning stages. Council Member Mercado expressed concern about the lack of clarity regarding the term "procedure." Deputy Director Kiburi clarified that the governance committee will provide recommendations on the procedure.

Council Member Raynor requested that the proposed procedure comply with ADA regulations.

Council Member Israel mentioned that the existing Bagley-Keene guidelines outline accessibility standards and suggested that examples of potential procedures be reviewed. Executive Director Brazell highlighted the challenges of organizing council meetings and the importance of having a quorum, noting that remote attendance can disrupt business operations. She proposed conducting four meetings in metropolitan areas and four in remote locations to address accessibility concerns.

Council Member Israel shared that Bagley-Keene allows remote attendance under certain conditions, including disability, and suggested that bylaws be amended to clearly articulate these rules. Deputy Director Kiburi concluded that no changes to the bylaws can occur until the council approves the proposed process.

**MOTION:** Motion was read into the record by Public Affairs Director Gutierrez.

- Member Council Member Estrada motioned and Council Member Israel seconded.

**VOTE:**

- YES: Council Members Messina Captor, Clarke, Duarte, Estrada, Hirabayashi, Israel, Mercado, Miner, Raynor
- NO: 0
- ABSTAIN: 0

**With 9 Yes votes and 0 No votes, the motion PASSES.**

The Governance Committee will put forward a proposed procedure to be included in the bylaws pending a Council vote at a future Council meeting.

**15. PRESENTATION: FY 23-24 Grantee Data**

Data and Equity Measures Manager, Rebecca Ratzkin, provided a comprehensive presentation on the 23-24 Grantees.

[link to council book here for slide deck]

## **Council Discussion**

Council Member Estrada commended the presentation and requested a comparison of funding rates between applicants in Imperial County and those in Los Angeles, specifically asking for the application-to-funding percentage.

Equity Measures Manager Ratzkin noted that some SLPs may directly fund artists, particularly in areas like Sierra County, rather than organizations. Suggested tracking the number of artists supported in such contexts.

Council Member Clarke praised the presentation, highlighting the importance of data for making informed decisions. Expressed optimism about using this data for future planning.

Deputy Director Kiburi emphasized that the new equity manager and data measures will support more informed decision-making.

Programs Director Margolis noted that in Kern County, 80% of funded organizations had never received funding before. Advocated for outreach to increase applications.

Executive Director Brazell highlighted that only 2,000 of the 16,000 organizations are applying for funding, raising concerns about barriers preventing the remaining nonprofits from applying. Stressed the need for the CAC to scale its efforts and use data to advocate for greater support from state leadership.

## **16. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **Public Comment**

Transcriptions of live public comment are as follows; written submissions are attached at the end.

## **17. COMMITTEE/ Ad Hoc Reports (moved up to follow item 14 )**

Each committee presented their memos to the Council.

- Legislative Committee – [see memo.](#)
- Strategic Framework Committee – [see memo.](#)
- Equity Committee – [see memo.](#)
  - Council Member Raynor requested that a conversation be had November around developing a common understanding of equity.
- Partnerships (Ad Hoc) Committee – [see memo.](#)

- Disability, Accessibility and Inclusion (Ad Hoc) Committee – no report provided

### **18. Council Open Discussion (moved up to follow item 14)**

The Chair Messina Captor allocated 15 minutes to the agenda to allow for an open discussion with the Council to raise any topics that had not been addressed or were worth revisiting.

Council Member Estrada raised the question of what it would take to consider multi-year terms for the Chair Messina Captor and Vice Chair Messina Captor, noting the current terms of 2, 3, and 4 years.

Chair Messina-Captor suggested the need for a meeting focused on appointments.

Council Member Estrada emphasized the importance of having the right technology in place for meetings.

Chair Messina-Captor reported some technical issues and recommended augmenting the budget to address these concerns.

Council Member Clarke proposed that meetings would run more smoothly if participants wait to be recognized before speaking.

### **19. In Memoriam**

Council Member Council Member Hirabayashi read into the record of those honored in memoriam.

