Civic Arts Commission

Civic Arts Commission Meeting
Wednesday, December 3, 2025
6:00 PM
Meeting Location: Tarea Hall Pittman South Branch Library
1901 Russell St, Berkeley, CA 94703

Agenda

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **ROLL CALL**
   Jonathan Bachrach, District 1
   Dana Blecher (Vice Chair), District 6
   Lisa Bullwinkel, District 4
   Devi Dutta-Choudhury, Mayor
   Audrey Truc-Dao Kramer, District 7
   Peter Montgomery, District 8
   Eduardo Pineda, District 5
   Sean Vaughn Scott, District 3
   Cameron Woo (Chair), District 2

3. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**
   The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of Huchiun (*Hooch-yoon*), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (*Cho-chen-yo*) speaking Ohlone (*Oh-low-nee*) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona (*Vuh-roh-nuh*) Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. We acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan (*Lih-Shawn*) Tribe and create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this Land Acknowledgement

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT** (for items not on the agenda)

5. **COMMUNICATION** (received from the public for items not on the agenda)
   None

6. **CHAIR'S REPORT**
   a) Cultural District State Designation Application
   b) Update on Joint Subcommittee's Affordable Housing for Artists Recommendations Report to Council
   c) Chair transition planning

7. **PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS** (All items for presentation, discussion, and possible action)

   a) **Presentation Item:** Economic Impact Studies: Berkeley's Creative Economy and Assessment of Pandemic Relief Investments in the Arts Sector (20 minutes)
   Introduced by Jen Lovvorn, Chief Cultural Affairs Officer. Presented by Alissa Dubetz, CVL Economics. (Attachments 1 & 2)
   Public Comment

   b) **Action Item:** Event Producers Policy Recommendations (20 minutes)
   Introduced by Lisa Bullwinkel, Policy Subcommittee Chair (Attachments 3 & 4)
   Recommendation: Approval of Event Producers Policy Recommendations.
   Public Comment

   c) **Action Item:** FY27 Individual Artist Projects grant guidelines (7 minutes)
   Introduced by Dana Blecher, Grants Subcommittee Chair (Attachment 5)
   Recommendation: Approval of FY27 Individual Artist Projects grant guidelines.
   Public Comment

   d) **Action Item:** FY27 Community Festivals grant guidelines (7 minutes)
   Introduced by Dana Blecher, Grants Subcommittee Chair (Attachment 6)
   Recommendation: Approval of FY27 Community Festivals grant guidelines.
   Public Comment

   e) **Action Item:** FY27 Arts Programs grant guidelines (7 minutes)
   Introduced by Dana Blecher, Grants Subcommittee Chair (Attachment 7)
   Recommendation: Approval of FY27 Arts Programs grant guidelines.
   Public Comment

f) **Action Item:** Slate of Grants Panelists (5 minutes)
Introduced by Hilary Amnah, Grants Program Lead (Attachment 8)
Recommendation: Approval of Slate of Grants Panelists.
Public Comment

g) **Action Item:** Cube Space exhibition proposal by Ahn Lee: January - March 2026 (12 minutes)
Introduced by Eduardo Pineda, Public Art Subcommittee Chair (Attachment 9)
Recommendation: Approval of Cube Space exhibition proposal by Ahn Lee: January - March 2026.
Public Comment

h) **Action Item:** South Berkeley Senior Center Project Plan (12 minutes)
Introduced by Eduardo Pineda, Public Art Subcommittee Chair (Attachment 10)
Recommendation: Approval of South Berkeley Senior Center Project Plan.
Public Comment

i) **Action Item:** 2026 Civic Arts Commission meeting schedule (5 minutes)
Introduced by Jen Lovvorn, Commission Secretary (Attachment 11)
Recommendation: Approval of 2026 Civic Arts Commission meeting schedule.
Public Comment

j) **Action Item:** Subcommittee Appointments: Devi Dutta-Choudhury to Public Art Subcommittee and Design Review Committee; and Audrey Truc-Dao Kramer to Policy Subcommittee (5 minutes)
Introduced by Cameron Woo, Commission Chair
Recommendation: Approval of Subcommittee Appointments: Devi Dutta-Choudhury to Public Art Subcommittee and Design Review Committee; and Audrey Truc-Dao Kramer to Policy Subcommittee.
Public Comment

k) **Action Item:** 2026-2027 City of Berkeley Poet Laureate Selection (5 minutes)
Introduced by Jen Lovvorn, Commission Secretary
Recommendation: Approval of 2026-2027 City of Berkeley Poet Laureate Selection (name to be announced at meeting).
Public Comment

l) **Discussion Item:** Turtle Island Monument update and discussion (10 minutes)
Introduced by Lisa Bullwinkel, Policy Subcommittee Chair
Public Comment

m) **Discussion Item:** Commissioner spotlights on social media (5 minutes)

Introduced by Commissioner Audrey Truc-Dao Kramer
Public Comment

n) **Report Item:** Private Percent for Art Quarterly Report (3 minutes)
Presented by Jen Lovvorn, Chief Cultural Affairs Officer (Attachment 12)
Public Comment

o) **Report Item:** Festival Quarterly Report (3 minutes)
Presented by Hilary Amnah, Grants Program Lead (Attachment 13)
Public Comment

8. STAFF REPORT

a) Public Art Program Updates, Mark Salinas (8 minutes)

b) Grants Program Updates, Hilary Amnah (5 minutes)

c) Civic Arts Program Updates, Jen Lovvorn (5 minutes)

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Grants
- Dana Blecher, Chair
- Lisa Bullwinkel
- Cameron Woo

b) Public Art
- Eduardo Pineda, Chair
- Jonathan Bachrach
- Devi Dutta-Choudhury

c) Policy Subcommittee
- Lisa Bullwinkel, Chair
- Dana Blecher
- Cameron Woo

d) Representative on Design Review Committee
- Cameron Woo

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) Draft Minutes of September 17, 2025 Meeting (Attachment 14)
From: Commission Secretary
Recommendation: Approval of September 17, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Public Comment

11. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

12. ADJOURNMENT

Attachments:

1. Berkeley's Creative Economy Impact Report
2. Assessment of Pandemic Relief Investments in the Arts Sector
3. Event Producers Policy Recommendations
4. Protecting Special Events Letter to Council
5. FY27 Individual Artist Projects grant guidelines
6. FY27 Community Festivals grant guidelines
7. FY27 Arts Programs grant guidelines
8. Slate of Grants Panelists
9. Cube Space exhibition proposal by Ahn Lee
10. South Berkeley Senior Center Project Plan
11. 2026 Civic Arts Commission meeting schedule
12. Private Percent for Art Quarterly Report
13. Festival Quarterly Report
14. Draft Minutes of September 17, 2025 Meeting

Staff Contact:
Jennifer Lovvorn
Secretary to the Civic Arts Commission
Berkeley, CA 94704
Telephone (510) 981-7533
jlovvorn@berkeleyca.gov

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ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION:

This meeting is being held in a wheelchair accessible location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the ADA Program Coordinator by phone (510) 981-6418 or by TTY/TDD (510) 981-6347 at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

Berkeley Creative Economy Economic Impact Analysis

DECEMBER 2025



CVL ECONOMICS



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KEY FINDINGS

The City of Berkeley's creative economy represents a vital economic force that extends far beyond traditional notions of arts and culture. The creative economy consists of industries whose primary purpose is to produce or enable cultural expression, artistic content, design, and other creative goods and services.

It spans across eight distinct subsectors: Visual & Performing Arts, Architecture & Design, Entertainment & Digital Media, Publishing & Printing, Communication Design, Post-Secondary Arts Education, Creative Goods & Decorative Arts, and Fashion. Despite facing significant pandemic-related challenges, these subsectors continue to generate substantial economic activity, support thousands of jobs, and contribute meaningfully to Berkeley's fiscal health. This analysis examines how the sector has weathered the pandemic's disruptions and quantifies its current economic contributions. The findings summarized below provide essential data for policymakers, arts organizations, and community stakeholders working to chart a sustainable path forward for the arts and culture sector in Berkeley.

BUSINESS COUNTS

As of 2025, there are approximately 650 creative economy businesses in Berkeley (out of 12,800 total businesses), about 30% of which are nonprofit organizations.

There are 193 creative economy nonprofit organizations in the City of Berkeley. This share is notably high compared to the share of nonprofits across all industries (11%) in the city.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

In 2024, Berkeley's creative economy directly employed 8,186 workers, accounting for 7.3% of its total workforce of 111,640 jobs.[1]

Visual & Performing Arts is by far the largest subsector, accounting for more than half of all jobs (4,567 jobs, or 55.8% of the creative economy workforce). Other significant subsectors include Architecture & Design (908 jobs; 11.1%), Entertainment & Digital Media (791 jobs; 9.7%), and Publishing & Printing (562 jobs; 6.9%). Communication Design (495 jobs; 6.0%), Post-Secondary Arts Education (377 jobs; 4.6%), Creative Goods & Decorative Arts (325 jobs; 4.0%), and Fashion (161 jobs; 2.0%), comprise smaller shares but are still notable.

Nearly 70% of Berkeley's 8,186 creative economy workers are self-employed or gig-based, underscoring the sector's reliance on non-traditional work arrangements.

While project-based creative work fosters innovation and independence, it also often comes with irregular income and limited protections. This pattern is most pronounced in the Visual & Performing Arts subsector, where 84% of jobs are self-employed or gig-based, while fields like Architecture & Design and Entertainment & Digital Media lean more on salaried roles with more dependable hours and predictable schedules.

Berkeley's creative economy employment surged in the years before the pandemic, but current employment levels remain 17% below the 2018 peak. Berkeley's creative economy employment has declined year after year, while other neighboring cities have regained some ground.

After peaking with 9,850 creative economy jobs in 2018, Berkeley's 2024 total of 8,186 jobs has fallen back to roughly its 2013 level of 8,160 jobs.

Between 2014 and 2018, Berkeley's creative economy employment grew 16%, outpacing industry growth in San Francisco (12%), San Jose (10%), and Oakland (4%). That momentum, however, was abruptly cut short in early 2020. While all Bay Area creative economies contracted with the onset of the pandemic, Berkeley's downturn has proven far more persistent. San Francisco and San Jose have since regained some of their losses, but Berkeley's creative economy employment has continued to decline through 2024.

1 Job count includes salaried (full- and part-time), self-employed, and gig workers. Within this, Berkeley's salaried workforce accounted for 2,574 jobs in the creative economy and 68,126 jobs across the overall economy in 2024.

Berkeley's creative economy decline also sits in contrast to the city's overall economy, which, on average, has mostly recovered from the pandemic.

The city's overall economy sits about 3% above its 2019 employment level. By contrast, the city's creative economy remains 13% below its pre-pandemic baseline.

This divergence reflects the unique composition of Berkeley's creative economy, which comprises a relatively high concentration of Visual & Performing Arts employment, a sector that relies heavily on live, in-person activity, gig and contract work, and nonprofit structures—factors that made it more vulnerable to prolonged disruption.

Berkeley's creative sector is heavily concentrated in Visual & Performing Arts (56%), reflecting a reliance on live, in-person activity and gig or contract work within a nonprofit-heavy structure. By contrast, San Francisco leans more toward Entertainment & Digital Media (38%), driven by streaming, software publishing, and broadcasting.

Still, today, Berkeley maintains a greater share of creative economy employment relative to its total workforce than Oakland, San Jose, and California overall, and is only slightly below San Francisco.

Berkeley's 7.3% creative economy share of its total workforce is a higher concentration than in Oakland (4.2%), San Jose (2.5%), and California overall (4.8%), but trails San Francisco (7.6%).

THE ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACT OF BERKELEY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

Berkeley's creative economy is an essential part of the city's economy.

Even in a weakened state, Berkeley's creative economy remains a critical driver of the City's economic activity. Its impact ripples throughout the economy as arts organizations purchase goods and services, and workers spend their earnings locally, sustaining activity across many industries **(multiplier effect)**. Some of this spending "leaks" beyond city borders to suppliers and markets in other parts of the East Bay (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties), where the total impact grows even larger **(regional spillover effect)**. Together, these multiplier and spillover effects underscore the creative sector's role as both a local driver and a regional economic force.

In 2024, including multiplier effects in other industries, Berkeley's creative economy generated a total impact of 8,437 jobs (7.6% of total jobs), $537.5 million in labor income (5.7% of total labor income), and $1.0 billion in contributions to city gross regional product (value added), or approximately 7.9% of the total citywide.

In other words, each creative job in Berkeley generated about $66,000 in labor income, and $125,000 in value added (contributions to Berkeley's gross regional product) citywide.

An additional 5,605 jobs were supported by Berkeley's creative economy in other parts of the East Bay beyond city limits. This represents the spillover effect of Berkeley's creative economy—spending that originates in Berkeley but flows outward to suppliers, contractors, and consumer markets elsewhere in the region.

In 2024, every $1 of Civic Arts Grant funding to Berkeley's organizations, festivals, and individual artists catalyzed $197 in total economic activity across the city.

In FY2024, the City of Berkeley awarded $698,782 to 97 Berkeley arts and culture organizations, festivals, and individuals. This support underpinned the operations of 86 organizations and festivals (collectively generating over $130 million in operating revenue), as well as 11 artists through arts works projects.

Overall, the City's investments helped drive about 7.5% of the total economic activity ($1.8 billion) generated by Berkeley's creative economy.

Based on data from 37 Berkeley arts and culture nonprofit organizations, visitors to these institutions generate approximately $56 million in additional local spending each year across other sectors of the city's economy.

These 37 arts and culture organizations collectively attract about 1.4 million attendees annually, whose event-related spending extends well beyond tickets to these institutions—including nearly $30 million at nearby food and drink establishments, $7.6 million at retail stores, $7.2 million on local transportation, and $3.5 million on lodging.

In 2024, Berkeley's creative economy had a hand in generating $10.7 million in tax revenues, representing 3.9% of the City's tax base.

In FY2024, Berkeley's creative economy, including the impact of multiplier effects, contributed $4.6 million in property taxes, $2.9 million in sales taxes, and $3.2 million in various other taxes to the City.



INTRODUCTION

Berkeley's creative economy is central to local prosperity, but it also stands at a critical juncture. While creative industries nationwide continue to demonstrate remarkable resilience and growth, Berkeley's own arts and culture sector faces significant headwinds that threaten its role as both an economic driver and a cornerstone of the city's cultural identity.

The COVID-19 pandemic took a significant toll on Berkeley's creative economy, and its recovery has diverged from the growth patterns that once positioned Berkeley as a regional creative economy leader. Understanding both the current contributions and the emerging challenges facing this sector is essential for arts administrators, policymakers, arts organizations, and community stakeholders working to chart a sustainable path forward.





DEFINING THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

The creative economy refers to the industries whose primary purpose is to produce or enable cultural expression, artistic content, design, and other creative goods and services. The creative economy encompasses a wide range of industries that fall within eight subsectors where cultural expression, design, and creative innovation are central to economic value. As defined in Figure 1, these subsectors are Visual & Performing Arts, Architecture & Design, Entertainment & Digital Media, Publishing & Printing, Communication Design, Post-Secondary Arts Education, Creative Goods & Decorative Arts, and Fashion.[2]

FIGURE 1: CREATIVE ECONOMY SUBSECTORS

SUBSECTOR	DESCRIPTION
VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS	Entities engaged in services such as dance and theater companies, art dealers, museums, and activities involving independent artists, writers, and performers.
ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN	Entities providing architectural, drafting, interior design, industrial design, and landscape design services.
ENTERTAINMENT & DIGITAL MEDIA	Entities engaged in motion picture and video production, post-production services, sound recording studios, radio broadcasting, and digital streaming platforms.
PUBLISHING & PRINTING	Entities producing commercial printing, book printing, and publishing of books, periodicals, newspapers, directories, and mailing lists.
COMMUNICATION DESIGN	Entities engaged in graphic design, advertising agencies, photography studios, and commercial photography services.
POST-SECONDARY ARTS EDUCATION	Entities providing arts instruction in dance, drama, music, and visual arts (excluding institutions that grant diplomas or degrees).
CREATIVE GOODS & DECORATIVE ARTS	Entities producing ceramics, household furniture, rugs, decorative objects, toys, and games.
FASHION	Entities engaged in textile and apparel manufacturing, jewelry and silverware production, and related fashion goods and services.

Source: CVL Economics.

2 See Appendix A.1 for detailed list of industry classification codes.



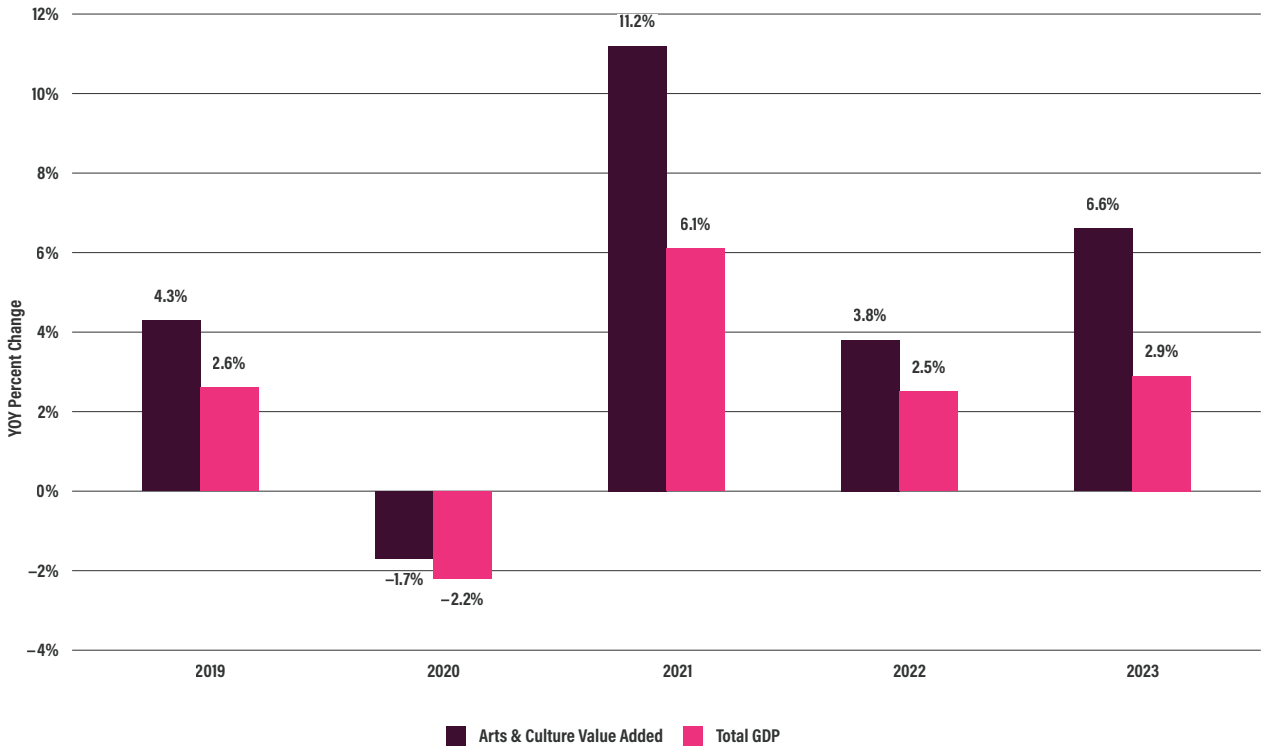
ECONOMIC CONTEXT: THE NATIONAL AND STATE PICTURE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

The creative economy has emerged as one of the most dynamic and resilient sectors in the U.S. economy, consistently demonstrating its capacity to drive growth and innovation. Far from being peripheral to economic development, the creative industries have proven themselves to be fundamental engines of prosperity, generating substantial employment, income, and economic output across communities nationwide—often outpacing the broader economy.

In fact, nationwide growth of real value added (contribution to gross domestic product) generated by the Arts & Culture sector[3] has consistently outperformed that of the overall U.S. economy each year since 2019 (Figure 2). In 2019, the sector grew 4.3% compared to the year prior, well ahead of the 2.6% increase in total U.S. gross domestic product (GDP). Even at the onset of the pandemic in 2020, nationwide Arts & Culture value added declined by just 1.7%, less than the overall economy's 2.2% contraction. The rebound that followed was especially striking: in 2021, Arts & Culture surged by 11.2%, nearly double the growth rate of total GDP. Growth continued in subsequent years, expanding by 3.8% in 2022 and 6.6% in 2023, again outpacing the national economy.

