CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL
A STATE AGENCY

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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Draft Minutes of Public Meeting
CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL
Friday, August 14, 2026
10 A.M. – 4 P.M.
On Location/Hybrid Meeting
Marin Shakespeare Company
514 Fourth Street
San Rafael, CA 94901

The members of the California Arts Council convened in San Rafael 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 Caleb Duarte
Council Member Vicki Estrada
Council Member Leah Goodwin
Council Member Roy Hirabayashi
Council Member Dorka Keehn
Council Member Phil Mercado
Council Member Rick Stein

Council Members Present Remotely:
Council Chair Roxanne Messina Captor
Council Member Alex Israel

Arts Council Staff Present:
Danielle Brazell, Executive Director
Michelle Radmand, Chief 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
Leslie Giovanini, Arts Program Specialist
Zachary Hill, IT Specialist
Qiana Moore, Events & Outreach Coordinator
Natalie Peeples, Arts Program Specialist
Gabrielle Rosado, Arts Program Specialist

Arielle Rubin, Arts Program Specialist
Emily Taggart, Arts Program Specialist

1. Call to Order
Vice Chair Nicola Miner called the meeting to order at 10:07 A.M.

2. Roll Call and Establishment of Quorum
Arts Program Manager Jonathan Estrada called the roll and quorum was established. All Council members were in attendance, with nine members of the Council present in San Rafael and two virtually on Zoom.

3. Land and People's Acknowledgement
Vice Chair Miner invited founder and director of the Alliance for Felix Cove Teresa Harlan to deliver the regional land acknowledgment for San Rafael. Harlan recognized the ancestral homelands of the Támalko/Huukuiko/Coast Miwok peoples and honored the historical and present power of Indigenous storytelling. Harlan also was previously a CAC multicultural arts fellow and staff member.

4. Opening Remarks & Community Agreements
Vice Chair Miner and Executive Director Danielle Brazell 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.

Vice Chair Miner then briefly went over meeting resources and accessibility for attendees, thanking ASL interpreters Paula Dunn and Daniel Schwartz and Spanish-language interpreters Julie Conde and Leticia Reyna, for their simulcast translation via Zoom.

5. Welcome Remarks
The Council was welcomed first by Leslie Currier, Managing Director of Marin Shakespeare Company, the day's business meeting venue. Marin Shakespeare Company is both a longtime CAC grantee and an Arts in Corrections Coordinating Organization. Tracy Bays Booth, Managing Director of the Marin Cultural Association that serves as the State-Local Partner for Marin County, also greeted the Council and gave a brief overview of the reach of CAC funding for the region.

6. Chair's Report
Chair Roxanne Messina Captor briefly summarized her full report, highlighting the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games as a significant opportunity to showcase California's cultural diversity to a global audience, emphasizing the need for all 58 counties to participate in the arts festival planning.

7. Executive Director's Report
Executive Director Brazell touched upon multiple points of her full written report including data requested by Council regarding general operations programming consolidation, a qualitative analysis of public comment, field research around AI impact and policy, and Arts in Corrections updates.

8. VOTING ITEM: Minutes from Previous Meetings
Vice Chair Miner then presented the minutes from the June 26 meeting for approval by Council. Chair Messina Captor abstained from the vote as she was not present at the June 26 Council meeting. As there were no objections from the rest of the Council, the minutes were approved.

9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations

The Council proceeded to Agenda Item 9: on the FY26-27 grant cycle allocations, with Vice Chair Miner outlining the process and call for any known or perceived conflicts of interest. Council members Hirabayashi and Stein both identified as needing to recuse themselves from the discussion and vote.

Council member Mercado presented two recommended funding scenarios developed by the Allocations Committee, with Scenario 1 recommending broader reach by funding 1,200 total grants compared to Scenario 2's 883 grants. Both scenarios allocating $24.6 million in total funding and incorporated additional scoring weight for priority criteria previously determined by Council, differing only in reach based on the percentage of funds awarded across General Operating Support, Arts and Youth, and Impact Projects grants.

A motion was made and seconded by the Allocations Committee to approve Scenario 1.

