

Veterans Memorial Building Community Arts Center

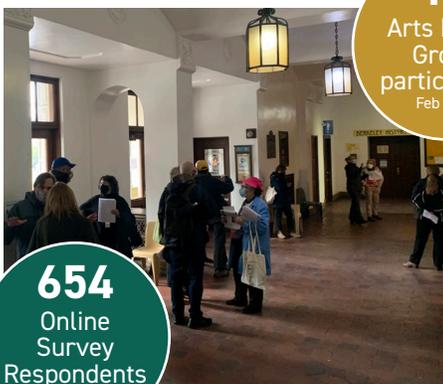


Veterans Memorial Building as Community Arts Center

The City of Berkeley, with strong support from its community, aims to foster the arts by re-envisioning the Veterans Memorial Building as a Community Arts and Cultural Center accessible to all.

The Berkeley Veterans Memorial Building, design by Henry H. Meyers, with contributions by his daughter Mildred Meyers, and George R. Klinkhardt, was completed in 1928 and is one of nine contributing buildings in the Berkeley Civic Center Historic District. It houses a large auditorium that has in the past hosted arts performances and civic gatherings, lodge rooms with ornate detailing, and support spaces including offices and a commercial kitchen. Due to concerns about the seismic safety of the historic building, it is no longer in use as a performance or assembly venue.

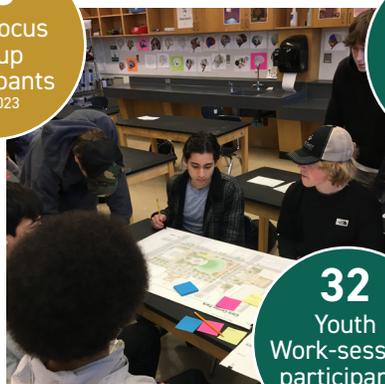
The Berkeley community was asked to envision what the Veterans Memorial Building might become. Through wide community surveys and close work with the multiple City Comissions and arts education groups, a consensus was reached: the Veterans Memorial Building should be re-envisioned as a City-owned center of the arts and culture, with performance, practice, exhibition and assembly spaces, as a shared resource and platform for creative expression for all.



16

Arts Focus
Group
participants
Feb 2023

654
Online
Survey
Respondents
Dec '22-Jan '23



32

Youth
Work-session
participants
Feb 2023



79

Arts Survey
Respondents
Jan-Feb 2023

40

Participants
at Open
House
Nov 2022



Set within the vibrant Downtown Arts District, the historic Veterans Building is reimagined as a community asset and platform for creative expression for all. The building's unique and flexible spaces, with their high ceilings, architectural details, and abundant natural light, can support existing and new Berkeley arts groups by expanding local access to high-quality spaces for classes, exhibits and performances.



Bringing a community arts center to the Veterans Memorial Building will require improvements, including:

- Seismic upgrades to protect the historic resource
- Restoration and repair to the historic building
- Additions to provide modern functionality to the auditorium and other performance areas
- Accessibility and egress improvements to provide universal access throughout the building.
- Electrification, renewable energy and energy storage to align with the City of Berkeley's Electrification Strategy and provide resiliency.
- New mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems to meet current efficiency and operations standards.

The project is pursuing multiple funding pathways to meet its expected \$26-37M construction budget, including:

- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
- Extreme Heat & Community Resilience Grant - California Governor's Office of Land Use & Climate
- Bond Measures



The entry hall and lobby with vaulted ceilings, red and polychrome tiles, and original light fixtures.