3 "Arts & Culture" as defined by the U.S. Bureau Economic Analysis.

FIGURE 2: NATIONWIDE YEAR-OVER-YEAR PERCENT CHANGE IN ARTS & CULTURE CONTRIBUTION TO GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (REAL VALUE ADDED) VS. TOTAL U.S. GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

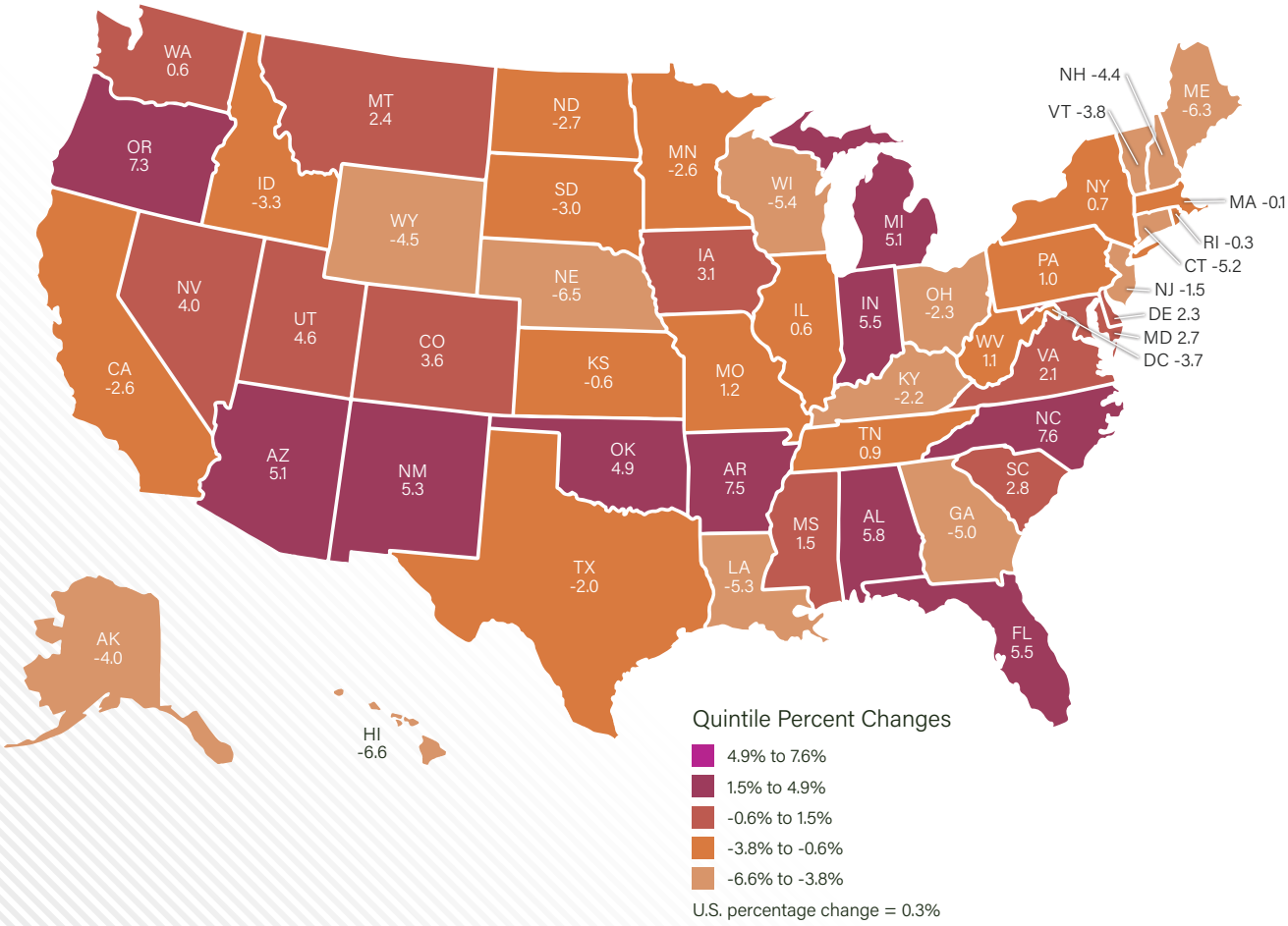


Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis Arts and Culture Satellite Account, CVL Economics.

While the national picture underscores the strength of the overall Arts & Culture sector, only some states are reaping the benefits—and California is not one. Many states posted strong gains in arts and cultural employment between 2022 and 2023 (Figure 3). North Carolina (+7.6%), Oregon (+7.3%), Florida (+5.5%), and New Mexico (+5.3%) were among the top performers, with other states like Arizona, Nevada, and Colorado showing decent growth. Washington and New York experienced minimal, but still positive growth in Arts & Culture employment.

California, by contrast, saw a 2.6% decline in Arts & Culture employment. This relative decline is striking for a state often regarded as a global hub for creativity and culture, and it signals a growing disconnect between California's reputation and its current trajectory. Historically, the arts and creative industries have been central to California's rise as a global economic powerhouse—anchored by industries like film, music, design, theatre, and digital media that helped define the state's economic strength. Yet today, the very sector that once symbolized California's competitive edge faces mounting challenges: high costs of living and doing business, policy barriers, outmigration of talent, and increasing incentives (e.g., tax breaks) offered by other jurisdictions.

FIGURE 3: PERCENT CHANGE IN ARTS & CULTURE EMPLOYMENT BY STATE | 2022–2023



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

This broader statewide decline provides an important backdrop for understanding Berkeley's own creative economy. As California struggles with high costs, policy hurdles, and growing competition from other states, local communities are feeling these pressures acutely—and Berkeley is no exception.

CREATIVE ECONOMY LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Berkeley's creative economy is both broad in scope and deeply embedded in the city's identity. As of September 2025, the City of Berkeley recorded 650 active business licenses in the creative sector industries, accounting for about 5% of all active licenses (12,783) in the city.[4] [5] These counts include private and nonprofit corporations, sole-ownerships, partnerships, and cooperatives.

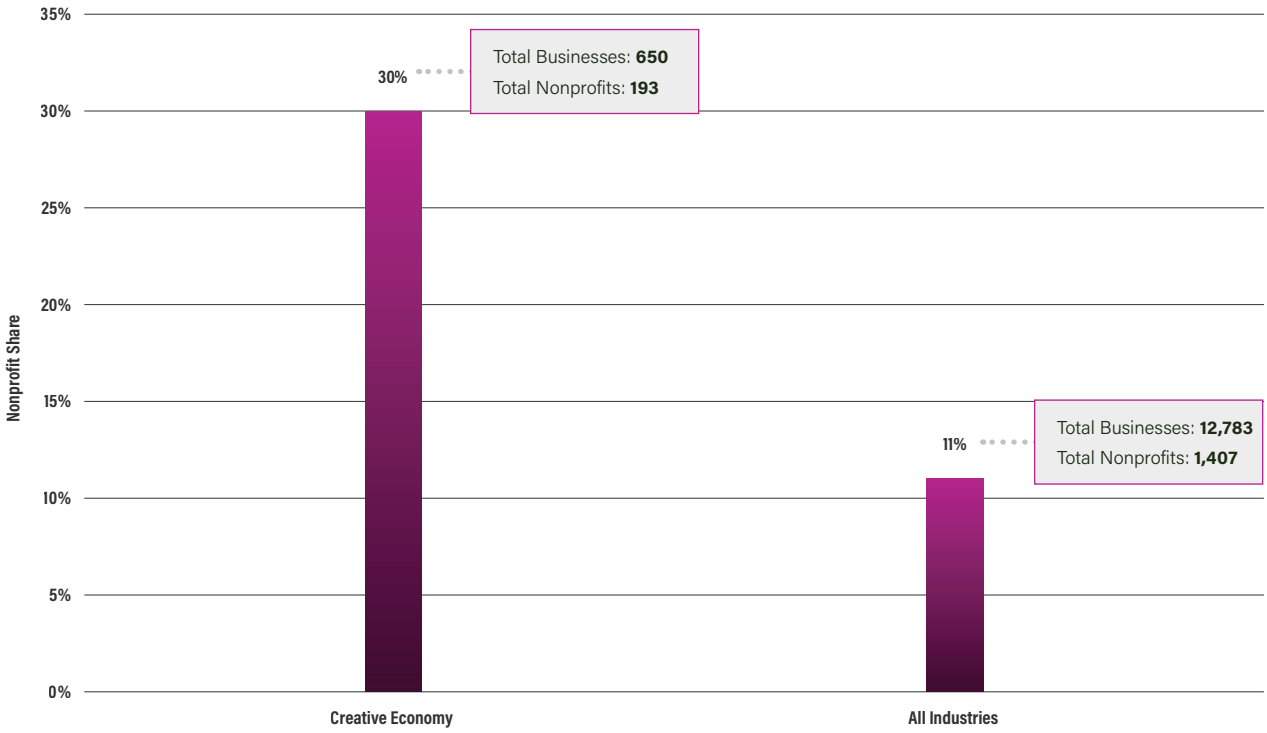
The nonprofit sector plays a particularly prominent role in Berkeley's creative economy compared to other industries. Analysis of Internal Revenue Service tax-exempt filings alongside local business license data shows that creative fields have a significantly higher share of nonprofit organizations than the citywide average across all industries (Figure 4). In total, nonprofits account for roughly 30% of Berkeley's creative economy organizations, compared to 11% of all businesses citywide.[6] **This structure has important implications: while it reflects the strong civic and cultural mission of Berkeley's creative sector, it also underscores the sector's reliance on contributed income, philanthropy, and public funding.**

4 City of Berkeley. *Business Licenses*. Accessed September 2025. https://data.cityofberkeley.info/Business/Business-Licenses/rwnf-bu3w/about_data.

5 See Appendix A.2 for further details on business count methodology.

6 See Appendix A.2 for further details on business count methodology.

FIGURE 4: SHARE OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN BERKELEY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY VS. ALL INDUSTRIES | 2025



Source: City of Berkeley Active Business License Data, Internal Revenue Service, CVL Economics.

CREATIVE ECONOMY EMPLOYMENT

In 2024, Berkeley's creative economy employed 8,186 jobs (Figure 5). Within the creative workforce, Visual & Performing Arts is by far the largest subsector, accounting for more than half of all jobs (55.8%). Other significant subsectors include Architecture & Design (11.1%), Entertainment & Digital Media (9.7%), and Publishing & Printing (6.9%). Smaller subsectors include Communication Design (6.0%), Post-Secondary Arts Education (4.6%), Creative Goods & Decorative Arts (4.0%), and Fashion (2.0%). Together, these fields form a dynamic ecosystem that extends well beyond traditional arts organizations—supporting innovation, attracting talent, and fueling the city's broader economic vibrancy.

Forms of Employment

The composition of Berkeley's creative workforce reflects not only the city's sectoral diversity but also the different ways people participate in creative work. As Figure 5 shows, jobs in the creative economy are distributed across three primary categories: salaried (W-2 employees), self-employed workers, and gig-based roles, as defined below.

- **Salaried Employment (W-2)**: Full-time and part-time jobs on payroll who receive a W-2 form, including both those covered by unemployment insurance (UI) programs (captured in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, or QCEW) and those not covered by UI programs (non-QCEW, such as certain small nonprofits, religious organizations, and others).

  Examples: *a full-time museum administrator, or a part-time stage manager employed by a theater.*

- **Self-Employed:** Individuals who work for themselves and are not on a payroll. This category is measured using IRS tax filings and Bureau of Economic Analysis proprietorship data and includes sole proprietors, freelancers, and independent contractors who typically file Schedule C income.

  Examples: *a freelance graphic designer running their own studio, or an independent architect who takes on client projects as their main source of income.*

- **Gig Employment:** A separate measure drawing from additional IRS non-employer filings that fall outside the standard self-employment category. This often includes freelancers, independent contractors, and sole proprietors who take on multiple short-term or project-based jobs. This category captures more contingent or supplemental work activity, often part-time or secondary. Including gig work is essential to understanding Berkeley's creative economy, where it represents a significant share of the arts and culture workforce.

  Examples: *an artist selling work occasionally on Etsy while holding another job, or a musician performing in one-off gigs or short-term productions while holding another source of employment.*

Each type of work carries its own opportunities and challenges, and together they form the backbone of Berkeley's cultural and creative ecosystem. In Berkeley, this dynamic is particularly visible in the Visual & Performing Arts subsector, where over 84% of jobs are self-employed or gig-based. By contrast, fields like Architecture & Design or Entertainment & Digital Media lean more heavily on salaried employment, providing relatively greater stability. Sectors such as Publishing & Printing, Communication Design, and Post-Secondary Arts Education fall in between, with a mix of W-2, self-employed, and gig roles that together illustrate the hybrid nature of creative work.

FIGURE 5: CREATIVE ECONOMY SUBSECTOR EMPLOYMENT COUNT BY WORKER TYPE IN BERKELEY | 2024

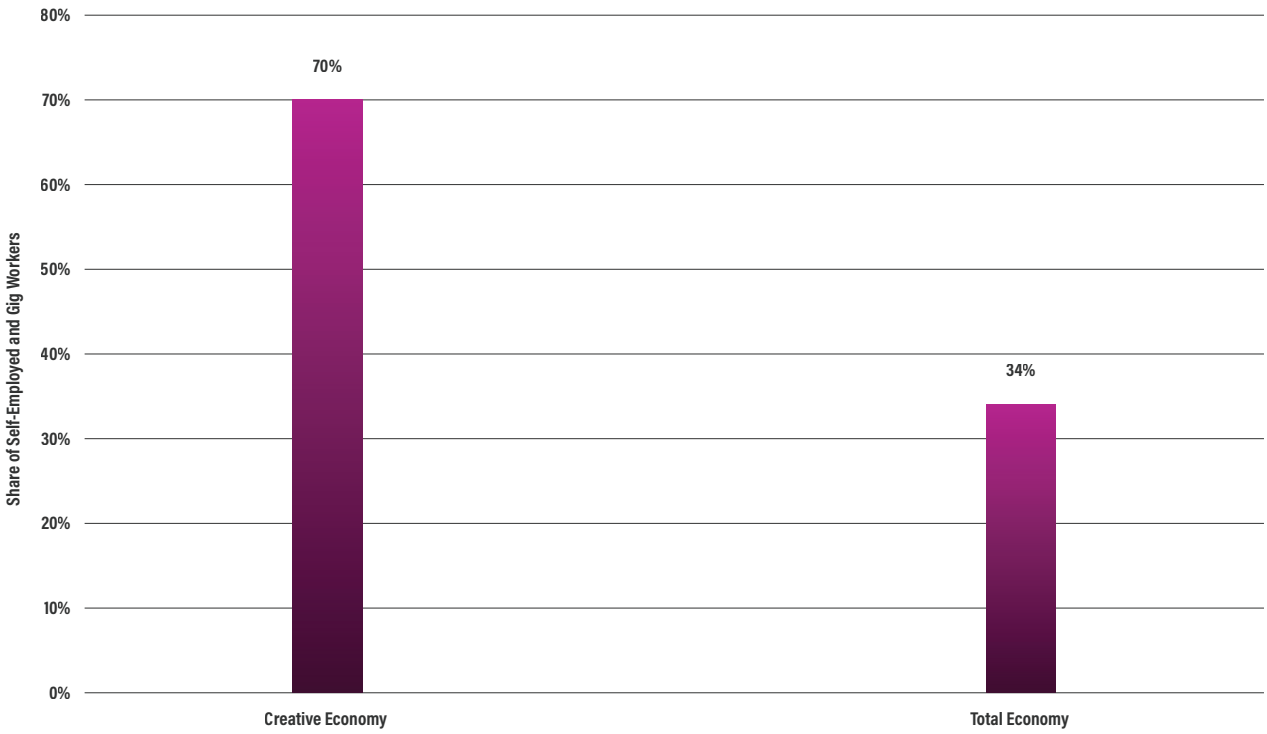
CREATIVE ECONOMY SUBSECTOR	SALARIED (W-2)	SELF-EMPLOYED	GIG	TOTAL	SHARE OF CREATIVE ECONOMY TOTAL
Visual & Performing Arts	718	827	3,022	**4,567**	**55.8%**
Architecture & Design	534	138	236	**908**	**11.1%**
Entertainment & Digital Media	478	159	154	**791**	**9.7%**
Printing & Publishing	193	43	326	**562**	**6.9%**
Communication Design	105	101	289	**495**	**6.0%**
Post-Secondary Arts Education	174	74	130	**377**	**4.6%**
Creative Goods & Decorative Arts	283	26	16	**325**	**4.0%**
Fashion	89	23	49	**161**	**2.0%**
Total Creative Economy	**2,574**	**1,391**	**4,222**	**8,186**	**-**

Note: Employment counts reflect the number of unique jobs and not individuals. In that sense, one individual can hold multiple jobs and therefore be counted more than once. This dynamic is especially prevalent in the "Gig" work category, where organizational models in industries like Visual & Performing Arts rely heavily on short-term, project-based, or seasonal hiring, and artists and performers often piece together income through multiple jobs.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, CVL Economics.

Unlike many other industries where traditional W-2 employment (salaried, with benefits) dominates, the creative economy is notable for its reliance on non-traditional work arrangements. Artists and creative workers are far more likely than the general workforce to be self-employed or gig-based (Figure 6). In Berkeley, nearly 70% of creative economy workers are self-employed or gig workers compared to 34% across the total economy. This reflects both the flexibility and precarity of the sector: while project-based and freelance work can create room for innovation and independence, it also often comes with irregular income, limited benefits, and less access to worker protections.

FIGURE 6: SHARE OF SELF-EMPLOYED AND GIG EMPLOYMENT FOR CREATIVE ECONOMY AND ALL INDUSTRIES IN BERKELEY | 2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, CVL Economics.

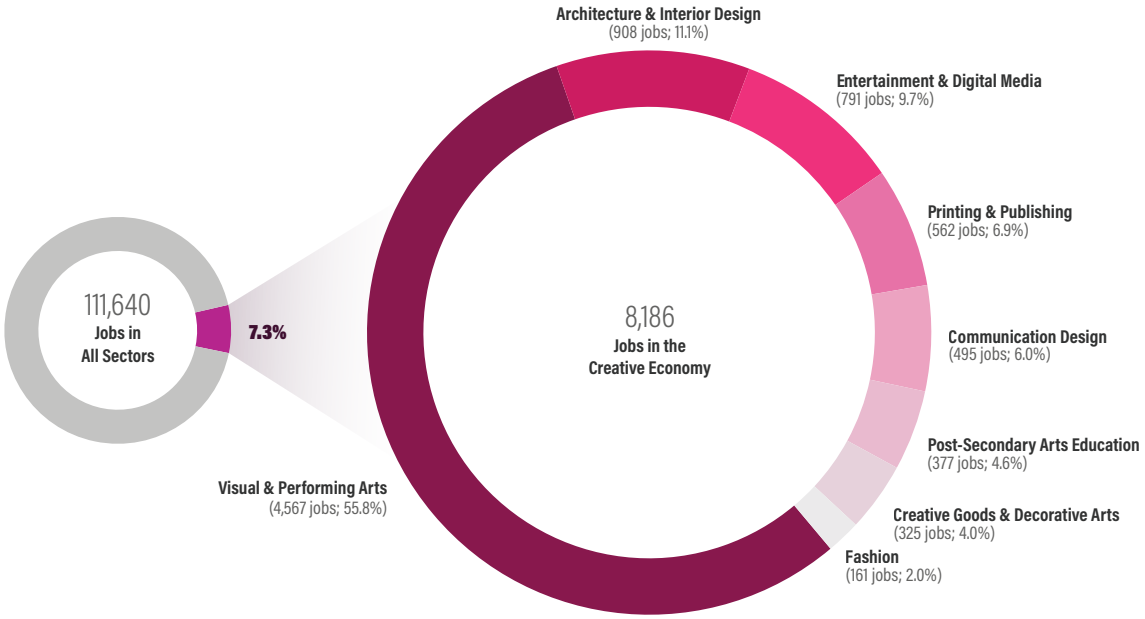
Berkeley's Creative Economy in the City's Broader Economic Landscape

Berkeley's creative economy is a critical part of the city's economic landscape, accounting for a significant share of total employment. While creative economy businesses accounted for 5% of all enterprises, they supported 7.3% of all employment citywide in 2024—8,186 out of the 111,640 total jobs across industries (Figure 7).[7]

Creative economy employment today has been declining year over year since the pandemic, following a period of strong growth in the years prior. From 2010 to 2018, Berkeley's creative sector expanded steadily, adding more than 2,300 jobs and peaking at nearly 9,850 positions (Figure 8). That momentum ended abruptly in 2020, when the pandemic caused steep job losses that erased much of the previous decade's gains. While employment has stabilized somewhat in recent years, 2024 levels remain just over 8,100 jobs—roughly on par with 2013.

