



Office of the City Manager

RECESS ITEM
CONSENT CALENDAR
 January 20, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager

Submitted by: Carianna Arredondo, Assistant to the City Manager

Subject: Ratification of City Manager Action to Accept a Grant from Americans for the Arts (AFTA) for \$20,000 to Support the “Arts Programs” Grants Category

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution ratifying the action taken by the City Manager to accept a grant from the Americans for the Arts (AFTA) National Arts Relief fund during recess to receive \$20,000 for the Civic Arts grants program, and to execute any resulting grant agreements and any amendments.

NEGATIVE EFFECT IF ACTION IS DELAYED UNTIL AFTER COUNCIL RECESS

If action is delayed until after the Council recess, the City will be unable to execute the grant agreement within the Americans for the Arts deadline. As a result, the City would forgo \$20,000 in National Arts Relief funding, reducing the total funding available for the Arts Programs Grant category. The funds will be regranted to nonprofit organizations for arts and cultural programming within the City of Berkeley.

SUMMARY

The City of Berkeley can partially restore previously rescinded National Endowment for the Arts funding by applying to and accepting funds from the Americans for the Arts National Arts Relief Fund. Approval of this item would authorize submission of the application, acceptance of up to \$20,000 in grant funding, and execution of the associated grant agreement to support the Civic Arts Programs Grant category in Fiscal Year 2026.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

There is no negative fiscal impact to the City’s General Fund. The \$20,000 grant from Americans for the Arts represents one-time, restricted funding that will be regranted through the existing Civic Arts Grants Program in Fiscal Year 2026. No City match is required. With this funding the City can provide an additional category of Civic Arts Programs grants.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The City of Berkeley was awarded \$40,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for FY26 to support the Civic Arts grant program known as the *Arts Programs* grant. Changes in the NEA's administration led to the agency's withdrawal of the award in May of 2025.

In October of 2025, Americans for the Arts offered NEA awardees whose grants were rescinded the option to apply for the National Arts Relief fund for half of the withdrawn award. The City of Berkeley can recover \$20,000 of the withdrawn NEA award by applying to and contracting with the National Arts Relief fund. The \$20,000, in addition to a recently awarded California Arts Council grant for \$15,900, will be awarded to the highest-scoring applicants for the FY26 Arts Programs grant. Applications for this category were collected January through March of 2025, and adjudicated by a grant review panel in May of 2025.

BACKGROUND

Funding was requested from the NEA in 2023 to establish a new "Arts Programs Grant" category in the Civic Arts Grants offerings and better support a wide range of arts and cultural activities taking place in Berkeley.

The Civic Arts Grants have an annual budget of \$658,500 from the City's General Fund (011), and annually the Civic Arts Grants Program awards funding in three distinct categories:

- 1) Individual Artist Projects;
- 2) Community Festivals, and
- 3) General Operating Support.

With funding from the NEA along with the local match, the City of Berkeley has established a fourth Civic Arts Grants funding category – the *Arts Programs Grant* – administered in conjunction with the annual Civic Arts Grants process. Arts Program grants support non-arts nonprofit organizations located in the City of Berkeley that produce arts or cultural programming in Berkeley led by a Berkeley-based partnering arts organization or teaching artist, and arts nonprofit organizations located in the Greater Bay Area (outside of Berkeley) producing arts and cultural programming in the City of Berkeley.

The Arts Programs grant was anticipated to have a total of \$80,000 allocated with a \$40,000 NEA award and a \$40,000 required City match. Though the program was cancelled upon the NEA rescinding the award, applicants can be awarded with the National Arts Relief funds (\$20,000) and California Arts Council fund (\$15,900).

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ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no environmental sustainability or climate impacts associated with this recommendation.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Accepting funding from the Americans for the Arts' National Arts Relief Fund would help the City accomplish one of the five high-level goals articulated in The City of Berkeley's Arts and Culture Plan (2018-2027): "***Increase Investment in a Vibrant Arts Community, Strengthen and support Berkeley's inclusive and culturally rich arts sector by expanding funding and marketing opportunities for a broader array of arts organizations.***"

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The City Council could choose not to accept the grant. If the grant is not accepted, fewer resources would be available for the Arts Programs Grant category in Fiscal Year 2026, resulting in reduced funding awards to eligible nonprofit arts and cultural organizations.

CONTACT PERSON

Hilary Amnah, Civic Arts Coordinator, 510-981-7539

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

ADOPT A RESOLUTION RATIFYING THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE CITY MANAGER DURING RECESS TO ACCEPT A \$20,000 GRANT FROM AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS (AFTA) TO SUPPORT ACCESS TO ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING IN THE CITY OF BERKELEY BY PARTIALLY RESTORING THE CIVIC ARTS GRANTS PROGRAM FUNDING CATEGORY KNOWN AS THE *ARTS PROGRAMS GRANT*.

WHEREAS, the Arts and Culture Plan for the City of Berkeley (2017-18) includes the goal of increasing investment in a vibrant arts community by expanding funding and marketing opportunities for a broader array of arts organizations; and

WHEREAS, an *Arts Program Grant* category supports the City's ability to create increased access to arts and cultural programming taking place in Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, funding from Americans for the Arts' National Arts Relief Fund is available to organizations that had their National Endowment for the Arts grants withdrawn; and

WHEREAS, the City is implementing the second year of the *Arts Program Grants* in Fiscal Year 2026 with \$20,000 from this grant and \$15,900 from a California Arts Council grant.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the Council ratifies the action taken by the City Manager to accept a grant from the Americans for the Arts to receive to \$20,000 for the above purpose; and execute any resultant agreements and amendments.