Motion:

Made by: Council Vice Chair Nicola Miner
Seconded by: Council member Phil Mercado

The Allocations Committee recommends that Council approve funding Scenario 1 as presented in the attached allocation spreadsheets.

SCENARIO 1: Broader Reach

- **$4,215,000 – State-Local Partners (SLP) (1st year only)**
- **$50,000 – State-Local Partner Mentorship (SLP-M)**
- **$11,015,683 – General Operating Support (GEN)**
- **$4,715,867 – Arts and Youth (AAY)**
- **$3,602,629– Impact Projects (PRJ)**
- **$1,000,000 – Folk and Traditional Arts - AO (FTA) (2nd year only)**

$24,599,179 Total Local Assistance Appropriation

The Committee further recommends that the Council approve the Executive Director to award grants at her discretion from any Local Assistance funds not allocated by Council as well as any funds remaining from terminated grants.

Submitted public comment for this item is noted below at the end of the minutes. Live public comment can be found in the downloadable meeting transcript and recording beginning at the 39.25 minute mark and concluding at the 1:03:42 minute mark.

Discussion: Council members proposed a request to staff for future cycles that each organization's county be included in the allocations scenario data, as well as information as to the percentage of overall applicants being funded in each scenario. Council argued to make bigger moves toward more general operational support in future cycles, citing it as a common funding trend in the field.

A motion was made and seconded by the Allocations Committee for an amendment to the final paragraph of the open motion of Scenario 1 to include the Executive Director award grants at her discretion in consultation with the Allocations Committee.

Motion:

Made by: Council Chair Roxanne Messina Captor
Seconded by: Council member Phil Mercado

Vote Tally:

- Chair Messina Captor - yes
- Vice Chair Miner – yes
- Barros – yes
- Duarte – yes
- Estrada – yes
- Goodwin – yes
- Hirabayashi – recusal
- Israel – yes
- Keehn – yes
- Mercado – yes
- Stein – recusal

Result: *Motion passed (9 yays – unanimous)*

Vice Chair Miner called for the vote to the now-amended motion on the table:

Motion:

Made by: Council Vice Chair Nicola Miner
Seconded by: Council member Phil Mercado

The Allocations Committee recommends that Council approve funding Scenario 1 as presented in the attached allocation spreadsheets.

SCENARIO 1: Broader Reach

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$24,599,179 Total Local Assistance Appropriation

The Committee further recommends that the Council approve the Executive Director, in consultation with the Allocations Committee, to award grants at her discretion from any Local Assistance funds not allocated by Council as well as any funds remaining from terminated grants.

Vote Tally:

- Chair Messina Captor - yes
- Vice Chair Miner – yes
- Barros – yes
- Duarte – yes
- Estrada – yes
- Goodwin – yes
- Hirabayashi – recusal
- Israel – yes
- Keehn – yes
- Mercado – yes
- Stein – recusal

Result: *Motion passed (9 yays – unanimous)*

10. STAFF PRESENTATION: Cultural Districts

Arts Program Specialists Gabrielle Rosado and Arielle Rubin provided a thorough overview of the California Cultural Districts program, explaining the program's background, current status, and upcoming plans, including potential changes to the designation process and funding structure. Morgan Schauffler shared the San Rafael Arts District's experience, emphasizing the positive impact of the designation on community collaboration and economic vitality.

Council discussed concerns about perceived gentrification, joint branding, and the program's future, with suggestions to extend the designation period and increase Council involvement in the process. They touched on how to measure district goals and whether there should be limits on the number of cultural districts, with Director of Programs Services Kristin Margolis confirming there is no current limit due to unanimous legislative support. Chair Messina Captor suggested creating an ad hoc committee for cultural districts to provide Council input on the program's growth.

11. STAFF PRESENTATION: Impact Projects
Arts Program Specialists Natalie Peeples and Leslie Giovanini provided Council with an overview of the Impact Projects grant program, including its background and purpose, reviewing prior council policy direction, program consolidations, budget shifts, artistic disciplines and project types, next steps and grantee highlights. Highlighted grantees included Attitudinal Healing Connections in Alameda, and their work with elders, and Piece by Piece in Los Angeles and their work with unhoused populations. They were followed by Kathryn Bates, cellist and grantee from the Del Sol String Quartet, who outlined the organization's Impact Projects-funded "Facing the Moon: Songs of the Diaspora" project, which explores the Chinese diaspora experience through new poetry and performances across multiple venues including Angel Island and the Presidio theater.