7 See Appendix A.3 for detailed documentation of employment counts.

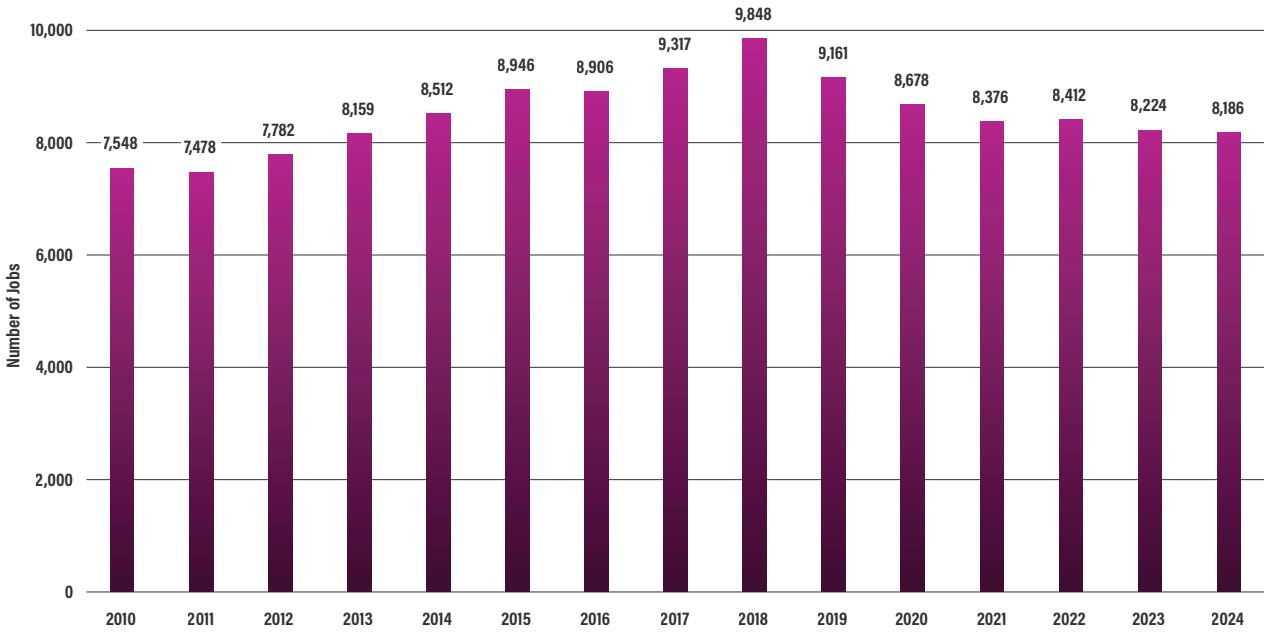
FIGURE 7: COMPOSITION OF CREATIVE SECTOR WORKFORCE IN BERKELEY | 2024



Note: Includes salaried, self-employed, and gig jobs in the creative economy and across all sectors. Employment counts reflect the number of unique jobs and not individuals. In that sense, one individual can hold multiple jobs and therefore be counted more than once. Berkeley salaried (QCEW) jobs total 2,574 in the creative economy and 68,126 in the overall economy.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, CVL Economics.

FIGURE 8: CREATIVE ECONOMY EMPLOYMENT IN BERKELEY | 2010–2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, CVL Economics.

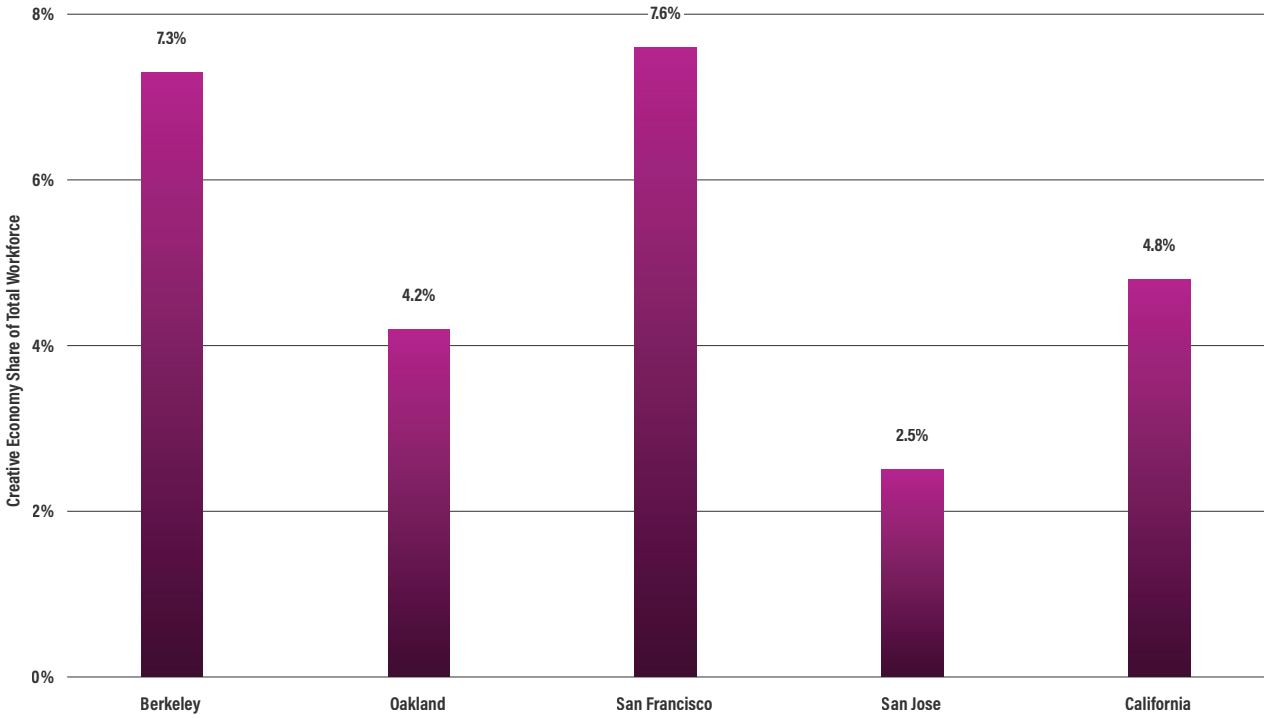


REGIONAL COMPARISONS

When compared to neighboring regions in the San Francisco Bay Area and the state as a whole, Berkeley's creative economy stands out. In 2024, it accounted for 7.3% of the city's total workforce—a larger share than in Oakland, San Jose, and California overall, though slightly trailing San Francisco (Figure 9).

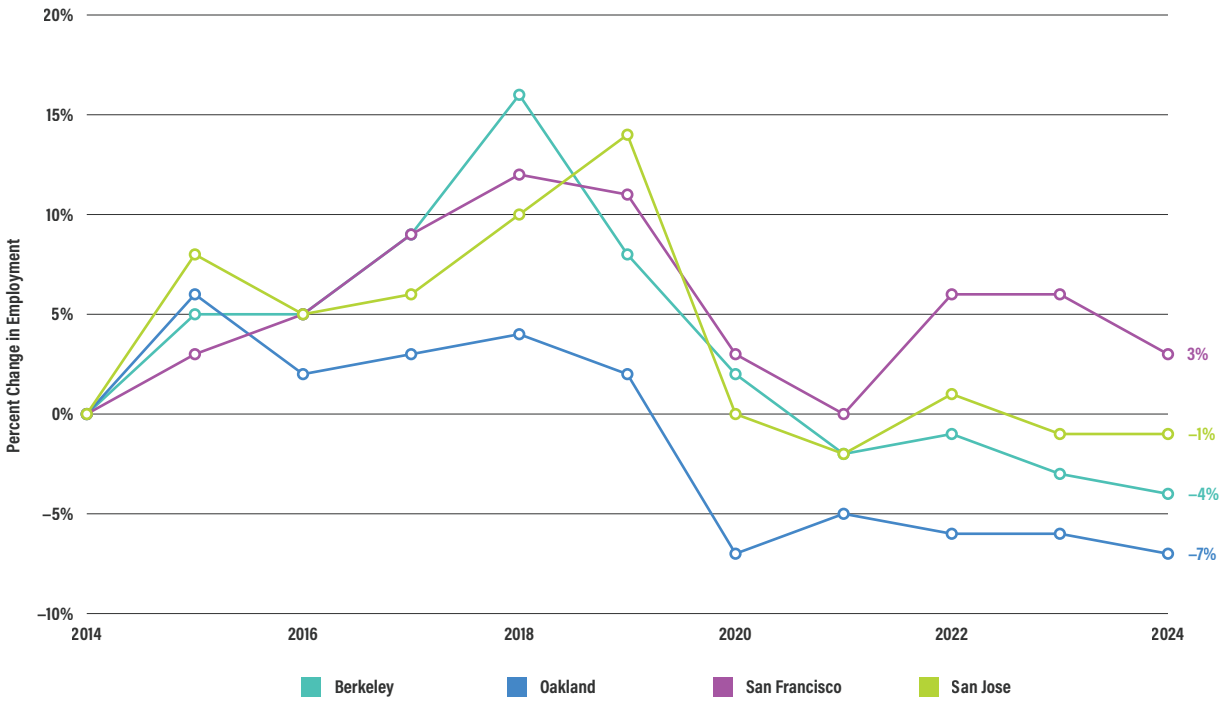
In the years leading up to the pandemic, Berkeley's creative economy was outperforming even San Francisco's sector in terms of job growth. Between 2014 and 2018, creative employment in Berkeley expanded 16%, outpacing industry growth in neighboring cities (Figure 10). Although all regional creative economies experienced steep declines with the onset of the pandemic in 2020, Berkeley's recovery has especially lagged behind. San Francisco and San Jose have seen partial rebounds, regaining some of their lost ground, but Berkeley's creative economy has remained flat or slightly negative through 2024.

FIGURE 9: CREATIVE ECONOMY EMPLOYMENT AS A SHARE OF TOTAL WORKFORCE BY REGION AND STATE | 2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, CVL Economics.

FIGURE 10: COMPARATIVE CREATIVE ECONOMY REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT GROWTH RATE | 2014–2024



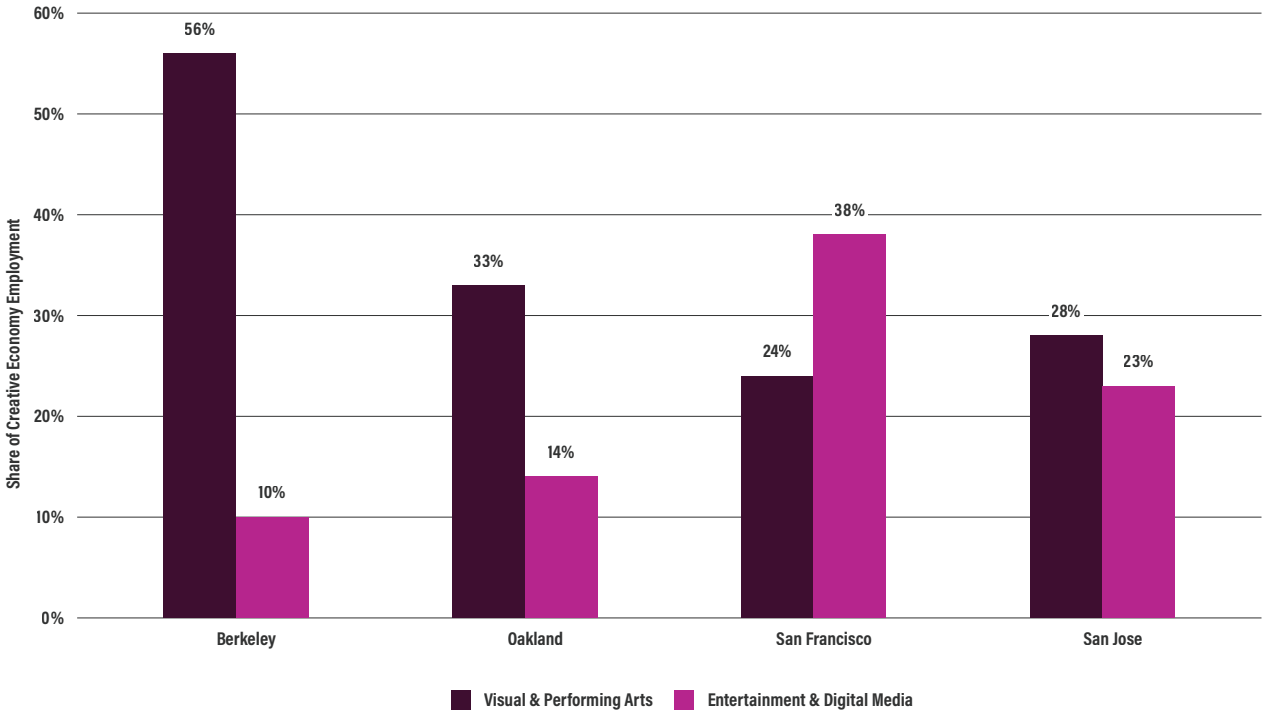
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, CVL Economics.

The result is a sector that was once leading the region in growth but now sits well below its pre-pandemic trajectory, underscoring the depth of the disruption and the ongoing challenges to full recovery.

One factor behind Berkeley's slower recovery is the composition of its creative economy relative to other cities. More than half of Berkeley's creative sector jobs are concentrated in Visual & Performing Arts (56%), **making the city far more dependent on live, in-person activity than its regional peers** (Figure 11).

San Francisco, by contrast, has a much larger share in Entertainment & Digital Media (38%), led by industries such as media streaming, software publishing (e.g., video game development), and broadcasting. These segments not only proved more resilient during shutdowns but in many cases expanded as digital content consumption surged. San Jose and Oakland fall between these two poles, with stronger mixes across both the Performing Arts and Digital Media industries.

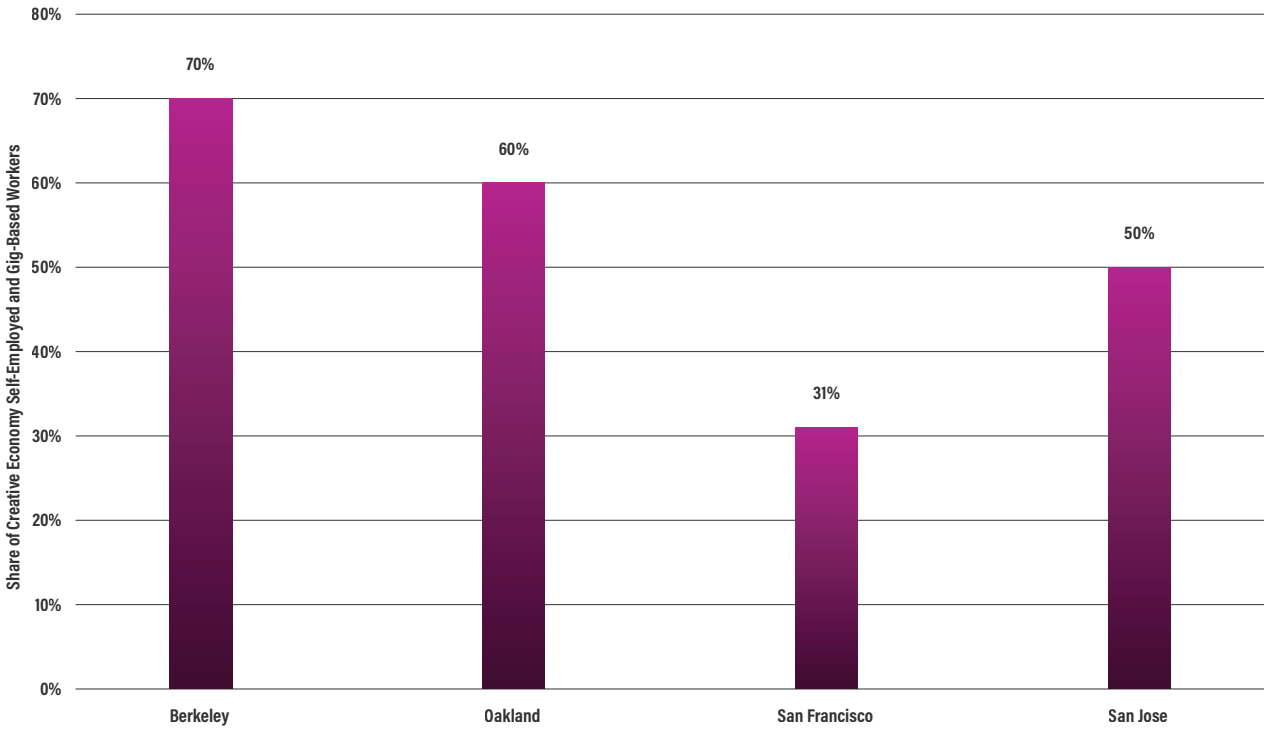
FIGURE 11: REGIONAL CREATIVE ECONOMY COMPOSITION: VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS VS. ENTERTAINMENT & DIGITAL MEDIA | 2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, CVL Economics.

With a significant percentage of Performing Arts industry employment comes other struggles tied to the sector's reliance on gig and contract work, as well as its nonprofit-heavy structure. **In Berkeley, the estimated 70% of the creative workforce that is self-employed or gig-based is driven largely by the city's Visual & Performing Arts sector, which alone accounts for 3,850 workers (827 self-employed and 3,022 gig-based)**. By comparison, only 31% of San Francisco's creative workforce falls into these categories (Figure 12). Oakland and San Jose also have higher shares of self-employed and gig workers (60% and 50%, respectively), but are not as high as Berkeley's.

FIGURE 12: SHARE OF CREATIVE ECONOMY SELF-EMPLOYED AND GIG-BASED WORKFORCE BY CITY | 2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, CVL Economics.

At the same time, Performing Arts is among the industries with the highest share of nonprofit organizations. For instance, in Alameda County, over 25% of Performing Arts jobs are in nonprofits, compared to just 9.4% across all industries countywide (Figure 13). The county's nonprofit share in the Performing Arts is also notably higher than the statewide average of 15.8%.

FIGURE 13: SHARE OF NONPROFIT EMPLOYMENT IN BOTH COUNTY AND STATE: PERFORMING ARTS VS. ALL INDUSTRIES | 2024

REGION	SHARE OF PERFORMING ARTS EMPLOYMENT IN NONPROFITS*	SHARE OF TOTAL EMPLOYMENT (ALL INDUSTRIES) IN NONPROFITS
Alameda County	25.1%	9.4%
California	15.8%	7.8%

*Includes employment in NAICS 711 (Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries).

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Nonprofit Establishment Employment and Wage Estimates, CVL Economics.

