



## ARTS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20240318-16

Date: 3/18/2024

Subject: Arts Commission FY 24-25 Budget Recommendations

Motioned By: Commissioner Monica Maldonado

Seconded By: Commissioner Amy Wong Mok

### Recommendation

The recommendations set forth by the Arts Commission each work together to address existing deficits within Austin's arts and cultural ecosystem. Recognizing that the funds from HOT are not enough to serve the diverse entities within the community, the Arts Commission is making a series of recommendations that maximize the limited HOT fund, as well as highlight the need to further support for programs and organizations that serve the greater arts community as a whole.

### Description of Recommendation to Council

- \$548K for Cultural Arts Division staff and admin fees from General Fund, alleviating this expense from the limited Hotel Occupancy Tax reserved for CAD funding.

**\$548,000 / City of Austin General Fund**

- Fiscal support for Cultural Arts Service Organizations to be issued to better support applicants during the cultural funding program application process, in particular for translation service providers. (Community Navigators\* is an example of such a program that could be continued to provide equitable access to these funds in order to better serve the community. \*The Community Navigators program needs to be updated based on the final reporting of its first iteration of the program.)

**\$500,000 / City of Austin General Fund**

- Fiscal support to continue the Austin Civilian Conservation Corps that works across departments and with external partners, that creates and supports pathways into employment and connects mission-aligned networks to form a larger collective, shaping Austin's green workforce.

**\$1 Million / City of Austin General Fund**

- Funding to support the Austin Economic Development Corporation to continue implementing the Cultural Trust program, especially with Common Area Maintenance and other associated costs borne by operators who would be managing spaces for community use.

**\$1 Million / City of Austin General Fund**

- Fiscal support for the Creative Space Assistance Program – match FY23-34 funding lever. CSAP awards between \$5,000 and \$50,000 to commercial creative spaces facing displacement or new leases at higher and unaffordable rates. Grant funds may be used for revenue-generating space improvements, partial lease payments, and gap financing for creative space purchases.

**\$1.5 Million/ City General Fund**

### Rationale:

Cross-sector collaboration is necessary for healthy, equitable, and thriving communities. Our artists and the arts and cultural sector are one of our greatest assets– they are the foundation of our identity as a city, drive tourism and economic development, and improve our quality of life and collective wellbeing. However, the sector is currently an

under-resourced and under-utilized asset in advancing municipal priorities. Currently, the primary public source of support for artists and arts organizations is the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) via the Cultural Arts Division's funding programs. This is a critical source of support, but the requirement that programmatic activities support tourism is limiting.

Artist service organizations, social practice artists, and process-based artistic methods do not easily fit into this funding structure. Municipal departments' strategic partnership with artists and arts organizations can take many forms, from traditional art in public places\* programs to arts-based community engagement initiatives to City artist-in-residence programs, among many others.

Meaningful integration of artists and arts organizations into large external funding proposals (which are much larger dollar amounts than arts-specific granting programs), is another way that the City can support the local arts and culture ecosystem while improving the outcomes of City processes and projects simultaneously. Decades of impact assessment, academic research, and case-study analyses demonstrate the myriad benefits of including artists and arts organizations across a range of civic domains and public priorities. These outcomes are well documented on sites including the National Association of State Arts Agencies, Art Place America, and [creativeplacemakingresearch.org](http://creativeplacemakingresearch.org)

\* \*The City has a robust Art in Public Places Program (AIPP), enabled by a municipal 2% for public art ordinance. However, municipal bond law and other regulatory requirements limit the uses and types of art that can be produced using such funds (physical, permanent public art).

**Vote: 8-0**

For:

Commissioner Nagavalli Medicharla  
Commissioner Monica Maldonado  
Commissioner Felipe Garza  
Commissioner Gina Houston  
Commissioner Acia Gray  
Commissioner Heidi Schmalbach, Vice Chair  
Commissioner Celina Zisman, Chair  
Commissioner Amy Mok

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

Commissioner Kate Csillagi  
Commissioner Michael Vernusky  
Commissioner Faiza Kracheni

Attest:

*Jesus Varela*  
*Arts Commission Staff Liaison*

  
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