Council discussed how inspiring and powerful the program and its associated projects and presentations were. Discussion ensued about the definition of small organizations for these programs which are prioritized for organizations with total revenues below $3 million. Discussion also included how this kind of funding can support many different communities in different ways. Examples from the presentation shows how it encourages partnership with communities and social services and is a flexible program.

12:55-1:25 WORKING LUNCH

12. CONSULTANT PRESENTATION: Native American Artist Grant Program (KAI)
Program Manager, Elisa Gollub and Program Specialist, Emily Taggart, provided a short overview of the in-progress timeline and development of the proposed California Native American Artist Grant Program. They then introduced and turned over the presentation to contracted consultant, Kauffman & Associates (KAI) representative Stephen Valliere. KAI is a woman and American Indian owned consulting firm.

Stephen Valliere | AnishinabeTribe | Project Director for Kauffman & Associates focused on the details of the Native American Advisory Committee which was formed over the last year as well as several listening sessions with participants exploring implementation details and addressing concerns about skepticism from potential beneficiaries. Council members raised questions about program scope, funding levels, and whether it should be permanent or a pilot program, with staff noting that Kauffman & Associates would present high-level grant program recommendations for the October meeting. The discussion emphasized the importance of addressing trust and skepticism in the Native American community, with participants acknowledging the program's long development history since 2019 and committing to provide comparative data on existing support for Native American artists through other CAC programs.

13. DISCUSSION: Programs to Open
Programs Policy Committee, Council Members Caleb Duarte and Vicki Estrada presented on the proposed Programs to open in 2027. They presented two scenarios for opening programs in 2027-28, with Councilmembers discussing whether to wait for the new strategic plan or proceed with changes now. Scenario One proposed opening the same programs as 2025 plus the proposed program for

Native American artists and Cultural Districts, while Scenario Two suggested disaggregating certain programs and adding statewide and regional networks.

Councilmembers expressed concerns about maintaining opportunities for specific communities and organizations, with some advocating for waiting until the strategic framework is complete to avoid overburdening staff. The discussion highlighted the need to balance program consolidation with maintaining support for diverse arts organizations and addressing specific community needs. The council discussed removing caps on grants and increasing funding to support more organizations across the state, with some council members supporting this change and suggesting a review of past successful grants. Staff provided data on Cultural Pathways funding and highlighted the need to hear from more voices across the state.

14. DISCUSSION: Ad Hoc 50th Anniversary Arts Awards

The meeting then moved to a discussion about continuing the 50th Anniversary Arts Awards as an annual program, with committee members Alex Israel and Leah Goodwin proposing to recognize 10 individuals or creative partnerships each year through certificates and potentially including recognition on the legislative floor. The Council discussed the concept of an annual artist award emphasizing the importance of the original mission statement from 2014. Several members suggested making the award biennial or even less frequent, using the existing legacy artist pool for nominations, and potentially focusing on fewer recipients to make the honor more special. The staff expressed concerns about bandwidth and logistics given current staffing challenges and ongoing strategic planning work.

15. General Public Comment

All submitted public comment listed at the end of these minutes. Live General Public Comment begins at minute 4:52.29 and going until 5:17:41 on the downloadable transcript and recording.