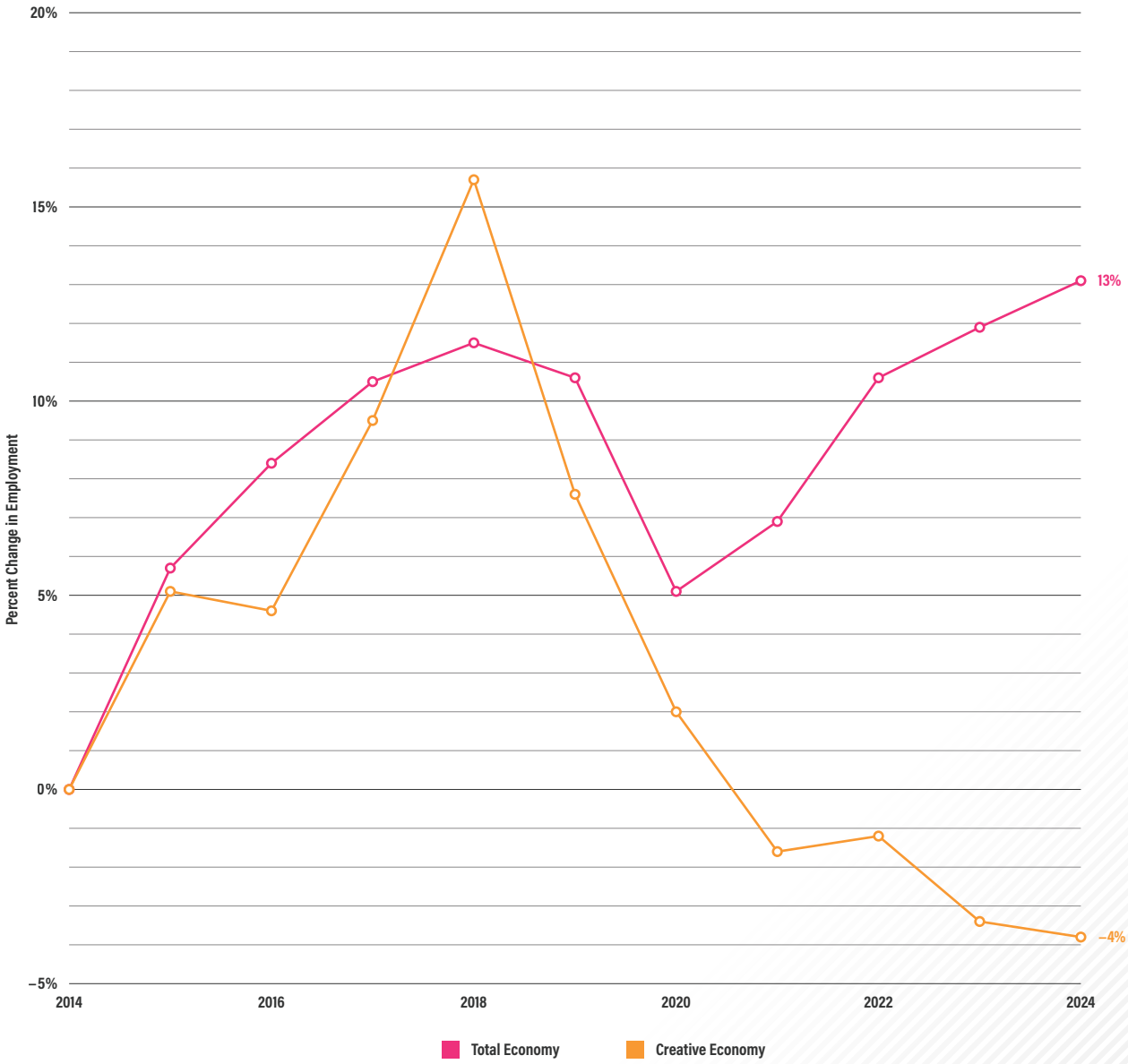


COMPARISON TO THE OVERALL ECONOMY IN BERKELEY

The picture becomes even more stark when comparing Berkeley's creative economy to the city's overall employment base (Figure 14). Before the pandemic, the creative workforce grew faster than Berkeley's overall economy. Between 2014 and 2018, creative employment surged nearly 15%, compared to about 11% growth in the total workforce. This momentum underscored the sector's potential as one of the city's most dynamic economic drivers, suggesting that, absent disruption, it might have continued to anchor local growth.

The pandemic, however, set the creative economy in Berkeley on a very different trajectory than the overall local economy. While total employment in Berkeley dipped briefly in 2020, it has since resumed a steady upward climb, reaching new highs by 2024. The creative workforce, as noted earlier, has remained stagnant or declined since 2020, and is currently registering at levels observed back in 2013, more than a decade ago. This divergence makes clear that while Berkeley's broader economy has expanded and rebounded, its creative economy, which relies on the Performing Arts industry, has been left behind—changing from a leading growth engine into a sector struggling to regain its footing.

FIGURE 14: CREATIVE ECONOMY EMPLOYMENT GROWTH RATE VS. GROWTH RATE FOR ALL SECTORS IN BERKELEY | 2014–2024



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, CVL Economics.

Berkeley's heavy reliance on the Performing Arts—among the hardest-hit and slowest-recovering industries nationwide—has left its creative economy especially vulnerable. **The sector's dual reliance on gig and contract work, alongside its nonprofit-heavy structure, compounds this fragility by tethering organizational stability to fluctuating audience demand, shifting philanthropic priorities, and uncertain public funding.** As a result, Berkeley's creative economy remains more exposed to the ongoing challenges of rebuilding sustainable audiences than many of its regional peers.

Yet despite the sector's slower recovery compared to the broader economy, Berkeley's creative economy remains an essential economic engine. The following economic impact analysis highlights just how significant this activity is for Berkeley and the region—underscoring why the sector's recovery is not simply a cultural priority, but an economic imperative.



CREATIVE ECONOMY ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Entities in the creative economy are part of a broader ecosystem, constantly interacting with other businesses in other industries and consumers. While it is directly composed of the eight defined subsectors outlined earlier (see Figure 1), its reach extends well beyond these boundaries.

Arts organizations and creative firms rely on a wide array of goods and services—purchasing materials, contracting with marketing agencies, and engaging professional services—thereby generating demand across many other industries. At the same time, the people who work in creative jobs—whether performers, designers, technicians, or administrators—spend their earnings on everyday needs like groceries, rent, and childcare. These purchases further help sustain local businesses across many different sectors.

Economic impact analysis is a tool that helps us measure all of these effects—not just the direct output of an industry, but also the chain reaction it sets off across the broader economy, also known as the "multiplier effect." To do this, we break the total impact into three parts: direct, indirect, and induced impacts, the latter two of which constitute the multiplier effect.[8] Together, these layers show the total economic impact of the creative economy through its role in a much larger ecosystem.

- **Direct effect** includes the economic activity that happens within the creative economy sector itself—like sector employee wages, business revenue, and taxes paid.
- **Indirect multiplier effect** captures the activity supported by the creative economy sector's suppliers. For example, a theater might rely on a local costume shop, which in turn buys fabric from a regional wholesaler.
- **Induced multiplier effect** refers to the ripple effect of household spending. When creative economy sector employees or those in related businesses spend their paychecks locally, they help generate jobs and income in industries like food service, retail, and transportation.

To assess the contribution of arts and culture to the local and regional economy, several key indicators are analyzed:

- **Employment impact:** This refers to the total number of jobs supported by the creative economy—both directly (within arts organizations themselves) and indirectly (at supporting businesses), as well as jobs created through household spending by those workers (induced impact).
- **Labor income impact:** This captures the total wages, salaries, and benefits earned by workers across the direct, indirect, and induced layers of activity. It reflects how the sector supports livelihoods throughout the community.
- **Value added impact:** This measures the creative economy's direct contribution to Gross Regional Product (GRP) in Berkeley. Value added reflects the net new wealth created by the sector, including labor income (wages and salaries), taxes on production, and business profits.
- **Fiscal impact:** This measures the tax revenue generated by businesses and workers associated with the creative economy. Tax revenue is broken down by city, county, and state levels.

8 See Appendix A.4 for IMPLAN input-output methodology.



BASELINE IMPACT

The baseline impact reflects the economic impact that originates from creative economy activity within the City of Berkeley's boundaries. These impacts are generated by Berkeley-based entities and include the employment, labor income, and value added that flow directly from activity located in the city.

In 2024, the 8,186 direct jobs in Berkeley's creative economy supported an additional 251 jobs through multiplier effects (indirect and induced), for a total of 8,437 jobs supported citywide tied to the sector (Figure 15). Altogether, Berkeley's creative economy generated $537.5 million in labor income (wages, salaries, and benefits) and contributed more than $1.0 billion to the city's gross regional product (value added). Put another way, **each creative job in Berkeley generated about $66,000 in labor income and $125,000 in value added (contributions to Berkeley's gross regional product).**

These impacts are significant in scale: Berkeley's creative economy accounted for 7.6% of the city's total employment, 5.7% of labor income, and 7.9% of value added across the city in 2024. This underscores the sector's role not only as a major source of jobs and income but also as a key component of the city's overall economic base.

FIGURE 15: CITYWIDE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BERKELEY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY | 2024

	EMPLOYMENT (JOBS)	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED
DIRECT EFFECT	8,186	$519.6 Million	$979.7 Million
INDIRECT EFFECT	213	$15.3 Million	$22.6 Million
INDUCED EFFECT	38	$2.5 Million	$19.2 Million
TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	**8,437**	**$537.5 Million**	**$1,021.4 Million**
SHARE OF BERKELEY TOTAL	**7.6%**	**5.7%**	**7.9%**

Note: Totals may not be exact due to rounding. Includes impacts associated with private and non-profit entities in Berkeley's creative economy.

Source: IMPLAN, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, CVL Economics.

REGIONAL SPILLOVERS ACROSS THE EAST BAY

While the city-level results capture the impacts that occur strictly within Berkeley, creative economy activity doesn't stop at the city's boundaries. Widening the lens to look at the East Bay (Alameda and Contra Costa counties) as a whole, the impact grows because of "leakages," or spillovers—spending that originates in Berkeley but flows outward to suppliers, contractors, and consumer markets located elsewhere in the two-county region as a result of the multiplier effect.

As such, in addition to the 8,437 jobs supported by the creative economy in Berkeley (citywide total employment impact from Figure 15), the sector supported an additional:

- 3,784 indirect jobs by supply-chain spending in other parts of the East Bay. For example, a Berkeley theater company might contract with a fabrication shop in Oakland or Richmond, or a design studio in Berkeley might purchase printing services from a vendor in Hayward or Concord. These transactions represent spillovers out of the city that become economic activity elsewhere in the East Bay.
- 1,821 induced jobs in other parts of the East Bay when creative workers spend their earnings on household needs. A Berkeley-based musician's paycheck might go towards childcare in Alameda or Albany, groceries in San Leandro or Orinda, or shopping in Oakland or Walnut Creek. Those everyday expenditures ripple outward, supporting additional jobs and income across the region.

This means an additional 5,605 jobs were supported by Berkeley's creative economy in other parts of the East Bay (elsewhere in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties) (Figure 16).

FIGURE 16: SPILLOVER ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BERKELEY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY INTO OTHER PARTS OF THE EAST BAY | 2024

	EMPLOYMENT (JOBS)	LABOR INCOME	VALUE ADDED
DIRECT EFFECT	-	-	-
INDIRECT EFFECT	3,784	$307.9 Million	$426.4 Million
INDUCED EFFECT	1,821	$138.6 Million	$254.7 Million
TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	**5,605**	**$420.8 Million**	**$624.0 Million**

Note: As this analysis measures only creative economy activity originating within the City of Berkeley, direct effects occur only within Berkeley, as shown in Figure 15. Totals may not be exact due to rounding. Includes impacts associated with private and non-profit entities in Berkeley's creative economy.

Source: IMPLAN, CVL Economics.

A DEEPER LOOK:
UNDERSTANDING THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

The multiplier effect (indirect and induced impacts) captures how the impact of the creative economy extends beyond the organizations and workers directly involved in creative activity. Every creative job in Berkeley generates additional activity across a wide range of other industries, through business-to-business (supply-chain) transactions and household spending by industry workers. Because Berkeley is deeply interconnected with the surrounding East Bay economy, these multiplier effects also have a geographic dimension. While some of the secondary activity remains inside city boundaries, much of it naturally flows to nearby communities such as Oakland, Emeryville, Richmond, Albany, El Cerrito, and San Leandro where many vendors are located and workers live.

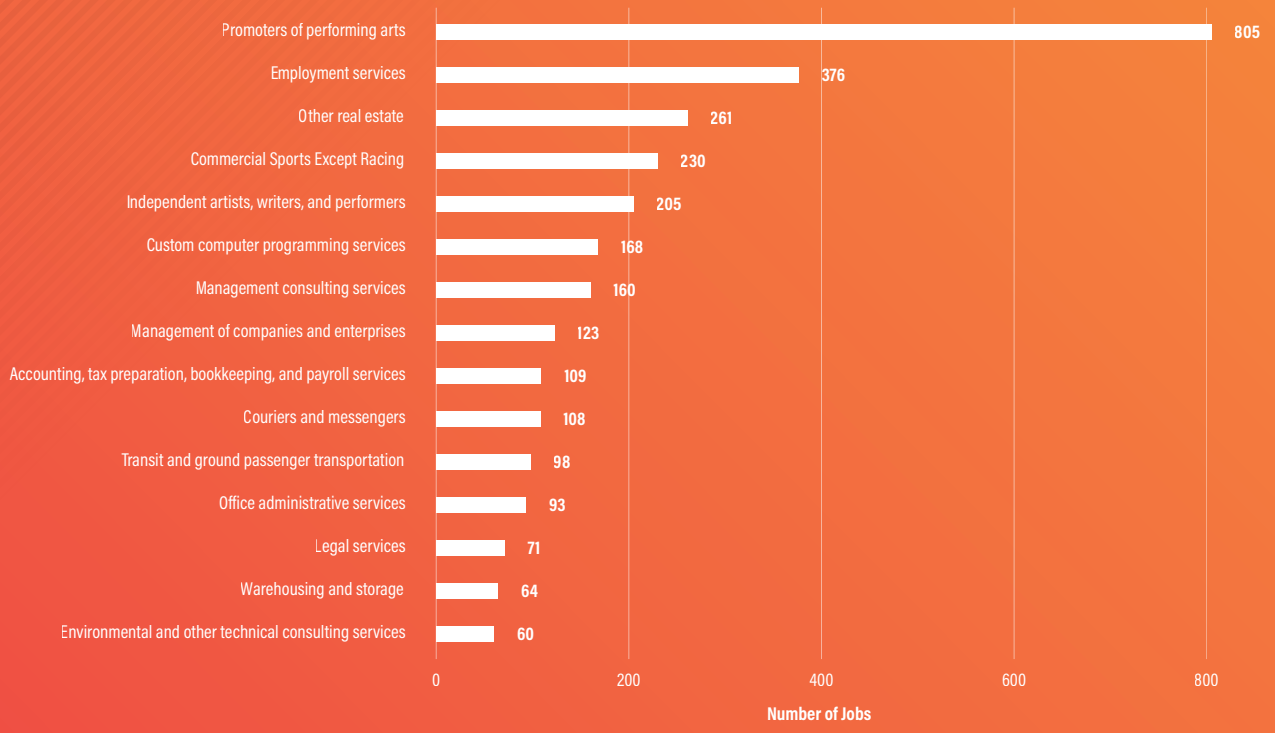
The multiplier effect of Berkeley's creative economy is evident in the diverse range of industries supported through supply-chain linkages (indirect effects) and household spending (induced effects) (Figure 17). On the supply-chain side, the largest employment impacts occur in industries directly tied to arts and culture production. Promoters of performing arts (i.e., organizations that organize and manage live shows, concerts, theatres, or festivals) (805 jobs) and independent artists, writers, and performers (205 jobs) illustrate how creative activity sustains related fields within the broader arts ecosystem.[9] At the same time, significant spillovers occur in various professional and technical service industries: employment services (376 jobs), other real estate (261 jobs), custom computer programming (168 jobs), and management consulting (160 jobs) all benefit from the demands of creative organizations and firms. Even industries like warehousing and storage (64 jobs), couriers and messengers (108 jobs), and commercial sports (230 jobs) are strengthened through their connections to Berkeley's creative sector.

On the household spending side, induced effects spread the benefits in a different way. Creative workers spend their earnings on everyday needs that sustain jobs in restaurants (175 jobs across full- and limited-food service), family services (103 jobs), and healthcare (55 hospital jobs and 48 in physicians' offices). Retail is also a major beneficiary, with creative economy earnings supporting employment in food and beverage stores (51 jobs), general merchandise stores (43 jobs), and other retail outlets. Additional gains are seen in education (37 jobs in other educational services), personal care services (42 jobs), and even auto repair and maintenance (32 jobs).

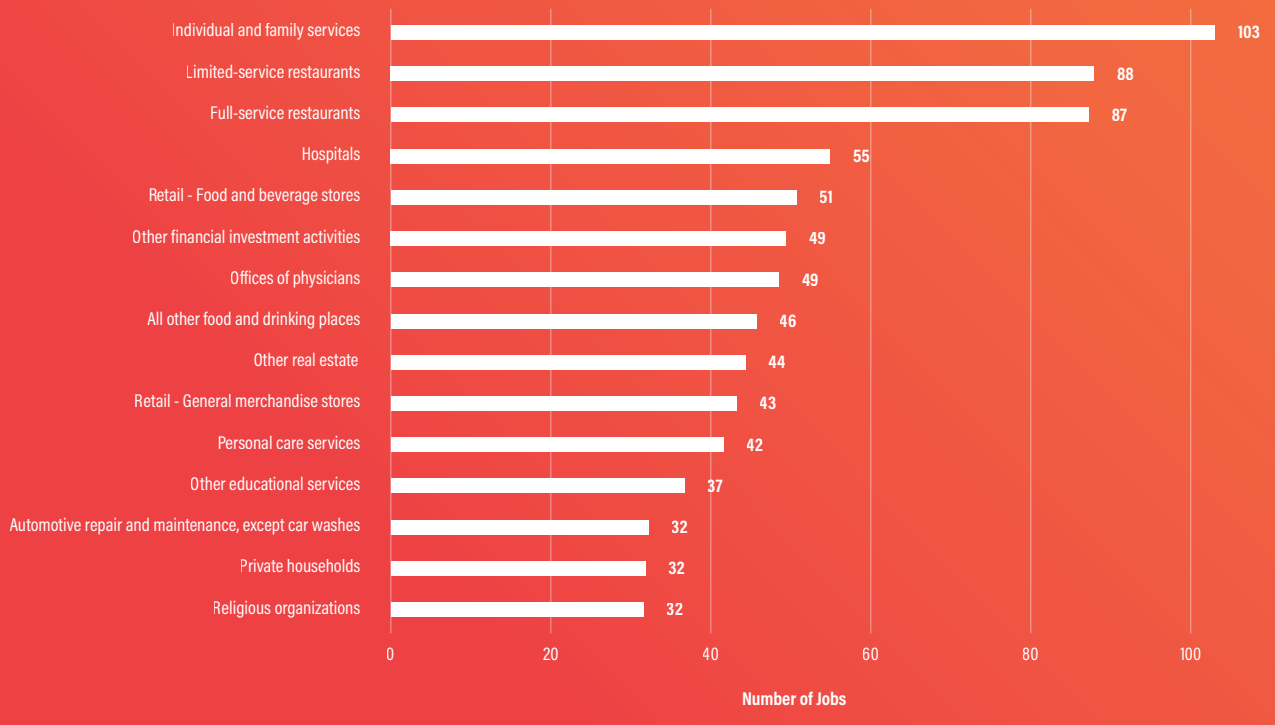
9 Industry titles are reported using IMPLAN's sectoring scheme, which is mapped to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

FIGURE 17: RIPPLE EFFECT OF EAST BAY EMPLYOMENT SUPPORTED BY THE BERKELEY CREATIVE ECONOMY | 2024

A) Indirect Effect (Supply Chain)



B) Induced Effect (Household Spending)



Source: IMPLAN, CVL Economics.

BEYOND THE TICKET:

ARTS AND CULTURE ATTENDEE SPENDING

In considering the broader role of the creative economy, it is important to account for the additional activity generated by visitors to arts and culture establishments. Audiences at performances and visitors to museums often turn their outings into fuller experiences—grabbing a meal at a restaurant, stopping at a café or bar, or browsing nearby shops. This ancillary spending amplifies the value of arts and culture by circulating dollars into multiple sectors and sustaining the vitality of surrounding commercial corridors. The presence of continued arts and culture programming drives foot traffic that sustains nearby businesses and keeps commercial corridors vibrant.

To quantify this effect, CVL Economics used the SMU DataArts Cultural Data Profile database to compile attendance figures for an available sample of Berkeley arts and culture organizations. **Together, the 37 arts and culture venues in Berkeley in this sample group attract roughly 1.4 million attendees annually.**[10]

Spending estimates were drawn from *Arts & Economic Prosperity 6* (Americans for the Arts), which provides audience spending patterns for local regions. While no Berkeley-specific profile exists, spending data from Walnut Creek and San Francisco were averaged to approximate Berkeley's position—more urbanized than Walnut Creek, yet less dense (and with lower associated costs) than San Francisco. Similarly, the average mix of local and nonlocal attendees was applied to get an estimate of spending in Berkeley. This distinction is important because local attendees, who live in the city, generate less new spending when they attend a performance than their nonlocal counterparts. **In total, the average Berkeley local attendee spends $35.76 on additional activities per artistic/cultural event, and the average (nonlocal) attendee from outside Berkeley spends $48.83.**

Applying these patterns to the Berkeley sample group shows **that arts and culture audiences for these organizations generate an estimated $56 million in annual spending at other local businesses** (Figure 18). This includes nearly $30 million at food and drink establishments, $7.6 million at retail stores, $7.2 million on local transportation, and $3.5 million on lodging.

