



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR
October 14, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager
 Submitted by: Eleanor Hollander, Economic Development Manager
 Subject: Civic Arts Grant Awards: Fiscal Year 2026

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the Civic Arts Grant awards for the budget appropriated for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26). It includes FY26 Civic Arts Grant categories of *Individual Artist Projects* (10 awards), *Community Festivals* (29 awards), and *Arts Organization General Operating Support* (72 awards) for a total of 91 awards totaling \$658,214.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Civic Arts Grant award amounts (Attachment 1), as approved by the Civic Arts Commission, include two annual grant categories (FY26 Individual Artist Projects and FY26 Community Festivals), and one biennial grant category (FY26/27 General Operating Support). Awards in the annual Civic Arts Grant categories for FY26 totaled \$50,000 for ten (10) Individual Artist Projects and \$158,500 for twenty-nine (29) Community Festivals, and \$449,714 for seventy-two (72) organizations for General Operating Support.

The Civic Arts program received a total of 202 grant applications in the recent cycle. Similar to the previous grant cycle, there was high demand for *Individual Artist Projects* grants, with a total of 49 applications. The high volume of applications was received even with strategic changes to this grant category. In order to attempt funding a higher percentage of applicants, the Individual Artist Projects grant piloted a two-year split among artistic disciplines; artists could apply for projects in film and new media, multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary, social practice, and visual arts disciplines in FY26, and dance, folk and traditional arts, literary arts, music, and theater projects in FY27. Hoping to reduce the applicant pool by 50% with this strategy, however, it only reduced the applicant pool by approximately 15%.

The *Community Festivals* category received 57 applications, a 33% increase from the last cycle which had 43 applications. The City has consistently included \$158,315 in its budget for this program category. In previous years, the Council has provided additional funds to bring the total allocation up to \$200,000, however, for FY26, no additional funds were appropriated to the *Community Festivals* grant category due to the City's

fiscal constraints. This combination of a larger application pool and limited funding resulted in the program being able to fund fewer applications (29 funded in 2026 vs. 34 funded in 2025) than in previous years.

The FY26/27 *General Operating Support* grant category received 78 applications from Berkeley’s arts and cultural organizations, representing a total request amount of \$769,285. The Grants Subcommittee opted to fund all *eligible* applications, with most awards at \$4,000.72 each. All told, 72 Berkeley-based arts and cultural organizations were awarded in this grant category.

The new *Arts Programs* grant category received a total of 18 applications, all from nonprofit organizations not previously funded by the City’s Civic Arts program. This grant program, anticipated to be offered for a second year, was initially funded by a \$40,000 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) award received in November 2024, with matching City of Berkeley General Fund contributions of \$40,000, creating a total program budget of \$80,000 intended to fund sixteen \$5,000 projects for arts and cultural activities in Berkeley. A four-member panel reviewed and scored all eligible applications and convened on May 21, 2025, to discuss the submissions, despite the NEA’s withdrawal of their grant award on May 2, 2025, as there remained hope that the withdrawal could be successfully appealed. However, after Civic Arts filed an appeal with the NEA on May 9, 2025, a final determination upholding the federal grant withdrawal was issued on August 20, 2025, prompting the cancellation of the *Arts Programs* grant category for FY26 due to the absence of funding.

The combination of increased applications and funding constraints led to smaller individual award amounts in both the *Festivals* and the *General Operating Support* grant categories for FY26. Recognizing the current financial challenges facing arts organizations, the Civic Arts Commission made the strategic decision to fund all eligible *General Operating Support* applicants this year, resulting in a greater number of grantees in this category but with necessarily smaller individual awards.