16. In Memoriam

Council member Goodwin led a tribute honoring creative individuals who have passed in the days following the last business meeting at the end of June:

- Joe Melson, American Songwriter
- Sam Neal, Actor
- Brenda Fricker, Actress
- Freddie Cannon, Rock Singer
- Bill Mclaughlin, Conductor
- Betty Saar, Artist
- Benjamin Alari Sainz, Poet
- Simone Forti, Dancer, Choreographer & Artist
- Vincent Pastor, Actor
- Violet Hensley Neeve Brumley, Fiddler
- John Seto, Former Arts Council Staff Member

- Kristin Noeings, Actress
- John Seifert, Actor

17. Open Council Discussion
No discussion. Council moved to the next agenda item.

18. Closing Remarks
Vice Chair Miner called for agenda items for the October 23, 2026, Council Meeting in Merced, CA. Council member Keehn requested an update on the Creative Economy Town Halls. Council member Goodwin expressed how good it was to meet and hear from additional staff members and various program presentations from the California Arts Council in-person. Executive Director Brazell invited staff and council members to take a few photos together before departing the business meeting.

Vice Chair Miner adjourned the meeting at 3:32 P.M.

CAC PUBLIC COMMENT SUBMISSIONS
COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 14, 2026

Anonymous, San Mateo County
RE: Agenda Item 15. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT;

What is being done to help K-12 schools and charter schools to be in compliance with the Proposition 28 law in San Mateo County? The continuing excuses, resistance, and delay tactics are adversely impacting the development of the Creative Intelligence of our children and youth in ways that are unacceptable. What can be done to have San Mateo County release a public performance report on how well Proposition 28 is working in all of its K-12 schools and charter schools that are in compliance with the law?

- **Ricky Abilez (They/Them/Theirs)**
  4C LAB, Celebration Theatre, Los Angeles County
  Current or Former Grantee: Impact Projects; Creative Youth Development (formerly Youth Arts Action); Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations

  I'm writing in strong support of Scenario 2 funding levels.

  4C LAB is a small nonprofit serving youth in the San Gabriel Valley, a historically under-resourced region of the state. Like many small arts nonprofits, we're working hard to sustain our operations during a genuinely difficult funding environment. The difference between Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 isn't marginal for organizations our size — it's the difference between scraping by and being able to actually sustain and grow the impact we're having.

  Our free programming gives young people in our community a space to explore the topics and ideas they care about, often for the first time. Students have told us directly that this work helps them imagine a better future for themselves. For many of the youth we serve, this kind of creative outlet simply doesn't exist anywhere else in their daily lives.

  Celebration Theatre is one of the longest running queer theatres in the nation and continues to offer some of the most groundbreaking and important Trans stories in the region.

  Scenario 2 funding would allow small, community-rooted organizations like ours to keep showing up for the young people who depend on us — not just to survive year to year, but to deepen and expand the work. I urge the Council to adopt Scenario 2 for both General Operating and Impact Projects funding.

  Thank you for your consideration and for your continued investment in arts access across California.

- **Leticia Santos (She/Her/Hers)**
  4C Lab, Los Angeles County
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations

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  4C LAB is a small nonprofit serving youth in the San Gabriel Valley, a historically under-resourced region of the state. Like many small arts nonprofits, we're working hard to sustain our operations during a genuinely difficult funding environment. The difference between Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 isn't marginal for organizations our size — it's the difference between scraping by and being able to actually sustain and grow the impact we're having.

  Our free programming gives young people in our community a space to explore the topics and ideas they care about, often for the first time. Students have told us directly that this work helps them imagine a better future for themselves. For many of the youth we serve, this kind of creative outlet simply doesn't exist anywhere else in their daily lives.

  Scenario 2 funding would allow small, community-rooted organizations like ours to keep showing up for the young people who depend on us — not just to survive year to year, but to deepen and expand the work. I urge the Council to adopt Scenario 2 for both General Operating and Impact Projects funding.

  Thank you for your consideration and for your continued investment in arts access across California.

- **Clifford Odame (He/Him/His)**
  World Bank Edge / Agora Gallery
  RE: Agenda Item 15. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

  Please create room for diversity as a spring board to economic growth. Because growth is not only attainable but sustainable. Be proactive, bright minds.