10 SMU DataArts Cultural Data Profile (2017–2024).

FIGURE 18: ANNUAL ARTS AND CULTURE ATTENDEE SPENDING BY CATEGORY FOR 37 ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS IN BERKELEY | 2024

SPENDING CATEGORY	LOCAL ATTENDEES	NONLOCAL ATTENDEES	TOTAL ATTENDEES
Food and Drink	$17.6 Million	$11.8 Million	$29.2 Million
Retail Shopping	$4.5 Million	$3.1 Million	$7.6 Million
Overnight Lodging	$0.6 Million	$3.0 Million	$3.5 Million
Local Transportation	$3.5 Million	$3.7 Million	$7.2 Million
Clothing and Accessories	$2.5 Million	$1.4 Million	$3.8 Million
Groceries and Supplies	$1.8 Million	$0.8 Million	$2.6 Million
Childcare	$0.5 Million	$0.4 Million	$0.9 Million
Other/Miscellaneous	$0.6 Million	$0.5 Million	$1.2 Million
Total Spending	**$31.3 Million**	**$24.6 Million**	**$56.0 Million**

Source: SMU DataArts, Americans for the Arts, CVL Economics.

FISCAL IMPACT

Creative economy activity within the City of Berkeley also generates meaningful public revenues that flow across multiple levels of government. While these activities take place strictly within city boundaries, California's layered tax system distributes the resulting revenues among the City of Berkeley, Alameda County, and the State of California. This means that a single dollar of creative economy activity in Berkeley contributes to multiple jurisdictions simultaneously.

Creative activity contributes to several types of taxes that fund distinct public services (Figure 19). The following are major sources of creative economy tax revenue:

- **Property tax (shared by City of Berkeley and Alameda County)** revenues come from the assessed value of land and buildings occupied by creative organizations and businesses—such as theaters, studios, galleries, or design offices—whether paid directly by the property owner or indirectly through commercial leases. These revenues fund a broad range of public services, from public safety to county-administered programs, including road maintenance and transit services.
- **Sales tax (shared by City of Berkeley, Alameda County, and California)** in the creative sector is typically tied to ancillary transactions like food and beverage concessions, merchandise, or purchases of supplies and equipment. Ticket sales are not included because they are not subject to California sales tax. These revenues are distributed across all three levels of government—supporting the City's general fund, countywide systems administered by Alameda County, and the State's General Fund, which finances education, health and human services, and other statewide priorities.
- **Personal income taxes (California only)** are generated by the wages and self-employment earnings of workers employed in the creative economy, including W-2 employees, freelancers, and gig workers. They are a major source for the State of California's General Fund.
- **Corporate income taxes (California only)** apply to the net profits of for-profit creative firms, such as design practices, production companies, or galleries, while nonprofit entities are generally exempt. These revenues also accrue to the State's General Fund and help sustain statewide systems and programs alongside income taxes.

FIGURE 19: SCENARIOS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CREATIVE ECONOMY'S TAX REVENUE GENERATION

TAX TYPE & COLLECTOR	SCENARIO 1: NONPROFIT THEATER COMPANY	SCENARIO 2: PRIVATE DESIGN FIRM
PROPERTY TAX (City, County)	Theater company leases its space; tax is assessed on the property owner but is effectively built into rent.	Firm leases its space; tax is assessed on the property owner but is effectively built into rent.
SALES TAX (City, County, State)	Sales tax collected on concessions (food, drink), merchandise, and taxable rentals. Ticket sales exempt.	Core design services exempt. Sales tax applies to tangible goods (printed collateral, models, branded merchandise) and on taxable inputs purchased by the firm.
PERSONAL INCOME TAX (State)	Actors, stage crew, and set designers pay income tax on wages or self-employment income.	Designers, administrative staff, and contractors pay state income tax on wages or self-employment income.
CORPORATE INCOME TAX (State)	Exempt as a nonprofit.	Corporate profits taxed at the state level.

Source: CVL Economics.

DIRECT TAX BENEFITS

Creative economy activity in Berkeley generates tax dollars that flow into the City's General Fund, which provides flexible revenues that are budgeted to core municipal services, such as public safety and personnel. Unlike special district revenues that are legally restricted to specific purposes, General Fund revenues represent the City's discretionary pool.

In fiscal year 2024, the City of Berkeley's General Fund was budgeted at $273.4 million.[11] Of this, based on the IMPLAN modeling described above which includes the impact of multiplier effects, the creative economy generated an estimated $10.7 million in tax revenues (Figure 20), equal to nearly 4% of the City's discretionary tax base. The largest contributions came from sales taxes, where creative sector activity accounted for more than 15% of total collections, and property taxes at 4%.

11 City of Berkeley, Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2025 & 2026 (PDF). Available at: https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/FY-2025-2026-Proposed-Biennial-Budget.pdf.

FIGURE 20: CITY OF BERKELEY GENERAL FUND (GF) TAX REVENUE GENERATED BY BERKELEY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY | 2024

SOURCE OF REVENUE	CREATIVE ECONOMY GF TAX REVENUE	FY2024 EST. ACTUAL GF REVENUE (TOTAL GF REVENUE)	CREATIVE ECONOMY SHARE OF TOTAL GF REVENUE
PROPERTY TAX	$4.6 Million	$116.0 Million	4.0%
SALES TAX	$2.9 Million	$18.7 Million	15.6%
ALL OTHER TAXES*	$3.2 Million	$138.7 Million	2.3%
TOTAL GENERAL FUND TAX REVENUE	**$10.7 Million**	**$273.4 Million**	**3.9%**

Note: Totals may not be exact due to rounding. Includes impacts associated with private and non-profit entities in Berkeley's creative economy.

* "All Other Taxes" for the creative economy include Business License Taxes, Utility Users Taxes, Cannabis Taxes, and other smaller categories. For the City's total General Fund, this category also includes revenues not meaningfully generated by creative economy activity, such as Vehicle License Fees, Ambulance Fees, Interest Income, Franchise Fees, Indirect Cost Reimbursements, and Transfers.

Source: IMPLAN, City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL SYSTEMS THAT RETURN VALUE LOCALLY

Beyond the direct benefit to Berkeley residents through City revenues, the tax dollars generated by Berkeley's creative economy for county and state jurisdictions also strengthen the regional and statewide system that Berkeley's population depends on.

In 2024, Berkeley's creative economy generated $14.3 million in Alameda and Contra Costa County revenues (most is appropriated through Alameda County since that is where Berkeley activity is directly located) and $74.6 million in state revenues (Figure 21). County revenues flow into systems that the City does not operate directly, but that are critical for residents, including public health programs, social services, elections, courts, and jails. State revenues, meanwhile, are collected through income, sales, and corporate taxes and deposited into California's General Fund, which supports K–12 and higher education (the State General Fund is the largest source of public support for UC Berkeley), Medi-Cal, and other health programs. Though administered at the county and state levels, these dollars cycle back to Berkeley by funding schools, public universities, healthcare access, and regional services that residents use every day.

FIGURE 21: COUNTY AND STATE TAX REVENUE GENERATED BY BERKELEY'S CREATIVE ECONOMY | 2024

SOURCE OF REVENUE	REVENUE FOR ALAMEDA & CONTRA COSTA COUNTIES	REVENUE FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA	-	$25.5 Million
PROPERTY TAX	$12.3 Million	
SALES TAX	$0.6 Million	$25.6 Million
CORPORATE TAX	-	$14.2 Million
OTHER TAX	$1.4 Million	$9.3 Million
TOTAL TAX REVENUE	**$14.3 Million**	**$74.6 Million**

Note: Totals may not be exact due to rounding. Includes impacts associated with private and non-profit entities in Berkeley's creative economy.

Source: IMPLAN, CVL Economics.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The City of Berkeley provides grant funding to arts and culture organizations, festivals, and individuals through its robust Civic Arts Grant Program, established in 1991.

The Civic Arts Grant Program aims to strengthen Berkeley's arts ecosystem by directly supporting individual artists, organizations, and festivals that expand cultural access, foster equity and inclusion, and contribute to the city's creative vitality and economic vibrancy.[12]

Over the past decade, the program has expanded significantly in scale, with annual direct investment increasing from $230,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2016 to approximately $700,000 annually since FY2022 (Figure 22).[13] Funding is distributed across three primary categories: Individual Artist Project Grants, Community Festival Grants, and General Operating Support for arts organizations.

12 For more information, visit the City of Berkeley's Civic Arts Grants page: https://berkeleyca.gov/community-recreation/civic-arts/civic-arts-grants.

13 City of Berkeley, *Civic Arts Grants Program – Improved Practices & Community Impact* (Work Session Item 01), March 21, 2023, https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2023-03-21%20WS%20Item%2001%20Civic%20Arts%20Grants%20Program.pdf.

FIGURE 22: BERKELEY CIVIC ARTS GRANTS ALLOCATIONS | FY2016–FY 2024

FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT AWARDED	NUMBER OF GRANTS	AVERAGE GRANT SIZE
FY2016	$229,100	53	$4,323
FY2017	$378,848	56	$6,765
FY2018	$497,510	61	$8,156
FY2019	$500,000	63	$7,937
FY2020	$650,199	90	$7,224
FY2021	$579,493	94	$6,165
FY2022	$714,470	104	$6,870
FY2023	$696,996	114	$6,114
FY2024	$698,782	97	$7,204

Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

In FY 2024, the City of Berkeley awarded $698,782 in Civic Arts Grants to 55 arts and culture organizations, 31 community festivals, and 11 individual artist projects (97 grants total).[14] This investment sustains year-round organizational programming in Berkeley, supports artists' livelihoods, and improves community access to diverse cultural experiences. To provide a better sense of the significance of this support, we estimate the City's return on investment using the following process outlined below.

In 2024, the organizations and festivals receiving Civic Arts Grants reported a combined operating revenue of $131 million. CVL Economics estimated the total operating revenue of grantee organizations by compiling financial data from the IRS Exempt Organizations Business Master File. For festivals, revenue was attributed to the organizing entity (unless the festival was an entity itself); in some cases, the same organization received both a grant for its annual programming and a separate grant to support a festival it manages. In aggregate, however, these awards represent funding to a single entity, and the reported revenues reflect the full scope of that organization's operations.

While most revenue data was available through IRS tax filings, there were a few data gaps in organizational revenue availability. Adjustments were made where necessary—for example, nonprofits with annual revenues under $50,000 are not required to submit total revenue figures to the IRS, and CVL Economics developed reasonable estimates recognizing the relatively small scale of these entities. In a few cases where 2024 revenue data was not yet available, 2023 filings were used as a proxy to ensure consistency across the analysis. In addition, in 2024 the program distributed $44,000 in project grants to individual artists, functioning as direct income in exchange for their creative work.

When accounting for both direct activity and the broader ripple effects across the local economy, **these organizations and individuals that received grants from the City of Berkeley together generated $137.4 million in economic activity within the City of Berkeley.** This estimate was developed using IMPLAN input–output modeling, capturing not only the direct contributions of grantees and their employees, but also the supply chain effects on local vendors, contractors, and service providers, along with the induced spending of households supported by arts-related jobs. In other words, every $1 of Civic Arts Grant funding supported nearly $197 in total economic activity across the City of Berkeley. Overall, the City's investments supported about 7.5% of the total economic activity generated by its creative economy.

14 City of Berkeley, Fiscal Year 2024 Civic Arts Grant Awards (Information Calendar), October 10, 2023, https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2023-10-10%20Item%2015%20Fiscal%20Year%202024%20Civic%20Arts%20Grant.pdf.

PUBLIC ART PROGRAM AND PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY GRANTS

In addition to its Civic Arts Grants program, the City of Berkeley provides substantial support for the local creative economy through its Public Art Program. Unlike the Civic Arts Grants, which are allocated annually from the City's General Fund, Public Art funding is generated primarily through Berkeley's Public Art ordinances, which dedicate a portion of capital project budgets to commissioning, installing, and maintaining public artworks, as well as through in-lieu fees paid by private developers who opt to contribute funds rather than install art on their buildings. This structure means that funding levels are driven by the scale and timing of both municipal capital projects and private development activity, both of which can be cyclical, rather than a fixed appropriation. Because these allocations are tied to specific artworks and capital improvements—rather than to flexible operating support—they are not included in the ROI analysis, which focuses on General Fund dollars that flow directly into organizational capacity and community programming.

Public Art Program expenditures nevertheless represent a meaningful municipal investment in Berkeley's cultural landscape. Over the past five fiscal years, annual expenses have ranged from $276,656 in FY21 to nearly $923,475 in FY23. The spike in FY23 reflects one-time allocations from the City's T1 Infrastructure and Facilities Bond,[15] which funded new public art commissions and conservation projects in conjunction with broader civic improvements. More recent spending totaled $407,212 in FY24 and $624,035 in FY25.[16] The City maintains a digital catalog of its public art collection, including an interactive map that allows residents and visitors to explore artworks across the community.[17]

Furthermore, in rapid response to the widespread impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the local arts and culture sector, **the City of Berkeley awarded more than $3 million in emergency relief and recovery grants between 2020 and 2022.** This included $2.5 million to 88 arts and culture organizations and over $520,000 to 193 individual artists. Although these were one-time allocations, they were extraordinary in scale and helped many organizations withstand the most difficult periods of pandemic shutdowns. **Every $1 of the City's emergency investments spurred by the pandemic leveraged at least $5.64 in sustained arts and culture economic activity that might otherwise have been lost entirely.**[18] The impacts of these investments are detailed in the companion report (published concurrently), entitled *Assessment of Berkeley Arts & Culture Pandemic Relief and Recovery Funding.*



15 City of Berkeley, Measure T1: Infrastructure and Facilities Bond, https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/bond-revenue-measures/measure-t1.

16 Jennifer Lovvorn, Chief Cultural Affairs Officer at City of Berkeley, email to CVL Economics, September 26, 2025.

17 City of Berkeley, City of Berkeley Public Art Collection, https://www.artworkarchive.com/profile/civicartscollection/portfolio.

18 City of Berkeley, Assessment of Berkeley Arts & Culture Pandemic Relief and Recovery Funding, prepared by CVL Economics, October 2025.





FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

PRE-PANDEMIC MOMENTUM LOST

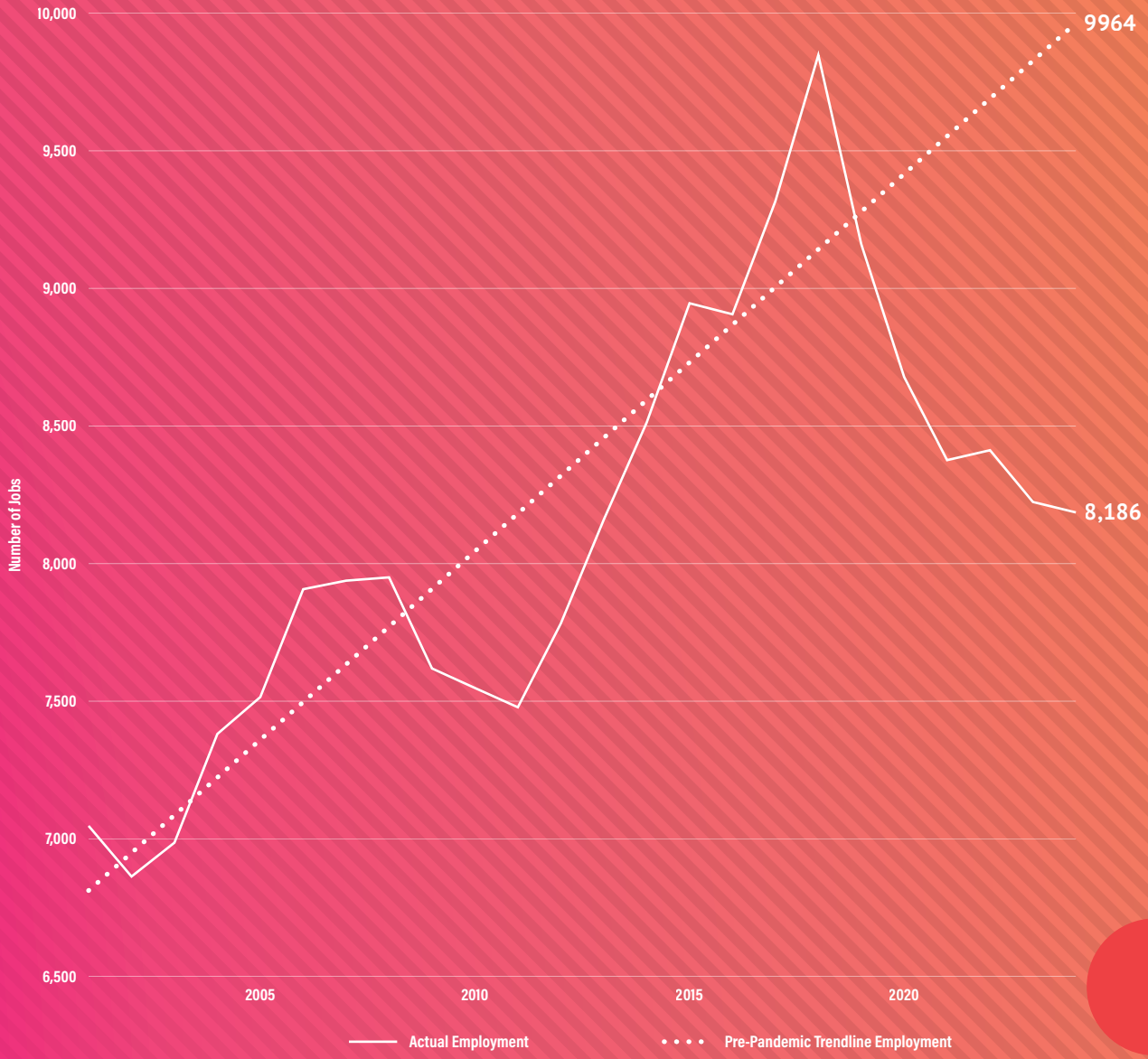
While the creative economy in Berkeley delivers significant impacts today, it is important to recognize the strength and momentum the sector had prior to the pandemic. In 2018, creative employment in Berkeley had climbed to a peak of nearly 9,850 jobs—growth that not only outpaced overall citywide employment, but also exceeded the expansion of creative sectors in neighboring regions. That momentum was abruptly halted when the pandemic hit. The shutdown of 2020 erased all of the gains built over the previous decade; today, Berkeley's creative sector sits 17% below its 2018 peak and is aligned with employment levels experienced in 2013.

What had long been one of Berkeley's greatest cultural strengths—its concentration of live performance venues and nonprofit arts organizations—quickly became a vulnerability when in-person gatherings were deemed unsafe. Live theater, music, and dance were among the first to close and the last to return, severing both earned and ancillary revenue streams. This challenge was compounded by Berkeley's high proportion of nonprofit organizations, which made the sector particularly reliant on philanthropic and public funding sources. As emergency relief and federal grant programs have wound down, many of these funding streams have diminished, leaving organizations with fewer resources to sustain operations.

Unlike other industries that have since rebounded, Berkeley's creative economy has continued to decline year after year, leaving a widening gap between its current scale and the trajectory it was once on. Its strength in live performance—one of the sectors hardest hit by shutdowns and slowest to recover—made the creative economy especially vulnerable, while reliance on gig work, high local costs, and cautious audiences further compound the challenges.

The divergence between actual outcomes and the projected pre-pandemic trend highlights what has been lost, including nearly 1,800 more jobs than what was observed in 2024 (Figure 23). Those unrealized jobs represent more than just employment—they translate into lost wages, reduced household spending, and diminished tax revenues. If the pre-pandemic trajectory had held, Berkeley's creative economy would not only employ more people, but also generate higher levels of labor income and value added (contributions to the City's gross regional product) than currently measured citywide.

FIGURE 23: ACTUAL CREATIVE ECONOMY EMPLOYMENT VS. PRE-PANDEMIC TRENDLINE IN BERKELEY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, CVL Economics.