BACKGROUND

The Civic Arts FY26 grant application period started January 6, 2025 and had staggered application deadlines for each grant category (see table below):

<i>FY25 Civic Arts Grant Program Category</i>	<i>Grant Application Deadline</i>
Individual Artist Projects	February 19, 2025
Arts Programs	February 26, 2025
Community Festivals	March 5, 2025
General Operating Support	March 12, 2025

In January 2025, at the beginning of the application period, Civic Arts staff held four grant webinars (one workshop for each grant category) to inform applicants about eligibility, application requirements, and to provide instruction on using the online grants submittal and management system. All webinars were held virtually using Zoom

Webinar. Recordings of the webinars were also made available on the Civic Arts website for applicants' reference.

To evaluate the grant applications, Civic Arts staff selected panelists from a Civic Arts Commission-approved pool of potential panelists. The pool consists of individuals from the greater Bay Area who have substantial backgrounds in arts and culture and a demonstrated commitment to cultural equity. All panelists participated in an orientation and training for their panel service. Between May 13 and June 4, 2025, staff conducted five grant review panel meetings via Zoom webinar. Panelists independently evaluated and scored applications relative to the review criteria prior to the panel meetings and discussed their evaluations with fellow panelists during the meetings.

At the conclusion of the grant review process, the compiled panel scores were presented to the Civic Arts Commission's Grants Subcommittee. The Subcommittee determined award recommendations based on application scores, the grant program guidelines, funding criteria, and available funding. The Grants Subcommittee's award amount recommendations were then forwarded to the full Civic Arts Commission for approval on June 25, 2025. Civic Arts staff communicated the grant award amount recommendations to all applicants via email after each Civic Arts Commission meeting. Grant award approvals took place at the following meetings, with the following commission votes at the June 25, 2025 Civic Arts Commission meeting.

Action Item: *FY26 Individual Artist Projects Grant Awards*

M/S/C (Bullwinkel/Blecher) to approve FY26 Individual Artist Projects Grant Awards.

Vote: Ayes — Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Montgomery, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — None; Absent — Pineda, Scott.

Public Comment: 4

Action Item: *FY26 Community Festivals Grant Awards*

M/S/C (Bullwinkel/Blecher) to approve both scenarios for the FY26 Community Festivals Grant Awards.

Vote: Ayes — Blecher, Bullwinkel, Montgomery, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — None; Recuse — Bachrach; Absent — Pineda, Scott.

Public Comment: 2

Action Item: *FY26 General Operating Support Grant Awards*

M/S/C (Blecher/Bullwinkel) to approve FY26 General Operating Support Grant Awards.

Vote: Ayes — Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Montgomery, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — None; Absent — Pineda, Scott.

Public Comment: 2

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

None.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The Civic Arts *General Operating Support* grant is awarded on a two-year basis to arts organizations and includes an annual amount granted in both fiscal years; *Individual Artist Projects* and *Community Festival* grants are awarded on an annual basis and include funding for one year. Staff plans to implement the annual Civic Arts grant application and review process for Fiscal Year 2027 beginning in fall 2025. The grant cycle for FY26 will be substantially similar to this year's cycle and will culminate with the Civic Arts Commission's approval of the FY27 grant award amounts in June 2026. Staff will apply for future National Endowment for the Arts funds—if available—to once again offer funding in the *Arts Programs* grant category. Staff has also applied for funds from the California Arts Council to support this category of grants programming and is awaiting a funding decision at this time.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The City's annual budget typically includes an allocation of \$500,000 for Civic Arts Grants to Arts Organizations and Individual Artists and \$158,315 for Community Festival grants. To expand future grant opportunities, staff has applied for federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts to reestablish the *Arts Programs* grant category in FY27, with notification of award or decline expected in November 2025, and has also applied to the California Arts Council for regranting funds, with results anticipated in late 2025.