- **Marissa Herrera (She/Her/Hers)**
  4C LAB, Los Angeles County
  Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief; Impact Projects
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations

  As the Co-founder/Executive Artistic Director of 4C LAB, our small org has served over 20K youth and families since 2016, yet in 2026, like many organizations, we are facing a funding crisis. We have already condensed our small staff as we continue to aim to provide NO COST arts programming to under-resourced communities. Our communities continue to need a safe space to foster creativity, leadership and community. I urge the Council to adopt Scenario 2 for

both General Operating and Impact Projects funding for small organizations to not just survive, but thrive and deepen the work we have been doing for a decade. With several other funding sources perishing or making major cuts, the support of the CAC will ensure our sustainability and lead the way in supporting arts education. Thank you in advance for your support.

- **Corey Young (He/Him/His)**
  4C LAB, Los Angeles County
  Current or Former Grantee: Impact Projects; Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations; 15. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

  4C LAB is a small nonprofit serving young people in the San Gabriel Valley — a region that has long faced limited investment and support. Like many arts organizations of our size, we're working hard to keep our programs running in an increasingly challenging funding landscape. For groups like ours, the gap between Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 is not a minor adjustment; it represents the difference between barely staying afloat and being able to maintain — and meaningfully grow — the impact we're creating.

  Our free programs offer local youth a rare space to explore ideas, express themselves, and engage with subjects that matter to them. Many students have told us that these experiences help them envision new possibilities for their futures. For a significant portion of the young people we serve, this kind of creative outlet simply isn't available anywhere else in their daily lives.

  Scenario 2 funding would allow small, community-based organizations like ours to continue showing up for the youth who rely on us — not only to make it through each year, but to strengthen and expand the work. I respectfully urge the Council to adopt Scenario 2 for both General Operating and Impact Projects funding.

  Thank you for your time and for your ongoing commitment to expanding arts access throughout California.

- **Alma Villegas (She/Her/Hers)**
  Los Angeles County
  Current or Former Grantee: Creative Youth Development (formerly Youth Arts Action); Artists in Schools; Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief
  RE: Agenda Item 15. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

  Dear California Arts Council members,

  I am writing on behalf of Inner-City Arts, a long-standing CAC grantee. For over 36 years, our organization has provided high-quality, multidisciplinary arts education; spanning dance,

music, visual arts, media arts, drama, ceramics, and a creativity lab on our 1-acre campus—to K–12 youth in Los Angeles who would otherwise lack access to arts programs in their neighborhood schools.

Unfortunately, this year we were ineligible to apply for General Operating Support and Creative Youth Development (formerly Youth Arts Action) grants because our operational revenue slightly exceeded the program budget caps.

We respectfully request that the Council reconsider these strict budget caps for upcoming grant cycles. Adjusting or broadening these eligibility restrictions will ensure that established organizations like Inner-City Arts, with decades of deep-rooted expertise and community trust, can continue to receive vital state support to serve young people across Los Angeles, California.

Sincerely,
Alma Villegas
Senior Director of Development
alma@inner-cityarts.org

- **Kimberly Snyder (She/Her/Hers)**
  New Museum Los Gatos, Santa Clara County
  Current or Former Grantee: Impact Projects; Creative California Communities; Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations

  I am writing to express my support for the funding allocations outlined in scenario 1. I am against the changes outlined in scenario 2 as it severely impacts our organization, Los Gatos Museum Association.

  We stand to lose two grants with these changes. $12,000 in general operating funds and $16,173 for our upcoming exhibition, Community Ignition: Partnership and Artmaking in the Disability Arts Community, and its related programs. Support of CAC helps us prove our worth and secure more funders for our programs.

  Funding programs like Community Ignition, $16,000 is transformational. Not only would those funds help us put on an exhibition platforming a group often left out of the traditional museum, but allows us to offer programming, tailored for people of all ability levels - dance lessons for the blind, sensory hours at the museum, and more. CAC funding directly corresponds to our ability to support our artists participating in this project.

  Every arts organization that would be affected by this is a pillar in our cultural ecosystem. We are all feeling the burden of rising costs and reduced funding, while still putting in the time and

effort to maintain or grow our programs. This change would fund only performing arts, leaving visual arts completely unfunded.

Fund more programs by voting for scenario 1, spreading the impact of your support through a larger network and through more varied programming. I urge you to make the choice that benefits a larger community.