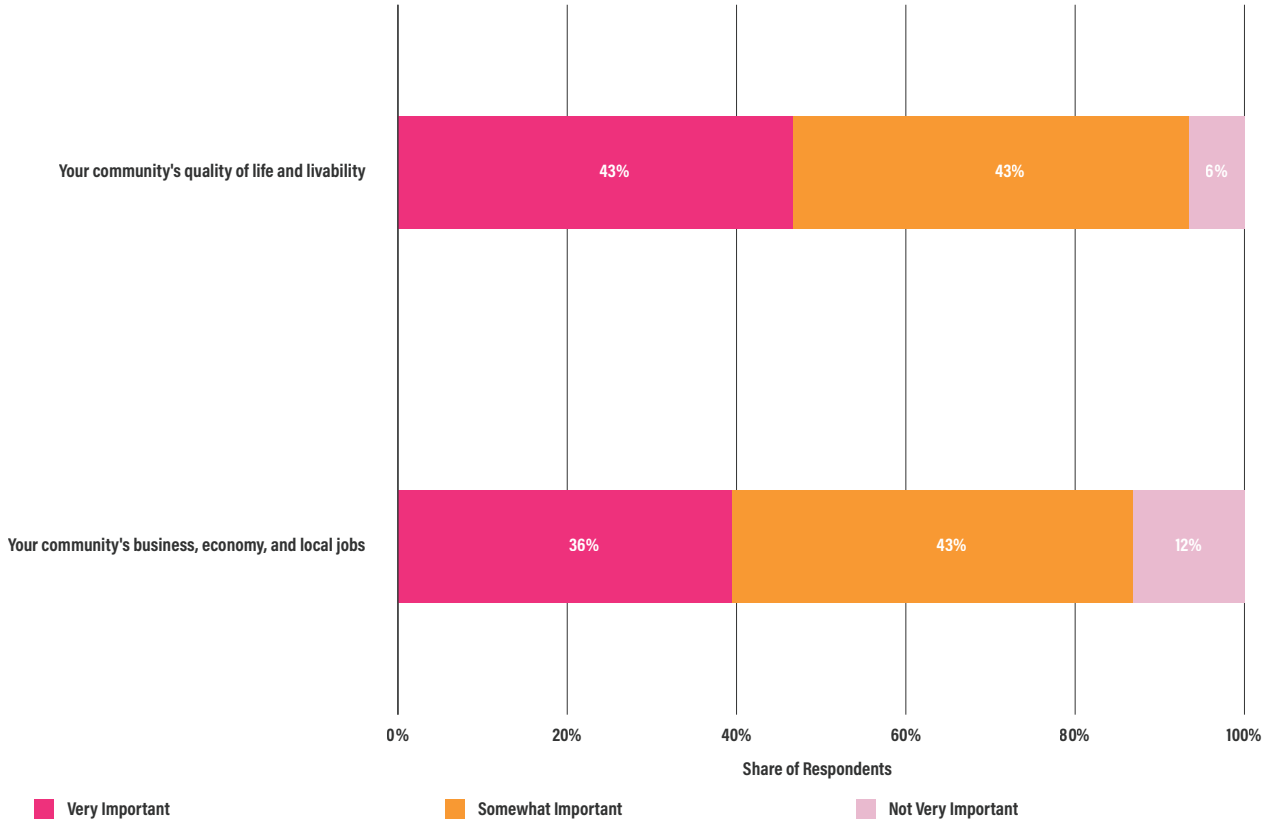
ARTS AND CULTURE AS ENGINES OF ECONOMIC VITALITY

Beyond the numbers, the creative economy plays a central role in shaping Berkeley's identity, quality of life, and appeal as a place to live and work. A strong creative sector enriches the city with performances, festivals, cultural institutions, and design-driven businesses that make Berkeley distinctive within the Bay Area and attractive to both residents and employers.

This connection between creativity and community wellbeing is not unique to Berkeley—it reflects a broader national understanding of the arts' role in civic life. A 2023 nationwide survey conducted by Americans for the Arts reveals that a vast majority of Americans share this view: 86% agreed that arts and culture are important to their community's overall quality of life and livability, and 79% affirmed the importance of arts and culture to supporting local businesses, the economy, and jobs (Figure 24).[19]

FIGURE 24: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN COMMUNITY WELLBEING IN THE U.S.

How important, if at all, do you think having arts and culture are to...



Source: Americans for the Arts.

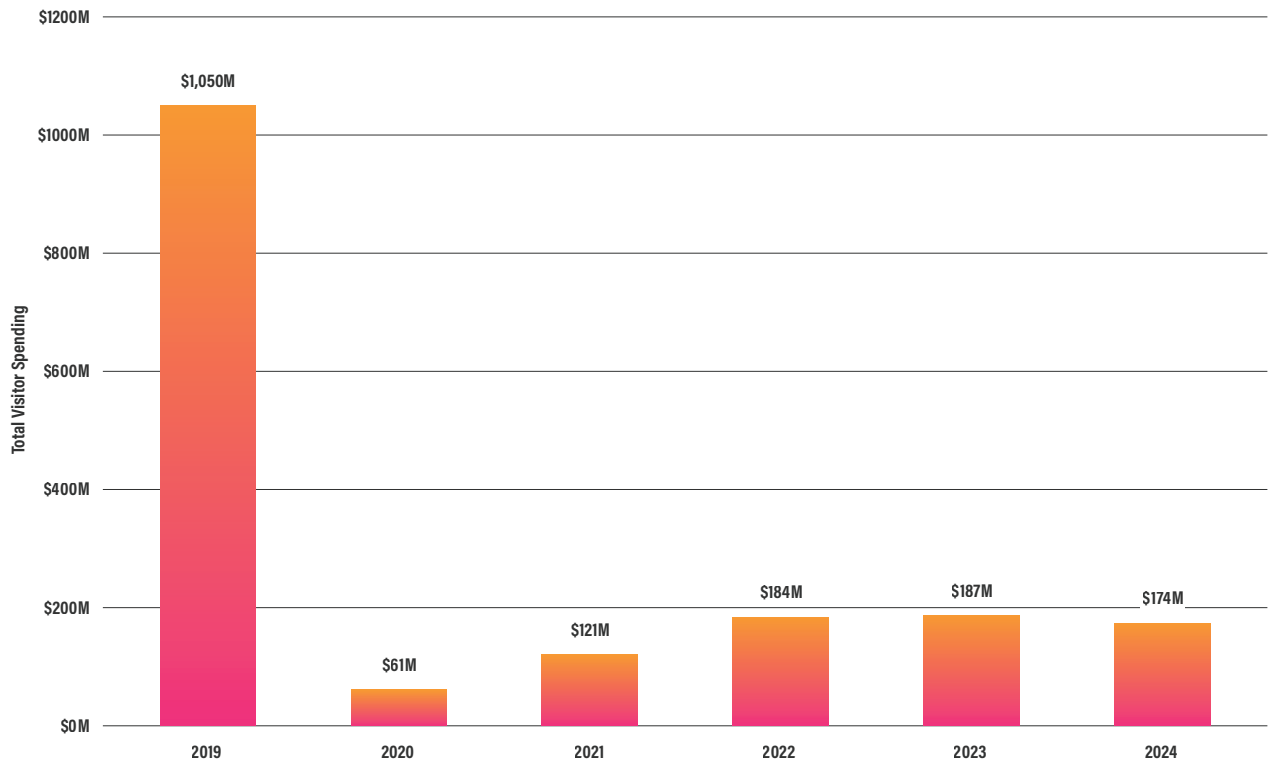
19 Americans for the Arts, Americans Speak Out About the Arts: An In-Depth Look at Public Perceptions and Attitudes About Arts & Culture in America in 2023, December 2024. https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/AFTA_2023_Public%20Opinion%20Study_FINAL_12.4.24.pdf

The significance of arts and culture extends directly to the vitality of downtowns and commercial districts. Cultural venues—such as theaters, galleries, and music spaces—serve as anchors that drive foot traffic, activate public spaces, and generate demand for nearby restaurants, bars, and retail establishments. These dynamics not only support small businesses but also contribute to perceptions of safety and livability by ensuring that public areas remain active and inviting across a range of hours and days of the week. Investments in arts and culture have proven to be catalysts for broader downtown revitalization, sparking further private investment and creating a multiplier effect that benefits the entire local economy.

Berkeley itself has long recognized this connection. The establishment of the Downtown Arts District along Addison Street in the 1990s and early 2000s was a deliberate recognition of arts and culture's role in economic development as the city faced an 18% ground-floor vacancy rate downtown.[20] By clustering cultural venues along Addison Street and leveraging relatively modest public investment into tens of millions in private dollars, Berkeley transformed a struggling downtown corridor into a vibrant destination that continues to anchor the city's economic and cultural identity.

Berkeley's recent downward trends underscore what is at stake, threatening to erode the progress built from the 1990s through 2020. Visitor spending in the city fell from over $1 billion in 2019 to just $174 million in 2024 (Figure 25), while the Downtown Berkeley commercial vacancy rate (including office and retail spaces) sat at nearly 11% in 2024, more than double pre-pandemic levels in 2019 (Figure 26). Office vacancies have driven much of this increase as remote work has become more prevalent, but ground floor retail and restaurant spaces have also struggled.

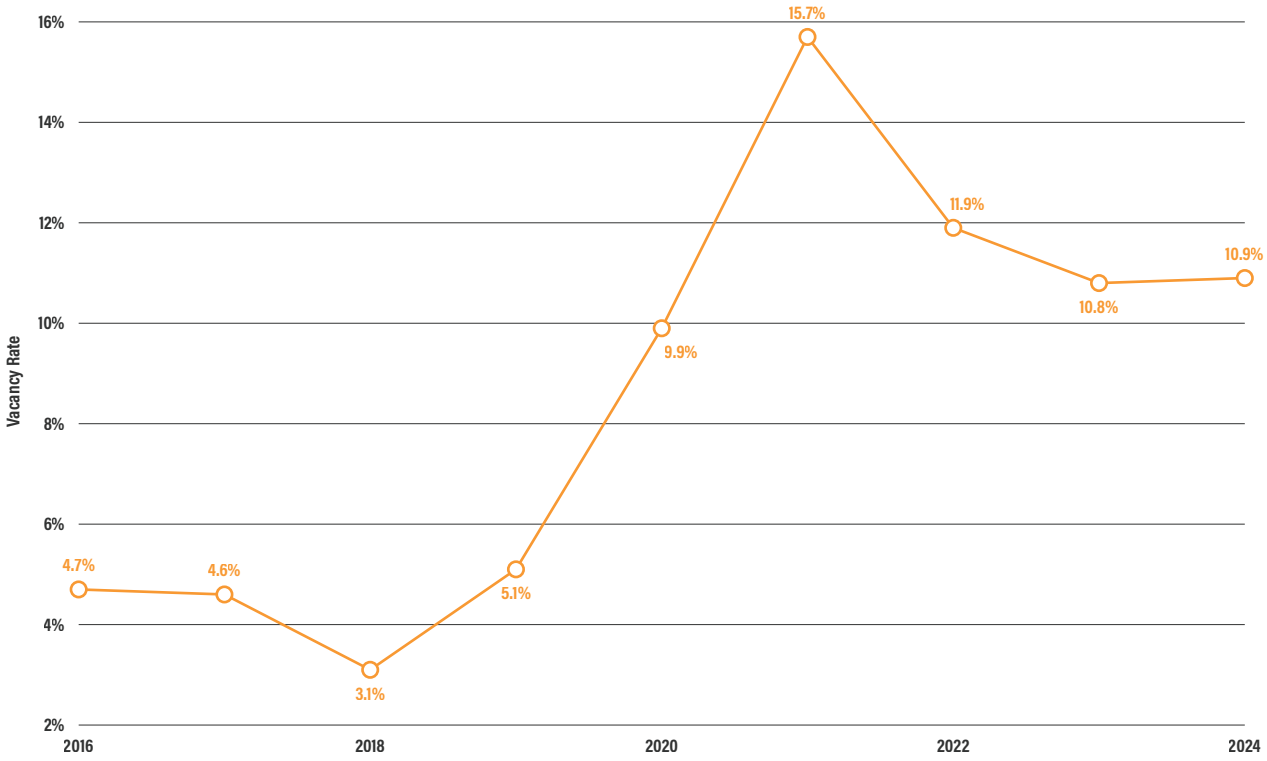
FIGURE 25: TOTAL SPENDING BY VISITORS TO BERKELEY | 2019–2024



Source: Visit Berkeley, Placer.ai, CVL Economics.

20 City of Berkeley, Arts as Economic Development, presented by M. Caplan at the U.S. Mayors Innovation Conference, August 2016. Available online: https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-02/ArtsDistrict_Panel_CoB_8.27.2016.pdf.

FIGURE 26: DOWNTOWN BERKELEY GROUNDFLOOR COMMERCIAL VACANCY RATE | 2016–2024



Note: Includes office and retail properties.
Source: City of Berkeley Office of Economic Development, CVL Economics.

These findings can help shape practical solutions for Berkeley's long-term recovery and the resilience of its diverse economy. As work continues to shift from traditional 9 to 5 office schedules to flexible, remote arrangements, the daytime worker presence that once sustained downtown retail, hospitality, and cultural activity has diminished. The outmigration of higher-wage workers to places with lower costs of living has left central business districts in Bay Area downtowns more vulnerable to shrinking audiences and weaker engagement with arts and culture.

Revitalizing downtown does not mean reverting to pre-pandemic models. To counter falling visitor spending and rising vacancies, Berkeley must reimagine how investment in the creative economy can drive renewal. Orienting economic development around the creative and nighttime economies is one of the most effective strategies for sparking new energy, with efforts focused on leveraging existing arts, culture, and entertainment amenities to attract residents and visitors alike. Sustaining and growing Berkeley's creative economy—especially its artists, arts organizations, and festivals—is essential to preserving the qualities that make the city a place where people want to live, work, and visit.

APPENDIX

A.1: CREATIVE ECONOMY INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION CODES

To ensure clarity and comparability, the definition of the creative economy is grounded in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), the federal standard used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Economic Analysis. Using NAICS codes allows us to map creative industries consistently across geographies over time, and to model their economic contributions. While no single code fully captures the breadth of the creative economy, assembling a curated set of codes provides a robust picture of the industry.

FIGURE A.1 CREATIVE ECONOMY INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION CODES

INDUSTRY CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION	NAICS
ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN	
Ornamental and Architectural Metal Work Manufacturing	332323
Architectural Services	541310
Landscape Architectural Services	541320
Drafting Services	541340
Interior Design Services	541410
Industrial Design Services	541420
COMMUNICATION DESIGN	
Graphic Design Services	541430
Advertising Agencies	541810
Photography Studios, Portrait	541921
Commercial Photography	541922
ENTERTAINMENT & DIGITAL MEDIA	
Motion Picture and Video Production	512110
Motion Picture and Video Distribution	512120
Teleproduction and Other Postproduction Services	512191
Sound Recording Studios	512240
Software Publishers	513210
Radio Broadcasting Stations	516110
Television Broadcasting Stations	516120
Media Streaming Distribution Services, Social Networks, Other Media Networks and Content Providers	516210

INDUSTRY CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION	NAICS
FASHION	
Fiber, Yarn, and Thread Mills	313110
Broadwoven Fabric Mills	313210
Narrow Fabric Mills and Schiffli Machine Embroidery	313220
Nonwoven Fabric Mills	313230
Knit Fabric Mills	313240
Textile and Fabric Finishing Mills	313310
Fabric Coating Mills	313320
Apparel Knitting Mills	315120
Cut and Sew Apparel Contractors	315210
Cut and Sew Apparel Manufacturing (except Contractors)	315250
Apparel Accessories and Other Apparel Manufacturing	315990
Footwear Manufacturing	316210
Other Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	316990
Toilet Preparation Manufacturing	325620
Jewelry and Silverware Manufacturing	339910
Jewelry, Watch, Precious Stone, and Precious Metal Merchant Wholesalers	423940
Piece Goods, Notions, and Other Dry Goods Merchant Wholesalers	424310
Footwear Merchant Wholesalers	424340
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Merchant Wholesalers	424350
Other Specialized Design Services	541490
FINE ARTS SCHOOLS	
Fine Arts Schools	611610
FURNITURE, TOYS & DECORATIVE ARTS	
Carpet and Rug Mills	314110
Curtain and Linen Mills	314120
Textile Bag and Canvas Mills	314910
Rope, Cordage, Twine, Tire Cord, and Tire Fabric Mills	314994
All Other Miscellaneous Textile Product Mills	314999
Pottery, Ceramics, and Plumbing Fixture Manufacturing	327110
Other Pressed and Blown Glass and Glassware Manufacturing	327212
All Other Miscellaneous Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	327999
Wood Kitchen Cabinet and Countertop Manufacturing	337110
Upholstered Household Furniture Manufacturing	337121
Nonupholstered Wood Household Furniture Manufacturing	337122
Household Furniture (except Wood and Upholstered) Manufacturing	337126
Institutional Furniture Manufacturing	337127

INDUSTRY CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION	NAICS
Wood Office Furniture Manufacturing	337211
Custom Architectural Woodwork and Millwork Manufacturing	337212
Office Furniture (except Wood) Manufacturing	337214
Showcase, Partition, Shelving, and Locker Manufacturing	337215
Mattress Manufacturing	337910
Blind and Shade Manufacturing	337920
Doll, Toy, and Game Manufacturing	339930
Furniture Merchant Wholesalers	423210
Home Furnishing Merchant Wholesalers	423220
Toy and Hobby Goods and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	423920
PUBLISHING & PRINTING	
Commercial Printing (except Screen and Books)	323111
Commercial Screen Printing	323113
Books Printing	323117
Support Activities for Printing	323120
Book, Periodical, and Newspaper Merchant Wholesalers	424920
Newspaper Publishers	513110
Periodical Publishers	513120
Book Publishers	513130
Directory and Mailing List Publishers	513140
Greeting Card Publishers	513191
All Other Publishers	513199
Libraries and Archives	519210
VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS	
Musical Instrument Manufacturing	339992
Art Dealers	459920
Theater Companies and Dinner Theaters	711110
Dance Companies	711120
Musical Groups and Artists	711130
Other Performing Arts Companies	711190
Agents and Managers for Artists, Athletes, Entertainers, and Other Public Figures	711410
Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers	711510
Museums	712110

*Note: In addition to the NAICS codes used to define Visual & Performing Arts, employment figures were adjusted to include three major arts and culture institutions at University of California, Berkeley, that would otherwise fall under the broader "colleges and universities" classification: Cal Performances, the Greek Theatre, and the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. Employment data was provided by these entities directly.

A.2: BERKELEY BUSINESS COUNT METHODOLOGY

Data on Total Businesses is sourced from the City of Berkeley Active Business License (BL) dataset. Total Nonprofit data is sourced from the Internal Revenue Service Tax-Exempt Organizations Business Masterfile (IRS EO BMF).

Total Business Count

The BL file provides the most comprehensive and locally specific inventory of business establishments available, capturing sole proprietorships, small enterprises, and other entities that are often excluded from federal datasets. While we know the BL file omits some arts organizations noted above, the reported total of 12,783 businesses is likely only a modest undercount. Even with this limitation, the BL dataset remains the most robust and locally accurate source for understanding the full scope of business activity in the city.

We benchmark the BL dataset against two other common sources for business counts: the U.S. Census Bureau County Business Patterns (CBP), which captures only employer establishments with payroll (and thus undercounts small nonprofits) and carries a 2-year reporting lag; and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), which provides establishment counts for payroll businesses at the county, metropolitan statistical area (MSA), and state levels (Figure A.2.2).

FIGURE A.2.1 TOTAL BUSINESS COUNT CROSS-REFERENCES IN BERKELEY

SOURCE	REGION	TOTAL BUSINESSES	TOTAL ARTS & CULTURE BUSINESSES
Berkeley Active BLs (2025)	Berkeley	12,783	650
CBP Establishments (2023)	Berkeley	4,279	139
QCEW Establishments (2024)	Alameda County*	71,737	2,335

*For reference, Berkeley employment accounts for about 10% of total Alameda County employment.

Nonprofit Organization Count

The IRS EO BMF is a national database of organizations recognized as tax-exempt under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code. This dataset is updated monthly and serves as the most comprehensive listing of nonprofit entities in the U.S. It includes key information such as Employer Identification Number (EIN), ruling date, subsection designation, filing status, and industry. For analytic purposes, the IRS dataset is widely used to benchmark the size and scope of the nonprofit sector because it applies consistent classification standards across jurisdictions and time periods. For this analysis, arts-related nonprofits were identified using National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) codes in the "A" category (Arts, Culture, and Humanities), which map onto the industry NAICS codes used to define the creative economy.