### **16. Closing Remarks**

Chair Messina Captor thanked everyone for attending.

### **17. Adjournment**

Chair Messina Captor adjourned the meeting at 3:03 PM

## **CAC PUBLIC COMMENT SUBMISSIONS COUNCIL MEETING SEPTEMBER 13, 2024**

- **Rachel Steinke (She/Her/Hers, They/Them/Theirs)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative, Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General**  
**Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

On behalf of Choral Arts Initiative, I want to express our gratitude for the General Operating Support grant, which has been critical to our mission of advancing the arts through innovative choral performances. This funding enables us to commission new works, support local artists, and keep our programs accessible to diverse audiences.

We recognize the difficult choices the Council faces due to the statewide budget cuts. As you consider the various scenarios, we ask that you continue to prioritize general operating support, as it provides the flexibility needed to sustain our core programs and staff. Significant cuts could jeopardize the vital cultural programs we provide to the community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

We appreciate the Council's ongoing support and commitment to the arts. Your decisions will play a crucial role in helping arts organizations like Choral Arts Initiative remain sustainable during this challenging time.

- **Jenna Hansen (She/Her/Hers)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative, Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

On behalf of Choral Arts Initiative, I personally want to express our gratitude for the General Operating Support grant, which has been critical to our mission of advancing the arts through innovative choral performances. This funding enables us to commission new works, support local artists, and keep our programs accessible to diverse audiences.

We recognize the difficult choices the Council faces due to the statewide budget cuts. As you consider the various scenarios, we ask that you continue to prioritize general operating support, as it provides the flexibility needed to sustain our core programs and staff. Significant cuts could jeopardize the vital cultural programs we provide to the community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

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- **Anthony Stevens (He/Him/His, They/Them/Theirs)**  
**Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

Firstly, I want to express gratitude for the General Operating Support grant, which has been critical to the mission of Choral Arts Initiative: advancing the arts through innovative choral performances. This funding enables us to commission new works, support local artists, and keep our programs accessible to diverse audiences.

We recognize the difficult choices the Council faces due to the statewide budget cuts. As you consider the various scenarios, we ask that you continue to prioritize general operating support, as it provides the flexibility needed to sustain our core programs and staff. Significant cuts could jeopardize the vital cultural opportunities we offer to the community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut

like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

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- **Ahlitney (She/Her/Hers)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

As a part of Choral Arts Initiative, I am extremely grateful for the opportunities provided the General Operating Support grant. With it, we have been able to commission new works, help local artists, and further our focus of accessibility and diversity. Without it, we risk jeopardizing the cultural contributions we provide to the community.

We understand the difficulty the Council faces in order to make viable budget cuts. As agents of change, inclusivity, community, and allowing previously silenced voices to be heard, we ask that general operating support is still prioritized. Scenario 4, a proposed 20% reduction for everyone, would allow us to still have a baseline of support to continue our important work as well as assure that the burden is distributed across all affected programs and communities. Thank you for taking Choral Arts Initiative into consideration as your decisions play a vital role in our future.

- **Anonymous**

The joy and knowledge brought to the children through cultural enrichment is invaluable and my reason for supporting Duvneck Black History grant. Last year's activities were wonderfully successful. They previewed a great potential for expanded programming that can have a wider impact in teaching children about this rich part of American history and culture. Exposure to different cultures that

make up this country is vitally important, especially when you consider the future, a time when our children go off to college or possibly move out of the area. Let's prepare them and bring the world to them before that time comes. Thank you for your consideration. Bianca López

- **John Monk (He/Him/His)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative, Los Angeles County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General**  
**Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

On behalf of Choral Arts Initiative, I want to express our gratitude for the General Operating Support grant, which has been critical to our mission of advancing the arts through innovative choral performances. This funding enables us to commission new works, support local artists, and keep our programs accessible to diverse audiences.

We recognize the difficult choices the Council faces due to the statewide budget cuts. As you consider the various scenarios, we ask that you continue to prioritize general operating support, as it provides the flexibility needed to sustain our core programs and staff. Significant cuts could jeopardize the vital cultural programs we provide to the community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

We appreciate the Council's ongoing support and commitment to the arts. Your decisions will play a crucial role in helping arts organizations like Choral Arts Initiative remain sustainable during this challenging time.