- **Alexandra Urbanowski (She/Her/Hers)**
  SVCreates, Santa Clara County
  Current or Former Grantee: State-Local Partnership
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations

  SVCreates is the county arts agency for Santa Clara County and a state/local partner with the CAC. As the county arts agency, SVCreates supports and works to strengthen arts organizations in our county and ensure opportunities for local artists. We know that the CAC wants to reach all corners of the state and serve artists in every region and we take seriously our role as a partner in representing and advocating for the arts groups and artists in our region.

  SVCreates strongly encourages the Council to adopt scenario 1 so that more arts groups can receive grants from the CAC. These grants, even if modest in size, provide a stamp of approval and public verification of merit from the State which arts groups can leverage to raise additional funds, expand visibility, and increase public attention. A larger number of grants and funded arts organization better serves the CAC's goal of supporting a diverse range of communities, artists, and residents and cultural practices.

  In our County scenario 1 funds twice as many arts organizations and projects, including important culturally specific organizations like San Jose's Chinese Performing Arts of America. Scenario 2 not only funds less organizations but also reduces total funding to our county by 23%.

  We know that there is just overall not enough money to go around and appreciate the difficult decisions you must make but I ask you to support the breadth and diversity of our arts ecosystem by adopting scenario 1.

- **Ko Ser Lu Htoo (He/Him/His)**
  California Karen Youth Connection, Alameda County
  Current or Former Grantee: Folk and Traditional Arts
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations;15. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

  Thank you to the California Arts Council for entrusting CKYC to deliver arts and cultural programs to ethnic minority communities, including Karen and Burmese communities, across

California. We are incredibly proud of the work we have accomplished together, the lives we have touched, the individuals and communities we have empowered, and the meaningful impact these programs have created. Through traditional arts, cultural celebrations, and community gatherings, we have created spaces where people can learn, celebrate, create, connect, and share their heritage. Most importantly, we have helped foster a sense of belonging, joy, pride, and connection across generations and communities. This work reminds us that arts and culture are not only about preserving traditions, they are powerful tools for building stronger, more connected, and more inclusive communities. We are deeply grateful to the California Arts Council for believing in this work and supporting our vision. CKYC will continue to stand alongside our youth, families, and communities, providing vital opportunities to celebrate culture, nurture creativity, strengthen belonging, and build a brighter future together. Together, we celebrate who we are, where we come from, and the beautiful communities we are building for generations to come.

- **Laura Sin (She/Her/Hers)**
  California Karen Youth Connection, Kern County
  Current or Former Grantee: Folk and Traditional Arts
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations;15. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

  Thank you to the California Art Council for your exceptional support and resources provided to our California Karen Youth Connection. Your support goes far beyond words; it provides our young people with a profound sense of identity and the confidence to carry our Karen traditions forward into the future. It is very inspiring to see our Karen community unite to uplift the next generation. With the grant that we received from the CAC, we continue to provide space and access to create vital programs and activities that benefit our youth in preserving our language, customs, and values to continue to thrive for years to come. Your generous support has been a key part in ensuring that part of the Karen culture stays alive. Thank you for entrusting CKYC to deliver CAC goals and mission in underserved communities and keeping our beautiful culture vibrant and strong.

- **Richard Falcon (He/Him/His)**
  Teatro Nagual, Sacramento County
  Current or Former Grantee: Individual Artists Fellowships

  As an AO for the Individual Artist Fellowship, it is my recommendation the council review the funding allocations for each tier. In my case opinion, reduce legacy and increase the other tiers. Additionally, I would like to speak to someone about the region allocations. If I remember correctly the amount per region is based on population. What does that mean and how is that determined?

Anonymous
Los Angeles County
RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations;15. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

I am an architectural designer and social-practice artist working across art, psychology, and placemaking. I encourage the California Arts Council to explore participatory art as social infrastructure.

My Connection Cards are two connected artworks with prompts on the reverse that invite two strangers to use the artwork itself as a shared object of observation and connection. I am seeking opportunities for museums, libraries, and cultural institutions to pilot this work as programming that strengthens social connection and community belonging.