CONTACT PERSON

Hilary Annah, Civic Arts, Office of Economic Development, 510-981-7539

Attachment:

1. FY26 Civic Arts Grantees



FY26 Individual Artist Projects (10 total)

Artist/Payee	District	Discipline	Award
Andrei Valladolid	District 3	Film and New Media	\$5,000
Angeline Marie Michael Meitzler	District 2	Film and New Media	\$5,000
Kimberlee Koym-Murteira	District 8	Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary	\$5,000
Emmanuele Allamani	District 3	Film and New Media	\$5,000
Niko Alexander	District 2	Visual Arts	\$5,000
Nimisha Doongarwal	District 3	Visual Arts	\$5,000
Shiree Dyson	District 2	Social Practice	\$5,000
Tess Rubinstein	District 4	Visual Arts	\$5,000
Wendy Reid	District 5	Social Practice	\$5,000
Wilma Wyss	District 5	Visual Arts	\$5,000
			\$50,000

FY26 Community Festivals (29 total)

Festival	District	Payee	Award
33rd Annual Indigenous Peoples Day Powwow & Indian Market	District 4	Kala Art Institute	\$4,900
7th Annual California Native Ways — California Indian Arts & Cultural Festival	District 1	Earth Island Institute	\$6,300
Bay Area Book Festival	District 4	Foundation for the Future of Literature and Literacy (dba Bay Area Book Festival)	\$6,300
	District 1		
	District 2		
	District 3		
	District 4		
	District 5		
	District 6		
	District 7		
Berkeley Bird Festival	District 8	Golden Gate Bird Alliance	\$5,600
Berkeley California Juneteenth Festival	District 3	Berkeley Juneteenth Association, Inc	\$4,900
Berkeley Festival & Exhibition	District 7		
	District 4	The San Francisco Early Music Society	\$6,300

Berkeley Old Time Music Convention	District 1 District 3 District 4	Ashkenaz Music & Dance Community Center	\$4,900
Berkeley Poetry Festival	District 2 District 4	Poetry Flash	\$5,600
Black Women's Roots Festival	District 4	Intersection for the Arts	\$5,600
BORP Adaptive Sports Expo	District 1 District 2	BORP Adaptive Sports and Recreation	\$5,000
Community & Culture Day	District 1	Ashkenaz Music & Dance Community Center	\$7,000
Community Health Day- The Art of Collective Healing	District 2	Berkeley Herbal Center	\$5,600
Community Music Day	District 1	Crowden Music Center	\$4,900
Dia de los Muertos 2025	District 4	R.I.S.E.	\$6,300
Earth Day Interfaith Concert and Jam		Sacred Music Fellowship	\$4,900
EBCLC's Fall Legal Festival	District 3	East Bay Community Law Center	\$6,300
Fist Up Film Festival	District 8	Freedom Bound Center	\$5,600
Freight Education Fest	District 4	Berkeley Society for the Preservation of Traditional Music (dba The Freight)	\$5,600
La Peña Summer Tianguis and Community Block Party	District 8	La Peña Cultural Center, Inc	\$7,000
Maya's Spring Music Festival	District 3	Maya's Music Therapy Fund	\$1,600
North Shattuck Block Party	District 4 District 5	Montclair Village Association	\$4,900
San Lázaro-Babalúayé Festival	District 1	Herencia Guantanamera	\$4,900
SF Bay Brazilian Day & Lavagem Festival 2025	District 4	BrasArte the Damasceno Brazilian Cultural Exchange	\$4,900
Solano Avenue Stroll	District 5	Solano Avenue Association	\$4,900
The Berkeley Cake Walk	District 2	30th and West Live Work Community Arts Center, Inc	\$7,000
The Gilman District Street Fair	District 1	Berkeley Chamber Foundation	\$4,900
Voice of Roma's Herdeljezi Festival	District 1	Voice of Roma	\$5,600
West Berkeley Community Print Festival	District 2	Kala Art Institute	\$4,900
West Side De Berkeley Festival and Car Show	District 2	West Side De Berkeley Car Club	\$6,300
			\$158,500

FY26 General Operating Support (72 total)