- **Lorraine Welling (She/Her/Hers)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative, Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

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We recognize the difficult choices the Council faces due to the statewide budget cuts. As you consider the various scenarios, we ask that you continue to prioritize general operating support, as it provides the flexibility needed to sustain our core programs and staff. Significant cuts could jeopardize the vital cultural programs we provide to the community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

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- **Alex Robinson (She/Her/Hers)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative, Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

My name is Alex Robinson, and I am a musician, educator, and choral artist with Choral Arts Initiative, one of the organizations that benefits from the General Operating Support Grant. I want to express our gratitude for the grant, which has been critical to our mission of advancing the arts through innovative choral performances. This funding enables us to commission new works, support local artists like myself, and keep our programs accessible to diverse audiences.

We recognize the difficult choices the Council faces due to the statewide budget cuts. As you consider the various scenarios, we ask that you continue to prioritize general operating support, as it provides the flexibility needed to sustain our core programs and staff. Significant cuts jeopardize the vital cultural programs we provide to the community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

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- **Marlon Santizo (He/Him/His)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative, Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

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We recognize the difficult choices the Council faces due to the statewide budget cuts. As you consider the various scenarios, we ask that you continue to prioritize general operating support, as it provides the flexibility needed to sustain our core programs and staff. Significant cuts could jeopardize the vital cultural programs we provide to the community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

We appreciate the Council's ongoing support and commitment to the arts. Your decisions will play a crucial role in helping arts organizations like Choral Arts Initiative remain sustainable during this challenging time.

- **Corina (She/Her/Hers)**  
**Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

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We recognize the difficult choices the Council faces due to the statewide budget cuts. As you consider the various scenarios, we ask that you continue to prioritize general operating support, as it provides the flexibility needed to sustain our core programs and staff. Significant cuts could jeopardize the vital cultural programs we provide to the community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

We appreciate the Council's ongoing support and commitment to the arts. Your decisions will play a crucial role in helping arts organizations like Choral Arts Initiative remain sustainable during this challenging time.

- **Bonnie Pridonoff (She/Her/Hers)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative, Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee:**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

I am writing as a Board Member for Choral Arts Initiative (CAI). CAI is a young choral organization based in Orange County. While CAI has a relatively small budget compared to other arts organizations, the grant from CAC has been vital to building our community programs. The second year of this grant is vital to continue our work. In the spirit of fairness I would encourage you to vote in support of Scenario 4.

- **Beth Eslick (She/Her/Hers)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative, Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

I know that this organization is intent on helping Arts groups in California thrive. I am part of the board of Choral Arts Initiative, and I want to express our gratitude for the General Operating Support grant, which has been critical to our mission of advancing the arts through innovative choral performances. This funding enables us to commission new works, support local artists, and keep our programs accessible to diverse audiences.

As you consider the various scenarios, we ask that you continue to prioritize general operating support, as it provides the flexibility needed to sustain our core programs and staff. Significant cuts could jeopardize the vital cultural programs we provide to the community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

We appreciate the Council's ongoing support and commitment to the arts. Your decisions will play a crucial role in helping arts organizations like Choral Arts Initiative remain sustainable during this challenging time.

We are truly hoping that you are able to consider our thoughts. Thank you so much.

- **Chihiro Ando**  
**Choral Arts Initiative, Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

On behalf of Choral Arts Initiative, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the General Operating Support grant. This grant allows us to remain connected with our art loving community with innovative choral concerts.

This funding enables us to keep local artists engaged with our diverse local residents by performing their inspirational new works.

Due to the statewide budget cuts, we understand the difficult decisions the Council must make. It is our hope that you will continue to prioritize general operating support, since without it we would be put at risk of losing the essential

staff support needed to produce and deliver thought-provoking music programs to our community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

We are truly grateful for the Council's ongoing support and commitment to the arts. Your decisions will play a crucial role in helping arts organizations like Choral Arts Initiative remain sustainable during this challenging time.