Separately, I am developing the Connection Bubble, a modular public pavilion originally proposed as an Olympic legacy project. Its enclosed form creates a sealed half-sphere; its wings open to become a stage for concerts, performances, facilitated programs, and public gatherings. An LA City Planner identified its potential to also serve as a cooling center.

These projects operate at different scales but address the same public need: creating intentional physical and social conditions for people to connect.

The Surgeon General identifies social isolation as a significant public-health concern, while California's arts strategy recognizes the role of arts and culture in mental health, civic connection, and community well-being.

I encourage CAC to help convene artists, cultural institutions, planners, and communities to pilot, evaluate, and scale arts-based approaches that make connection part of California's cultural infrastructure.

- **Sabrina Kwong (She/Her/Hers)**
  Chinese Performing Arts of America (CPAA), Santa Clara County
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations;15. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

  Dear California Arts Council,

  My name is Sabrina Kwong, Co-Executive Director of Outreach at Chinese Performing Arts of America (CPAA), a 35-year-old multicultural arts nonprofit in San José that serves 25,000+ community members annually and is home to 40+ resident arts organizations.

  I urge the Council to adopt Scenario 1 for this year's grant distribution, not Scenario 2.

Under Scenario 2, CPAA and several longstanding organizations, including City Lights, Local Color, Santa Clara Chorale, and NUMU Los Gatos, would receive $0 in General Operating Support. For CPAA, that funding sustains free and low-cost programming for immigrant families, first-generation students, and seniors who have few other paths to arts education or cultural connection.

Scenario 1's smaller, broader grants matter beyond the dollar amount: CAC's endorsement is a stamp of approval that helps us leverage other funding. Concentrating larger awards among fewer organizations would undermine the Council's commitment to a diverse, statewide arts ecosystem, cutting out grassroots, community-rooted groups precisely when they're needed most.

I respectfully ask the Council to choose Scenario 1 and continue supporting the full breadth of California's arts organizations, especially those serving communities too often overlooked by larger institutions.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sabrina Kwong
Co-Executive Director of Outreach, CPAA Arts Center

- **Lauren Nikkel**
  Fresno Arts Council, Fresno County
  Current or Former Grantee: State-Local Partnership

  Good morning, California Arts Council board and staff!

  My name is Lauren Nikkel, and I am sending this virtual public comment to introduce myself as the recently-selected Executive Director of the Fresno Arts Council. While internal operations keep me from joining you on screen this morning, I wanted to send a warm greeting and share how much I look forward to working alongside the CAC and all of the State-Local Partners across our great State. I bring my background in workforce and economic development to this position at a critical time in the Fresno Arts Council's history, along with my experience as a social dancer, cultural arts organizer, and community builder. While there is much work to be done, we go further when we go together, and I am looking forward to going together with all of you.

  The Fresno Arts Council is deeply grateful to the CAC for our longstanding State-Local Partnership, and I am personally looking forward to meeting all of you in person at the October meeting in the Central Valley. On behalf of the FAC board and staff, thank you for your ongoing support, leadership, and steadfast committment to resourcing arts and culture initiatives across our great State. Your leadership allows SLPs like us to champion the creative spirits, vibrant places, and diverse communities that make Fresno County, and all of California, so extraordinary.

- **Carman Gaines (She/Her/Hers)**
  Local Color, San Jose Arts Advocates, Santa Clara County
  Current or Former Grantee: Creative Youth Development (formerly Youth Arts Action); Arts Education Exposure
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations

  Good morning, Chair and Councilmembers. My name is Carman Gaines, and I serve as Deputy Director of Local Color, a San José-based nonprofit that builds equitable pathways for artists and creatives to thrive.

  I'm speaking today to thank you for your motion in support of Scenario 1, which would provide smaller grants to more organizations across California.

  For artist service organizations like Local Color, a California Arts Council grant is not only meaningful financial support. It is also a critical public endorsement. That stamp of approval helps us leverage additional funding, build trust with partners, and sustain programs that reach artists and communities who are too often under-resourced.

  In Santa Clara County, the difference between these two scenarios is significant. Local Color and several other arts organizations that scored well in panel review would receive no funding at all. That means fewer points of access, fewer community-rooted programs, and fewer pathways for artists and cultural workers to stay connected to opportunity in a region where the cost of living is already pushing many out.