CVL Economics uses the IRS file for nonprofit counts. The Berkeley BL dataset lists only 63 arts and culture nonprofits, which is a smaller number than what is present in the IRS findings. For example, several organizations known to be operational in Berkeley are not listed in the BL spreadsheet. In addition, the 2017 Arts and Culture Plan Update 2018–2027 indicates 152 arts nonprofits in Berkeley. In this context, the IRS count of 193 arts and culture nonprofits appears most consistent with the broader evidence presented in the table below (Figure A.2.2).

FIGURE A.2.2 NONPROFIT COUNT CROSS-REFERENCES IN BERKELEY

SOURCE	TOTAL NONPROFITS	TOTAL ARTS & CULTURE NONPROFITS
IRS Tax-Exempt Organization Masterfile (2025)	1,407	193
City of Berkeley Active Business Licenses (2025)	634	63
City of Berkeley Internal Compiled Arts & Culture Organization List (2025)*	n/a	187
Arts and Culture Plan Update - Economic Impact Report of the Arts in Berkeley (2017)**	n/a	152
City of Berkeley Pandemic Relief and Recovery Grant Recipients (2025)***	n/a	71

* An internal list of organizations compiled by the City of Berkeley that includes those listed in the City internal database (such as the Civic Arts Operating Grant program), organizations compiled by Visit Berkeley, and members of the Berkeley Cultural Trust.

** An economic impact report conducted in 2017 on the impact of Berkeley arts and culture nonprofit organizations, see section A.5 below.

***In 2020 and 2022, the City of Berkeley issued pandemic relief and recovery grants in response to the devastating toll of the COVID-19 pandemic. Grants were issued to 88 Berkeley-based nonprofit arts and culture organizations, of which 71 are still operating today.

Additional Data References on Berkeley's Arts and Culture Nonprofit Composition

Note that the methodology above estimates that 30% of creative economy businesses and 11% of total businesses (All Industries) are nonprofit organizations. To further benchmark this composition, we draw on the BLS Nonprofit Establishment Employment and Wage Estimates dataset. While that dataset is limited to state, county, or Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) geographies, offers limited NAICS detail, and the most recent data year is 2022, it supports benchmarking for the creative economy using NAICS 711 (Performing Arts)—Berkeley's largest creative sector. When we adjust the business-count methodology above to focus on Performing Arts (NAICS 711), about 28% of Berkeley's Performing Arts businesses are nonprofits. This is comparable to the shares shown in Figure A.2.3.

FIGURE A.2.3 BLS NONPROFIT ESTABLISHMENT EMPLOYMENT AND WAGE ESTIMATES (2022)

REGION	PERCENT TOTAL BUSINESSES NONPROFIT	PERCENT NAICS 711 BUSINESSES NONPROFIT	PERCENT TOTAL EMPLOYMENT NONPROFIT	PERCENT NAICS 711 EMPLOYMENT NONPROFIT
Alameda County	4%	22%	9%	25.1%
Bay Area MSA	4%	23%	9%	36.8%
California	2%	4%	8%	15.8%

Methodology Considerations

IRS nonprofit filings and City active business licenses are based on different reporting systems. IRS counts reflect the number of federally recognized nonprofit entities, whereas business license data reflects locally registered operations. The IRS EO BMF dataset is therefore a more standardized and comprehensive source for counting nonprofit organizations because it captures all federally recognized tax-exempt entities, regardless of local business-license status.

Some nonprofits may not appear in City records due to reporting gaps, classification issues, or exemptions from local registration requirements, yet they will still appear in the IRS file as long as their tax-exempt status is active. For measuring the nonprofit landscape—especially for standardization and comparisons across jurisdictions and time periods—the IRS dataset is the most reliable count, while City BL data remains valuable for the broader local business context. Although these measures are not perfectly interchangeable, together they provide useful benchmarks on the scale and structure of the City of Berkeley's creative economy.

A.3: CREATIVE ECONOMY EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTATION

Measuring employment in the creative economy requires going beyond traditional payroll data sources. Standard datasets, such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), provide a solid baseline for tracking salaried jobs, but they capture only part of the picture. Creative work often falls outside of conventional salaried employer–employee arrangements, relying instead on independent contracting, self-employment, and gig labor. To produce a more accurate account of the sector, our analysis incorporates multiple employment categories, each drawn from established federal datasets that are widely used in labor market research and economic modeling.

Salaried Jobs: QCEW is the most widely used dataset for measuring local employment. It is based on administrative records from unemployment insurance (UI) programs, which employers are legally required to file for most payroll workers. Additional salaried employment is derived from administrative and statistical adjustments that capture payroll jobs not covered by UI programs. These include W-2 employees at organizations exempt from UI reporting requirements, such as certain small nonprofits, charitable or community-based organizations, and religious institutions.

- **Includes:** Full- and part-time payroll jobs.

Self-Employed Jobs: Measured using IRS tax filings (Schedule C income) and Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) data on proprietorships. Represents individuals whose primary income comes from operating their own business.

- **Includes:** Sole proprietors, freelancers, and independent contractors whose primary source of income is generated from their own enterprises.

Gig Jobs: Derived from the U.S. Census Bureau Nonemployer Statistics (NES) dataset and supplemented by BEA adjustments. Represents secondary or contingent forms of work where individuals may earn supplemental income through short-term, project-based, or part-time activities.

- **Includes:** Freelancers, independent contractors, and sole proprietors engaged in gig-style or occasional work. Often counted in addition to a primary payroll or self-employed job.

Together, these categories ensure that creative employment is not undercounted and that the analysis captures the full scale and impact of the creative workforce.

A.4: ECONOMIC IMPACT METHODOLOGY

The foundational step in quantifying the economic impact of Berkeley's creative economy is the identification of the appropriate sectors that comprise the core—or "direct"—components of the industry (see industry classification in Appendix A.1).

Economic data are reported using the standardized North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which allows for consistency and comparability across datasets. No single NAICS code wholly encapsulates the creative economy. As a result, a curated list of relevant sectors was assembled.

The Industry Economic Accounts produced by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) are a key foundational data source for all input-output models. The BEA's tables provide a summary of how industries produce and consume commodities at the national level. The economic impact analysis in this report utilizes the industry-standard IMPLAN (Impact Analysis for Planning) software. IMPLAN is an input-output modeling system used to build economic models at various levels of geography. IMPLAN is widely used and recognized by government organizations, nonprofits, economic development organizations, workforce planners, education institutions, and consultants across the U.S. and Canada.

For this analysis, CVL Economics tailored the modeling framework specific to the creative economy to build an Input-Output (I-O) model to better account for market transactions, capture supply chains across regions, and more accurately estimate regional industry leakages. The impact analyses were estimated using a Multi-Regional Input-Output (MRIO) model, which expands upon the traditional I-O system to include various additional socioeconomic variables including sub-regional trade and income flows, commuting patterns, and household spending patterns between the City of Berkeley and the East Bay (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties).

Additionally, because Berkeley's creative economy comprises a significant portion of self-employed and gig workers, we adjusted the model to reflect the differences between these job structures. Salaried jobs typically generate greater and more stable economic impacts (through higher wages, benefits, and payroll taxes) while self-employed and gig work tends to involve lower and/or variable earnings and different tax treatment. By accounting for these differences, our model avoids overstating independent work while still recognizing its importance to the sector.

Within this framework, the following impacts are generated:

- **Direct effects** capture the employment, labor income, and value added generated by creative economy organizations and workers located in Berkeley.
- **Indirect effects** reflect the activity supported through the supply chain. IMPLAN estimates these based on regional purchasing patterns—how much, on average, businesses in a given sector spend on inputs from other industries within the study area.
- **Induced effects** reflect household spending by workers employed and supported by the creative industries. These are modeled from regional averages of consumer expenditure data (sourced from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey), adjusted to the income distribution of the study region.

A.5: DATA METHODOLOGY COMPARISONS TO 2017 ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT

A previous economic impact report, the *Arts and Culture Plan Update — Economic Report of the Arts in Berkeley* (2017), provided the last benchmark for understanding the role of arts and culture in Berkeley's economy.[21] It is important to note that there are key differences between the methodology used in the 2017 analysis and this report, which means direct comparisons should be approached with caution. Notably, the 2017 study examined a sample of 100 nonprofit arts and culture organizations, while the current analysis covers the broader creative economy, including nonprofits, private firms, individual artists, and other creative enterprises.

The following distinctions should be noted regarding the results reported in Table 6 (on page 18) of the 2017 study. This analysis modeled nearly $98 million in annual spending from the 100 nonprofits as the basis of its analysis. This produced estimates of 3,606 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers, $80.8 million in labor income, and $3.8 million in local tax revenue (including both City and County). By contrast, this current report captures the entire creative economy, counting 8,186 jobs (not converted to FTEs), which helps explain the larger overall economic contribution CVL Economics presents in the current report's findings.

The methodology behind these calculations of economic and fiscal impact also differs. The 2017 study used the Arts & Economic Prosperity Calculator 5 (AEP5), developed by Americans for the Arts. AEP5 measures the economic impact of nonprofit arts and cultural activity through a standardized input–output modeling framework. It combines locally reported organizational expenditures with audience spending data collected through on-site surveys, and then applies pre-set IMPLAN multipliers to estimate jobs, income, and local and state tax revenues. While this approach ensures consistency across participating communities, the calculator does not allow for adjustments to the unique structure of each local economy.

In comparison, the current study is modeled directly within the IMPLAN system, enabling customization to Berkeley's unique economic profile, including its composition of for-profit and non-profit organizations. This approach not only captures direct activity within Berkeley but also provides a breakout of the indirect and induced effects that ripple through the local economy and the broader East Bay as creative organizations and workers purchase goods and services and circulate income. This customization also allows for greater City-level detail on fiscal impact reporting.

Finally, the 2017 report added estimates of attendee spending on top of the modeled impact results, since they were able to capture attendee spending for their total sample of 100 organizations, using the SMU DataArts Cultural Data Profile and additional survey outreach. To ensure a process that can be standardized, we used the same approach to calculate visitor spending, but we treat these figures separately rather than folding them into the overall creative economy totals, recognizing that they represent only a sample of the wider ecosystem in this study.

21 See the 2017 report here: https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-02/Berkeley%20Arts%20Economic%20Impact%20Report.pdf

Berkeley Creative Economy Economic Impact Analysis

DECEMBER 2025

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was made possible through the leadership and support of the City of Berkeley, including the Office of Economic Development and its Civic Arts Program, the Civic Arts Commission, and Berkeley City Council, whose commitment to advancing the city's creative and cultural vitality guided this work. We also extend our appreciation to the many nonprofit arts and culture organizations, creative practitioners, and community stakeholders who generously contributed their time, insights, and experiences.

PREPARED BY:

CVL Economics is an economic consulting firm that takes a data-driven, human-centric approach to equitable development and sustainable growth. Founded in 2021, CVL Economics partners with communities, municipalities, organizations, and institutions to address today's most complex challenges and foster bold action. Coupling robust economic models with innovative research methodologies, we provide decision-makers with the actionable insights needed to effect change, expand opportunity, and improve economic well-being.



Assessment of Berkeley Arts & Culture Pandemic Relief and Recovery Funding

DECEMBER 2025



CVL ECONOMICS



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CONTEXT

Between 2020 and 2022, the City of Berkeley awarded over $3 million in emergency relief and recovery grants to arts and culture organizations and individual artists in Berkeley facing severe financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As one of the first municipalities to mobilize comprehensive support for the cultural sector, Berkeley's intervention provides a unique case study in crisis response for arts ecosystems operating in high-cost environments. Drawing on financial data, organizational surveys, and demographic analyses, this assessment examines both the immediate stabilization effects and longer-term outcomes of the City's emergency relief and sustained recovery investments, offering evidence-based insights into the effectiveness of targeted cultural relief strategies and the fundamental challenges facing creative communities during periods of economic disruption.

When the COVID-19 pandemic brought the Bay Area to a standstill in March 2020, the region's vibrant arts and culture sector—from intimate theaters and galleries to community festivals and independent artists—faced an unprecedented crisis as venues shutdown, events were cancelled, and revenue streams vanished overnight. Recognizing the essential role of arts and culture in the city's identity and economy, the City of Berkeley quickly mobilized a series of emergency grant programs to support local artists, nonprofit organizations, and cultural institutions facing acute financial strain. Over the course of three years, the City awarded $2.5 million to 88 organizations and $523,089 to 193 individual artists and cultural workers (Figure 1).[1] The City directed resources with a focus on equity and accessibility to sustain creative work, preventing organizational closures and ensuring underrepresented communities remained at the center of recovery.

1 To view the original documentation for these grants, see City of Berkeley, "Business and Arts Organization Continuity Grant Awards" (Off Agenda Report), April 27, 2020, https://newspack-berkeleyside-cityside.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Business-and-Arts-Organization-Continuity-Grant-Programs-042720.docx-1.pdf; and City of Berkeley, "Civic Arts Grants Program—Improved Practices & Community Impact" (includes Berkeley Art Works Project and Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants,), March 21, 2023, https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2023-03-21%20WS%20Item%2001%20Civic%20Arts%20Grants%20Program.pdf.



Figure 1: Summary of Berkeley Pandemic Relief Funding Programs

	PROGRAM YEAR	NUMBER OF GRANTEES	AVERAGE GRANT AWARDED	RECIPIENT TYPE	TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED
ARTS ORGANIZATION CONTINUITY GRANTS	2020	63	$15,151 organization	Nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored arts and culture organizations	$954,543
EAST BAY/OAKLAND RELIEF FUND FOR INDIVIDUALS IN THE ARTS*	2020	47	$1,372 per individual	Individual artists and arts workers	$64,500
BERKELEY ART WORKS PROJECT (BAWP)	2021	32	$5,698 per individual	Individual artists, performers, and community members	$182,339
BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS AND FESTIVALS	2022	74	$20,707 per organization	Nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored arts and culture organizations and festivals	$1,532,345
BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS	2022	114	$2,423 per individual	Individual artists, culture bearers, teaching artists	$276,250
				Total Amount Awarded to Arts & Culture Individuals (2020-2022)	**$523,089**
				Total Amount Awarded to Arts & Culture Organizations (2020-2022)	**$2,486,888**
				Total Berkeley Pandemic Relief and Recovery Funding (2020-2022)	**$3,009,977**

* The East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund was a regional grant program administered by the Center for Cultural Innovation that provided grants to 515 artists and cultural workers across Alameda and Contra Costa counties. The table includes only the portion awarded to 47 individual Berkeley artist residents leveraged with City of Berkeley funds.

Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

These investments, totaling over $3 million, were extraordinary in scale. By comparison, the City's annual Civic Arts Grants program distributes nearly $700,000 to arts and culture organizations, festivals, and individuals in a typical year. The pandemic-era funding programs for arts and culture organizations and individuals granted more than $1 million in 2020 and over $1.8 million in 2022, more than doubling its Civic Arts Grants investment in a typical year. For many Berkeley organizations and individual artists, the pandemic relief and recovery programs were more than simply helpful—they meant the difference between shuttering permanently and surviving long enough to rebuild.

SCALE OF COVID-19 DISRUPTION

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a wave of regionally mandated closures that reshaped daily life and severely disrupted arts and cultural activity. Berkeley is just one of three cities in California that operates its own public health department separate from the county, with an independent Health Officer who has the authority to issue local health orders.[2] During the pandemic, this meant that while the City often issued orders in alignment with Alameda County, it also at times acted earlier, leaving city residents and businesses subject to mandates that on occasion differed from neighboring cities and counties.

On March 17, 2020, Berkeley joined Alameda County and five other Bay Area counties to issue shelter-in-place orders, two days before Governor Newsom's statewide order on March 19. Under these orders, residents were required to remain in their places of residence except to perform essential activities. All non-essential business—like retail, entertainment, cultural, and recreational facilities—had to close to the public. This marked the beginning of what would become one of the most disruptive periods of widespread closures and halted activity in recent history.

In this environment of sudden and prolonged shutdowns, the timing of Berkeley's pandemic support for arts organizations and individuals was especially critical (Figure 2). The first round of funding (Arts Organization Continuity Grants) for organizations distributed in May 2020 arrived at the height of shutdowns and, for many organizations, served as their first—and in some cases only—source of external aid. In parallel, the City also contributed to the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund for Individuals in the Arts, a regional effort launched in May 2020 to provide direct cash assistance to artists and cultural workers. These local dollars often reached grantees before county, state, or federal relief programs such as the California Arts Council's Cultural Organizations Emergency Relief Fund, Shuttered Venue Operators Grants, Alameda County Arts Relief Grants, and the Paycheck Protection Program.

It wasn't until October 2020 that the City of Berkeley, along with Alameda County, cautiously began reopening a wider range of businesses and community spaces to the public under strict capacity limits. New health order protocols could now allow businesses like museums, galleries, personal care services, libraries, places of worship, restaurants, and movie theaters to operate indoors at 25% capacity. These steps marked the first time many cultural and social gathering spaces could invite the public back, albeit in highly restricted forms.

However, this momentum was short-lived. In December, a resurgence of COVID-19 cases strained intensive care unit capacity to below 15%, which in turn triggered a new regional stay-at-home order and the closure of nearly all indoor sectors across Berkeley and Alameda County once again. As cases eased in early 2021 and vaccines became widely available, cultural and recreational facilities were gradually permitted to return in stages: first at 25% capacity, then 50%, and by the spring of 2021 up to 75%. By May 2021, many museums, galleries, and other indoor spaces were operating under these expanded limits. It was not until June 15, 2021—fifteen months after the first shutdown—that nearly all restrictions were finally lifted, and businesses across California could fully reopen.

Recognizing the toll of lost work opportunities on local

[2] Sara Kassabian, "Berkeley is unusual in having its own public health division. How does that work during a pandemic?," Berkeleyside, April 15, 2020, https://www.berkeleyside.org/2020/04/15/berkeley-is-unusual-in-having-its-own-public-health-division-how-does-that-work-during-a-pandemic.



artists throughout this period, the City of Berkeley launched the Berkeley Arts Works Project (BAWP) in 2021, funded through the City's Cultural Trust Fund (Fund 148).[3] Modeled in spirit after the New Deal–era Works Progress Administration, which employed artists during the Great Depression to create public works, the program provided paid opportunities for artists, performers, and community members to produce temporary public artworks. These projects not only offered much needed income, but also fostered community healing by addressing themes of public health, resilience, and belonging at a time when many cultural venues were only beginning to reopen.

While the statewide June 2021 reopening marked a turning point for most cultural and recreational facilities, performing arts venues had endured some of the longest closures. Classified as among the highest-risk settings, they were the last to reopen, allowed to return only when the rest of the economy was cleared to resume operations. The Berkeley Repertory Theatre offers a vivid example of just how long the road back was for performing arts institutions. Despite the state's reopening in June, Berkeley Rep remained dark until November 12, 2021, when it finally welcomed audiences back with its production of Wintertime—a nearly 20-month closure from March 2020.

The City's next major rounds of recovery funding came through the Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (BARG) two years later in 2022 (funded with American Rescue Plan Act dollars).[4] This program was available to both arts and culture organizations and individuals. The BARG program arrived at a moment when federal and state programs wound down and organizations were confronting new pressures: inflation, workforce shortages, and lower levels of consumer engagement that had not fully recovered since the pandemic.