- **Marcus Carline (He/Him/His)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

On behalf of Choral Arts Initiative, the General Operational Support grant has been immensely helpful in expanding our program, supporting local artists, and keeping what we do accessible to many people.

I understand that cuts need to be made as budgets adjust, but we hope the council will highly consider a balanced approach (such as Scenario 4).

I'm grateful for the support CAI has been given thus far through the Council's support of the arts, and we hope to continue to be sustainable during these challenging times.

- **Deborah Brocus (She/Her/Hers)**  
**Brockus Project Dance Company, Los Angeles County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Artists in Schools, Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief, Arts Education Exposure, Arts**

**Integration Training, California Relief Fund for Artists and Cultural Practitioners, Creative Youth Development (formerly Youth Arts Action), Local Impact**

**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards, 12.**

**VOTING ITEM: Extend the FY 2024-2025 Grant Period to 2 Years**

I am dismayed that the CAC funding allocation is following a misguided trend to fund in significant amounts to only a few organizations vs spreading what I realized is limited funds to more groups.

In reality this philosophy is 1) very harmful to arts orgs and the people of CA who they serve and 2) can be a waste of money.

1) Organizations invest an excessive amount of time and energy building networks in community and in programs that serve communities- a trickle of funding can keep these investments alive vs sudden death with zero funding

2) Putting the funding money into a few groups means that fewer Californians are served with art. And as with any funding, the project might not go as planned but now the risk is higher.

A grant score of 5.5-6 is the equivalent of A to A+ grant. We are all impressed with an amazing “shiny” grant presentation, it comes with the price of these groups spending time just on creating their presentation or these orgs hire a grant writer. Other orgs put their focus on doing the art working in community, their grant presentation might not look as good but they are actually achieving the goals of the CAC.

To put it in perspective. It would be like the CAC was given funding to feed a school for a year and the choice was:

A) every child gets a PB & J for a year

or

B) 10 kids get a 5-course lunch every day for a year and the rest of the kids have nothing to eat for a year. My choice would be to feed all the kids at least something.

- **Christopher Walters (He/Him/His)**  
**Choral Arts Initiative, Orange County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

On behalf of Choral Arts Initiative, I want to express our gratitude for the General Operating Support grant, which has been critical to our mission of advancing the arts through innovative choral performances. This funding enables us to commission new works, support local artists, and keep our programs accessible to diverse audiences.

We recognize the difficult choices the Council faces due to the statewide budget cuts. As you consider the various scenarios, we ask that you continue to prioritize general operating support, as it provides the flexibility needed to sustain our core programs and staff. Significant cuts could jeopardize the vital cultural programs we provide to the community.

While we understand the importance of equity, we hope the Council will consider a balanced approach that fairly distributes reductions across all programs. A cut like the proposed 20% reduction across the board (Scenario 4) would allow organizations like ours to adapt without undermining the important work we do. This approach ensures no single program or community bears an excessive burden from the budget shortfall.

We appreciate the Council's ongoing support and commitment to the arts. Your decisions will play a crucial role in helping arts organizations like Choral Arts Initiative remain sustainable during this challenging time.

- **Laura Muñoz (She/Her/Hers, ella)**  
**Playhosue Arts and independent artist, Humboldt County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Artists in Communities, Artists in Schools, Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief, California Creative Corps**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**



Dear CAC, thank you for the work you have done and continue to do for the arts in our state.

I am not only disappointed, but also deeply concerned and disheartened by your lack of providing much needed funds to rural communities North of San Francisco during this funding cycle. As you know, rural arts dynamics are very different from how the arts work in urban settings. With respect, measuring projects and needs with the same ruler for both environments shows a lack of depth in understanding the rural art life. My County of Humboldt is full of art and artists doing the work of social change, creating culture every day, and imagining new ways of being- this time around with no support from this state agency. I hope that you are able to review and rectify what I see as an abandonment of our area, and I hope Governor Newsom hears our voices.

Thank you for reading and for listening.