Applicant	District	Fiscal Sponsor/Payee (if different than Applicant)	Award
Actors Ensemble	District 3		\$4,000
Alternative Music Foundation	District 1		\$3,500
Anatolian Arts Institute	District 5		\$4,000
Ashkenaz Music & Dance Community Center	District 1		\$8,000
AXIS Dance Company	District 1		\$10,000
BELLA MUSICA INC	District 7		\$2,000
Berkeley Art Center Association	District 5		\$4,000
Berkeley Capoeira Collective, Inc	District 1	Fractured Atlas	\$3,914
Berkeley Chamber Performances	District 5		\$3,000
Berkeley Choro Ensemble	District 5	IntermusicSF	\$4,000
Berkeley Commonplace	District 3		\$4,000
Berkeley Community Chorus & Orchestra	District 4		\$4,000
Berkeley Community Media	District 4		\$4,000
Berkeley Juneteenth Association, Inc	District 3		\$8,000
Berkeley Playhouse, Inc	District 8		\$8,000
Berkeley Poetry Festival	District 2	Poetry Flash	\$10,000
Berkeley Repertory Theatre	District 4		\$8,000
Berkeley Society for the Preservation of Traditional Music (dba The Freight)	District 4		\$8,000
Berkeley Symphony Orchestra	District 4		\$4,000
Black Repertory Group	District 3		\$4,000
BrasArte the Damasceno Brazilian Cultural Exchange	District 1		\$9,000
California Institute for Community, Art & Nature	District 3	Earth Island Institute	\$10,000
California Jazz Conservatory	District 5		\$4,000
Capoeira Arts Foundation	District 1		\$9,000
Cazadero Performing Arts Camp	District 5		\$3,600
Central Works	District 7		\$8,000
Danse Lumière	District 1	Poetry Flash	\$4,000
David Brower Center	District 4		\$4,000
Four Seasons Arts, Inc	District 8		\$10,000
Gamelan Sekar Jaya	District 8		\$4,000

Girls Garage	District 2		\$10,000
Heyday	District 1		\$8,000
Holistic Honu Wellness Center	District 1		\$10,000
Inferno Theatre	District 3		\$4,000
JUNTOS Collective, Inc	District 1		\$8,000
Kairos Music Academy	District 5		\$4,000
Kala Art Institute	District 2		\$9,000
Korsa Musical Theater	District 2		\$4,000
La Peña Community Chorus	District 8		\$8,000
La Peña Cultural Center, Inc.	District 8		\$10,000
Lark Traditional Arts	District 3		\$4,000
Left Margin LIT	District 5	Poetry Flash	\$8,000
Luna Kids Dance, Inc (dba Luna Dance and Creativity)	District 2		\$9,000
Makers Paradise	District 4		\$3,500
Mbira	District 4		\$8,000
New Apollo Youth Symphony Orchestra Inc	District 2		\$4,000
pateldanceworks	District 8	Shawl-Anderson Dance Center	\$8,000
Play Cafe, Inc	District 1		\$8,000
PlayGround	District 3		\$4,000
Poetry Flash	District 1		\$9,000
Sacred & Profane Chamber Chorus	District 3		\$4,000
Sacred Music Fellowship	District 2		\$4,000
Sage and Needles	District 2		\$8,000
School of The Getdown	District 3	Intersection for The Arts	\$10,000
Sense Object	District 1		\$9,000
Shawl-Anderson Dance Center	District 8		\$7,200
Shotgun Players	District 3		\$9,000
The Berkeley FILM Foundation	District 2		\$9,000
The CODEX Foundation	District 1		\$8,000
The Mahea Uchiyama Center for International Dance	District 4		\$4,000
The Potters' Studio	District 1		\$4,000
The Regents of the University of California at Berkeley / Cal Performances	District 7		\$4,000
The San Francisco Early Music Society	District 7		\$4,000
Theatre Lunatico	District 6		\$4,000
Transit Books	District 2		\$4,000

UC Alumni Chorus	District 6		\$4,000
Vital Arts	District 5		\$9,000
West Edge Opera	District 5		\$4,000
Wild Projects	District 2		\$4,000
Women Eco Artists Dialog	District 2		\$10,000
Young People's Symphony Orchestra Association	District 4		\$4,000
Youth Spirit Artworks	District 3		\$8,000

\$449,714