  Thank you for taking the time to review my comment and make what I believe is the right decision.

- **Allison Cagley (She/Her/Hers) Friends of Sacramento Arts, Sacramento County**
  Current or Former Grantee: Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief
  RE: Agenda Item 9. VOTING ITEM: FY26-27 Allocations

  Why is there a $100k difference between Scenario 1 and 2? Where does that $100k go?

  Thank you.

  Anonymous
  San Francisco County
  Current or Former Grantee: Artists in Communities; Artists in Schools; Arts & Cultural Organizations General Operating Relief; Creative Youth Development (formerly Youth Arts Action); Impact Projects; Local Impact; Statewide and Regional Networks

  Please change current review procedure so that panelists have a chance to discuss the applications that they have reviewed after scoring. They should not be operating in a silo. This

is a chance for people to catch anything that is out of wack. I believe this was the policy before COVID and it should be reinstated. Sometimes it is all “6”s from panelists and then one panelist gives a “1” - clearly that one panelist is missing something... Also, please be sure that what panelists are asked to score correlates to the question. Often times the question and what is being reviewed do not correlate. Yoiks!

- **Mark McMullen (He/Him/His)**
  Sonoma County
  RE: Agenda Item Culture District Program

  I attended the 8/14 meeting. I am from Healdsburg.
  Staff said there is no limit on CD program’s size, and that they are already thinking about decoupling “when & how” to open it from “how it gets funded.” I want to encourage Council to act on that by creating a tiered designation system, so more communities get recognized without needing full funding for each one. Nothing in AB 189 caps districts or ties designation to a cash grant. “Community” was left open ended on purpose, and the three-partner rule is an administrative add-on, not something the law requires. The law does require technical assistance, promotional support, and interagency collaboration, none of which depends on budget. Those should be a basic floor every district gets no matter the tier, with the more involved tier getting more on top.

  On saturation, a district still must show real cultural activity & compete for designation. That review is already the limit, not a fixed number of slots.

  On displacement, CAC does not need to build an AB 812 developer guide, CA for the Arts already publishes one CAC could adopt and hand out. The harder gap, broader anti displacement support, takes real staff time, so that level makes more sense reserved for the higher tier, with lighter tier districts receiving at higher tier.

  A lighter tier should not come at the expense of districts already in place. I also support the Chair’s ad hoc committee idea, and would ask that rural and smaller communities get a seat at that table.

- **Anh-Tuan Le, Bowers Renaissance**
  Orange County

  Presentations by CAC’s Arielle Rubin and Morgan Schauffler of San Rafael’s YIA were very informative and encouraging.

  The Bowers Renaissance Task Force will continue to follow CAC’s activities bc: (a) a team member submitted an Impact Grant application in April; and (b) we are currently planning how to groom a Museum District (“District”) as envisioned in Santa Ana’s planning study dated 1987. Besides the Bowers Museum as anchor, the District is richly populated with arts, cultural,

and teaching organizations: e.g., Discovery Cube, The Wooden Floor Dance School, the OC School of the Arts, the OC Children's Therapeutic Arts Center, the Maharajah House's art and its historic status; two community colleges nearby, etc.

Our original convening intent was to establish a 35,000-sf Vietnamese American Cultural Center @theBOWERS ("VACC@B") permissible by the recently passed rezoning which enables high-density housing/mixed-use up to 10-story building height. We have since expanded planning into other initiatives: (1) "Proyecto Hogares de Santa Ana" to build affordable and low-income housing, including artists' co-housing; and (2) the GOZiT micro-transit service to enhance mobility and reduce parking demands. Most excitingly, we have aligned partners to found PeacebuildingOC, with its landmark architecture co-located at the Bowers site, to become a first-in-the-nation Peacemaking Practicum and an international destination just 3.5 miles from world-famous Disneyland.

Indeed, we look forward to applying to CAC in its 2027 cycle to become OC's first CA Cultural District. Such a designation will help the City of Santa Ana and OC attract investment for redevelopment in the area.