**Ruthi Engelke (She/Her/Hers)**  
**Humboldt Creative Alliance & Playhouse Arts, Humboldt County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Artists in Schools**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

Rural counties are historically underserved when it comes to money to support programs, and yet we also have the most need. I was heartbroken to hear this morning that no entities in Humboldt County were granted money this year, while urban areas were. We have less resources and the most need. Please change your decision and send some money to Humboldt. I work as the education director at Playhouse Arts. We have a very successful program called Skue-Yech Son-Ee\_Nah or "We Are Becoming Well" where Yurok storytellers and teaching artists interact with schoolchildren in rural Humboldt. Without funding, we cannot continue this important program. The current process of funding is inequitable and not fair to rural communities. We need art programming as much, if not more, than urban areas. Thank you.

**Mary Stimmler (She/Her/Hers)**  
**Santa Clara County**  
**RE: Agenda Item 10. VOTING ITEM: FY 2024-2025 Grant Awards**

I'm writing in support of the Duveneck Elementary Black History Month funding. Last year was the first time our school had a multi-disciplinary Black History month celebration and we are excited about the possibility of using this funding to expand the program to including more artists and STEM professionals, more activities, and more memorable experiences that will highlight the vibrancy of Black culture for our school.

**Anonymous**

**Kern County**

**RE: Agenda Item 16. General Public Comment**

Can we address the use of Artificial Intelligence made artwork and how it has been used to submit to the public for acceptance in recent projects that are funded by grants and why it was taken to the very top of public review to choose against other authentic hand drawn creative artwork? Should AI be allowed especially when grants are involved? What are we going to do to protect this issue from happening again?

**Jim Miller (He/Him/His)**

**A Noise Within, Los Angeles County**

**Current or Former Grantee: Arts Education Exposure**

**RE: Agenda Item 12. VOTING ITEM: Extend the FY 2024-2025 Grant Period to 2 Years**

Hello - As we all know, regional theatre has been struggling since the pandemic. CAC support has been helpful. Extending your grants to a two-year period will help immensely with planning and allow our limited resources to have greater impact. I hope you will consider creating 2 year grants. Thanks!

**Anonymous**

**San Diego Opera**

**Current or Former Grantee: Artists in Schools, Arts Education Exposure, Creative Youth Development (formerly Youth Arts Action), Impact Projects**

Good morning and thank you to the entire California Arts Council. On behalf of San Diego Opera, I am writing today to express our deep gratitude for your support of our learning and engagement programs, which have been made possible through generous grants from the California Arts Council.

Thanks to your investment, our programs Words and Music, Student Night at the Opera, and Discovering Voices have provided opportunities for underserved young voices within our community to engage in the transformative power of opera. These programs have not only enriched the cultural fabric of San Diego but has also empowered and employed local artists and stage professionals, engaged new audiences, and fostered important conversations around identity, heritage, and creative expression.

The support from the California Arts Council has been instrumental in helping us bring these projects to life, and we are incredibly proud of the positive impact they have had on our community. We remain committed to advancing arts accessibility and equity, and your continued support is crucial in enabling us to pursue these goals.

On behalf of San Diego Opera and the countless individuals who have been touched by our programs, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the Council. We look forward to continuing this meaningful partnership and furthering the important work of arts and culture in California.

Thank you for your time, and for all you do to champion the arts in our state.

**Erik Gonzalez (He/Him/His)**  
**Urbanists Collective, Kings County**  
**Current or Former Grantee: Arts in Corrections, Cultural Pathways, JUMP StArts**

Greetings, CAC Council,

On behalf of Urbanists Collective, I hope this message finds you well.

Thank you for all that you do. We are honored to be awarded with your support.

Dear Council, I am reaching out in hopes that you can help us connect with the department or individual overseeing the JumpStart grants. We have been

attempting to reach someone for (over six months) regarding a critical funding issue affecting our Stories with Style project at JCM, Hanford Juvenile Detention.

Despite numerous attempts via email and phone, we have not been able to communicate directly with anyone. We kindly ask for your assistance in connecting us with the appropriate staff to help resolve this issue.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.