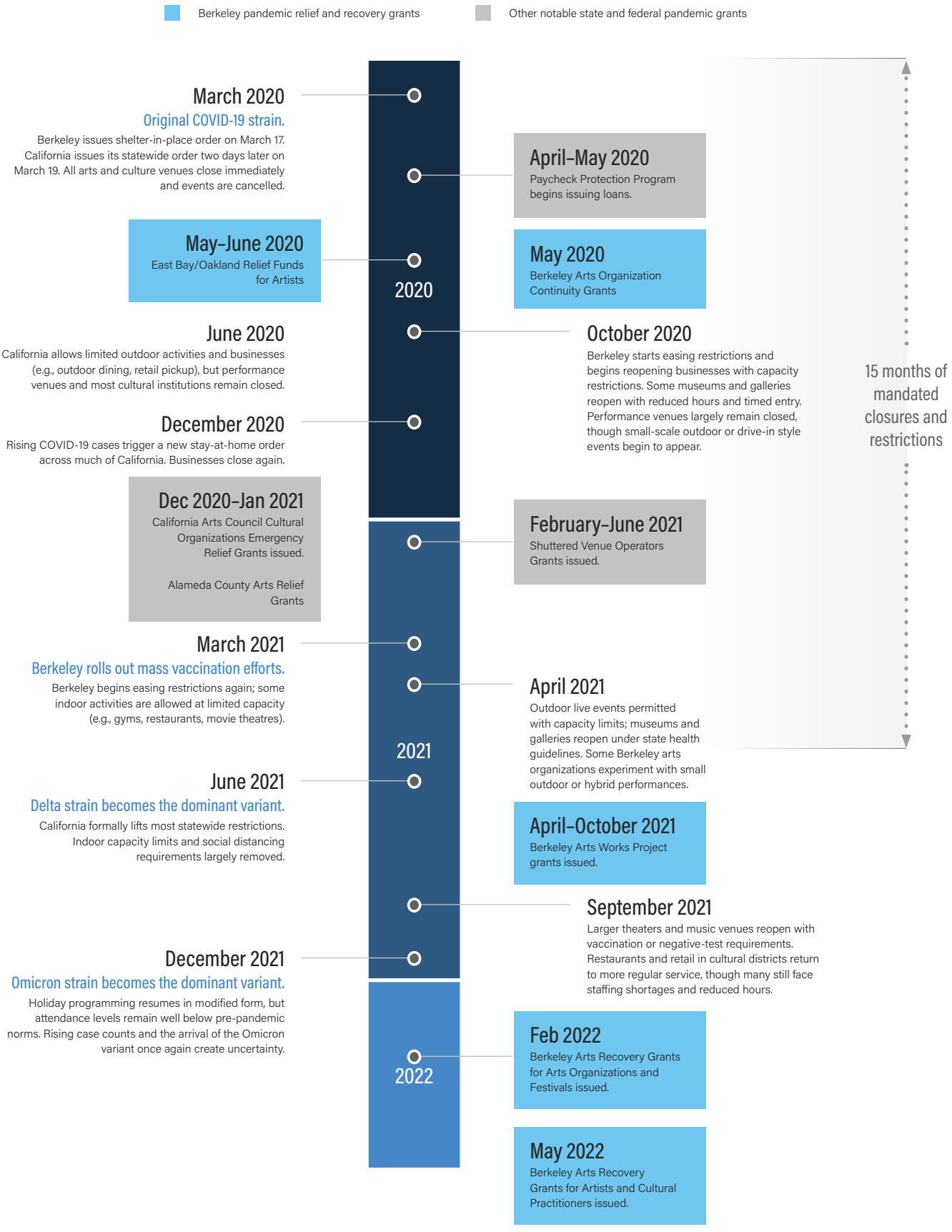
Together, the launch of these programs over three years created a phased response that moved from emergency relief to longer-term recovery. This approach helped preserve Berkeley's cultural ecosystem and sustain its creative workforce during one of the most disruptive periods in recent history.

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[3] The Cultural Trust Fund is a dedicated pool of City revenues that supports Berkeley's arts ecosystem through grants, public art, and cultural programming.

[4] The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a $1.9 trillion federal stimulus package enacted in March 2021, provided local governments with flexible State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to address public health and economic impacts of the pandemic, with a focus on disproportionately impacted communities. The City of Berkeley allocated a portion of these funds to support arts and culture organizations and individual cultural practitioners.

Figure 2: Timeline of COVID-19 Pandemic Relief & Recovery Grant Distribution

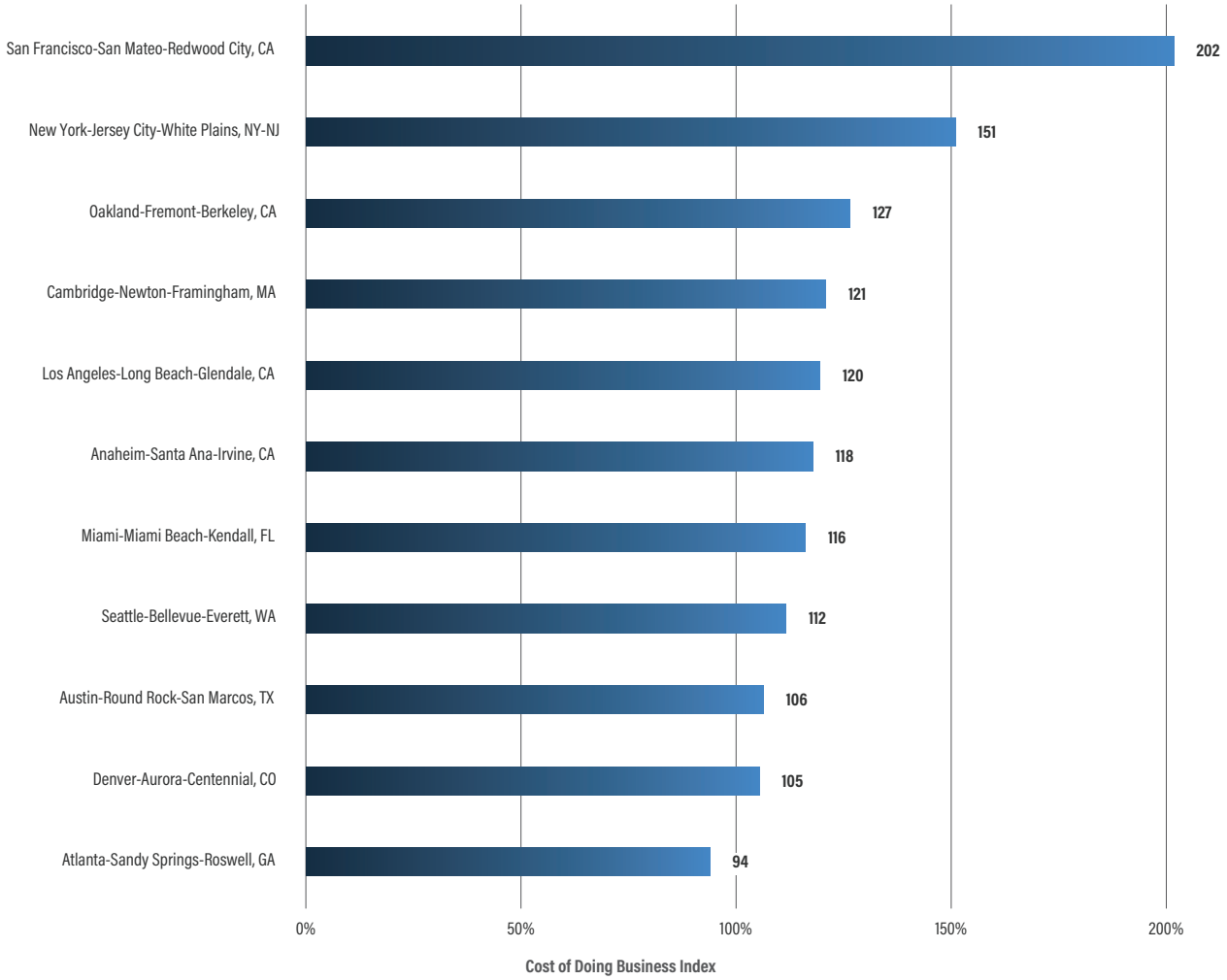


Source: CVL Economics.

At the same time, these prolonged closures exacerbated Berkeley's already exceptionally high-cost environment (Figure 3). The East Bay (comprising Alameda and Contra Costa counties, also known as the Oakland-Fremont-Berkeley metropolitan division) consistently ranks among the most expensive regions in the country—not just for households but also for employers. Berkeley arts and culture organizations must contend with some of the nation's highest commercial rents, utility costs, and taxes.

For nonprofit cultural organizations, the in-person experience is central to their survival. Earned income streams—such as ticket sales, performances, classes, festivals, gallery admissions, and space rentals—depend almost entirely on people gathering in shared physical spaces. When COVID-19 forced those spaces to close, the entire business model of many arts groups collapsed overnight. Unlike some industries that could pivot to remote operations, much of Berkeley's arts and culture sector remained tied to in-person engagement. While many organizations worked hard to provide online content and cultural experiences, virtual substitutes could not replicate the community connection of live experiences nor meaningfully make up for revenue shortfalls. Moreover, many organizations continued to shoulder fixed costs, such as leases, insurance, and baseline staffing. The inability to shed these expenses during more than a year of shutdown meant reserves were rapidly depleted, forcing some organizations to suspend operations entirely.

Figure 3: Cost of Doing Business Index by Metropolitan Division | 2022



Note: The Cost of Doing Business Index is a Moody's Analytics calculation factoring in labor costs, energy costs, office rent, and tax burden in a given metropolitan division.

Source: Moody's Analytics, CVL Economics.

KEY FINDINGS

IMPACT OF BERKELEY'S PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUNDING FOR ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

Two rounds of Berkeley pandemic relief and recovery grant programs were administered to 88 arts and culture organizations, totaling almost $2.5 million.

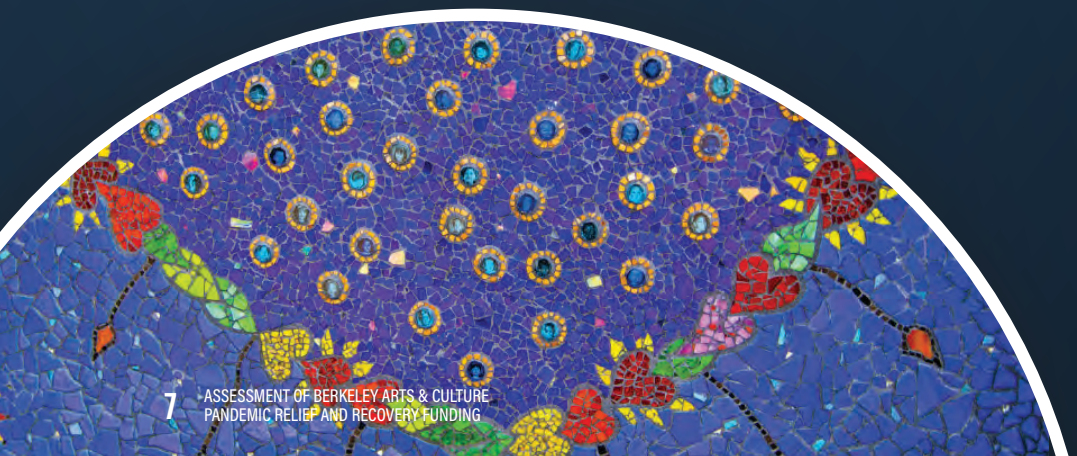
The two rounds were the Arts Organization Continuity Grants ($954,543) in 2020 and the Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (BARG) for Arts Organizations and Festivals ($1.5 million) in 2022.

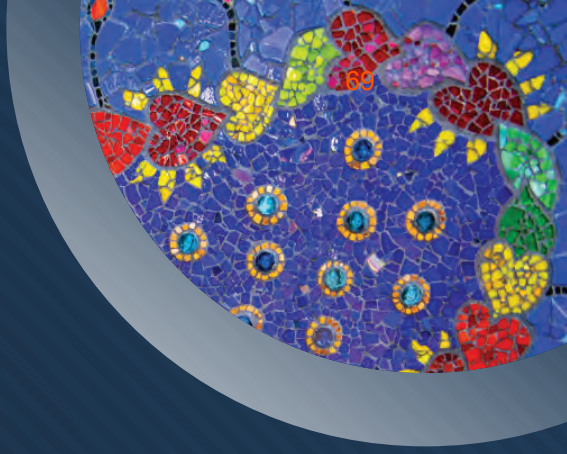
Smaller organizations were the most vulnerable to initial pandemic disruptions.

At the onset of the pandemic, organizations with annual budgets of $500,000 or less saw their revenues drop by nearly 50% on average, compared to a 30% decline among mid-sized organizations ($500k–$1M) and about a 40% decline among large organizations (over $1M). This sharper decline highlights how limited reserves and thinner margins left smaller organizations far more vulnerable to the initial shock.

Relief and recovery funding was broadly seen as critical, helping most organizations avoid layoffs and business closure entirely.

Nearly 83% of Arts Organization Continuity Grant (2020) and 90% of BARG (2022) recipients rated their Berkeley pandemic relief and recovery grant(s) as either "very helpful" or "essential." The remaining organizations, which were larger in size, described the funding as "moderately helpful." Importantly, the vast majority of grantees (up to 84%) credited the grants with preventing both organizational shutdowns and employee layoffs during the most acute months of the pandemic.





Arts Organization Continuity Grants (2020) served as an immediate lifeline.

Issued at the height of uncertainty in May 2020, these grants kept doors open during the first wave of shutdowns. Arts Organization Continuity Grants reached organizations before many other federal, state, and local relief programs. However, their impact tended to be short-term: most grantees (84%) stated funds sustained operations for less than six months, 11% said funds lasted 6-12 months, and just 5% stated funds lasted a year or more. Even so, the immediacy of this funding was critical; more organizations attributed the Arts Organization Continuity Grant as helping them avoid layoffs (85%) and closures (84%) than the BARG (2022) program. Over half of the recipients stated the grants helped them survive the pandemic period but left no lasting impact.

Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (2022) offered stabilization and transformation.

Distributed in a more stable but still challenging environment in 2022, BARG enabled longer-term planning and adaptation. 22% of recipients stated the funding lasted 6–12 months, and 11% reported funding lasting a year or more. Nearly one in five (19%) described the grants as transformative—compared to just 5% of Arts Organization Continuity grantees—and almost half (48%) credited the funds with helping them stabilize and make strategic changes. 70% of BARG recipients credited the grant for avoiding layoffs and 74% for avoiding business closure.

Many arts & culture organizations received both rounds of funding, which extended impact beyond any single cycle.

A majority of grantees (49 of 88) benefited from receiving both the 2020 Arts Organization Continuity Grant and the 2022 BARG. This sequencing mattered: the first round provided a lifeline in the immediate aftermath of shutdowns, while the second arrived during a difficult reopening phase marked by inflation, workforce shifts, and lagging consumer engagement. Taken together, the two rounds of support compounded one another, allowing organizations not only to survive the immediate crisis but also to weather the prolonged and unpredictable recovery period. In this way, limited local dollars stretched across multiple years of disruption, amplifying their effect far beyond what a single grant cycle could have achieved.

IMPACT OF BERKELEY'S PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUNDING FOR ARTS & CULTURE INDIVIDUALS[5]



Three Berkeley pandemic relief and recovery grant programs were administered to arts and culture individuals residing and practicing in Berkeley, totaling over $520,000.

The three programs were the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund ($64,500 to Berkeley residents) in 2020, the Berkeley Art Works Project (BAWP; $182,339) in 2021, and the BARG for Artists and Cultural Practitioners ($276,250) in 2022.

While the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund (2020) and BARG (2022) programs provided unrestricted funds to Berkeley's arts and culture workers, BAWP (2021) supported paid temporary visual and performing arts projects in public spaces. Instead of serving as direct stimulus assistance, BAWP (inspired by the Depression-era Works Progress Administration) functioned more like traditional income, employing artists who might otherwise have been working locally in theaters or other cultural venues, and redirecting their talents into community-based creative projects.

Individual grants covered the equivalent of up to nearly four months of housing costs.

Grants provided immediate relief for artists facing significant reductions in income, often covering essential living costs like rent, groceries, and medical bills. When measured against the median individual housing cost in Berkeley ($1,100/month), the impact becomes clear: East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund awards covered over one month of housing, BARG awards covered more than two months, and BAWP awards stretched nearly four months. Even this short-term coverage of basic living expenses mattered enormously for artists, and in some cases represented the difference between staying in Berkeley or being displaced.

Relief and recovery programs advanced equity and reached those most impacted.

Grants were mostly awarded to historically underrepresented artists, including Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and multi-racial cultural workers. More than half of grantees reported losing at least 50% of their arts-related income in 2020, with nearly one-quarter losing 90–100%, showing funding reached those in greatest need.

[5] While pandemic relief funding supported both organizations and individuals, this assessment focuses primarily on organizations. Relief to individual artists in Berkeley was important, and a high-level assessment is included, however the anonymity of individual grant awards limited the availability of detailed data. In addition, organizations serve as anchors for artists and the community and are more deeply established within communities, making their stability a clearer lens into the overall health of the creative ecosystem.



LONG-TERM OUTCOMES FOR ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

Every $1 in City funding leveraged at least $5.64 in ongoing arts and culture economic activity.

The City's $2.5 million investment in arts and culture organizations during the years spanning 2020 to 2022 helped safeguard more than $12.9 million in arts and culture revenue that otherwise would have been lost. This translates to every $1 of City pandemic emergency funding having leveraged at least $5.64 in arts and culture economic activity. This return captures not only the direct operations of arts and culture organizations, but also the ripple effects through local suppliers, contractors, and service providers.

17 of the 88 grantee organizations or 19% (of both relief and recovery programs to arts and culture organizations) closed permanently between 2020–2024, the majority of which were very small organizations.

Nine of the 28 grantee organizations with operating budgets under $100,000 closed, the highest number of any group. But large organizations were also not immune; two of the 13 institutions with revenues between $1M-$2M also shut down, as did two of the 11 organizations with operating budgets over $2 million. This pattern shows that while scale and resources provided some resilience, no segment of the sector was fully insulated. The loss of larger organizations—typically those with the broadest audiences or consumer base, most extensive programming, and greatest fundraising capacity—underscore the vulnerability of even the city's established cultural institutions.

Revenue for the 71 surviving grantees sits 9% below pre-pandemic levels, though the 62 smaller surviving organizations, with budgets less than $2 million, fared relatively better over time.

In 2024, grantee median revenue sat 9% below the 2019 benchmark. That said, smaller grantee organizations that are still operational have fared relatively better over time than their larger peers. For many of these groups, Berkeley's relief and recovery funds represented a substantial share of their annual budgets—sometimes covering the bulk of operating revenue in a given year. This scale of support often made the difference between survival and closure, allowing small organizations not only to stay afloat but also to begin rebuilding sooner than larger institutions, which in some cases remain more deeply destabilized.

The 9 larger organizations with budgets over $2 million that received grant funding faced deeper structural challenges, with current revenues sitting 33% below pre-pandemic levels.

For larger organizations, City relief and recovery grants accounted for a smaller share of overall budgets, limiting their ability to offset the steep financial shocks of the pandemic. As a result, for organizations with operating budgets over $1 million, funding was often described as moderately helpful rather than transformative. By 2024, revenues at these larger organizations remained one-third below 2019 benchmarks—far below the average 9% decline across all grantees.

Broader economic challenges are compounding strain across Berkeley arts organizations of all sizes.

Expenses have risen much faster than income, and earned revenue has been slow to rebound, leaving organizations more reliant on contributed income. Additionally, performing arts venues in particular continue to struggle with reduced attendance and shrinking subscriber bases. As a result of both of these factors, and a changed federal funding for the arts landscape, competition for public sector and philanthropic support has intensified, making recovery uneven, precarious, and difficult for arts organizations. Compounding these challenges, downtown revitalization struggles—including empty storefronts, reduced foot traffic, and heightened safety and transportation concerns—have made it more difficult for some arts venues to fully reestablish themselves as hubs of community life.

Together, these findings illustrate that while the pandemic-era grants were not sufficient in resolving every financial challenge for Berkeley's artists and arts organizations, they served as a lifeline. For many organizations, relief and recovery funding was the difference between survival and closure during unprecedented times, ensuring that Berkeley's arts and culture ecosystem remained intact long enough to begin navigating the long road to recovery.

PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FOR ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

Eighty-eight arts and culture organizations received at least one of the two pandemic relief and recovery grants, with 49 organizations receiving both the Arts Organization Continuity Grant in 2020 and BARG in 2022 (Figure 4). Together, these programs directed nearly $2.5 million in emergency support to the sector, which provided targeted financial assistance to help organizations weather immediate losses, retain staff, and adapt to rapidly changing conditions.

ARTS ORGANIZATION CONTINUITY GRANTS (2020)

In response to the immediate financial crisis faced by arts organizations during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Berkeley launched the Arts Organization Continuity Grants program in March 2020. This program was funded directly by the City of Berkeley's General Fund Catastrophic Reserve. The program ultimately awarded $954,53 in emergency funding to 63 local nonprofit arts organizations. Grants of up to $25,000 (with an average award of approximately $15,150) were distributed in May 2020 to organizations that demonstrated a loss of at least 25% in earned revenue, such as ticket sales, class fees, or venue rentals.

The program was designed as emergency gap funding to stabilize organizations experiencing acute financial hardship. Eligibility was limited to Berkeley-based organizations with a mission focused on the development or presentation of arts and culture, including fiscally sponsored entities. In keeping with the City's 2018 Arts & Culture Plan and commitment to cultural equity, applications were evaluated not only on financial need but also on equity-centered criteria, such as whether the organization worked primarily with artists from historically marginalized communities, served underrepresented audiences, operated in geographically underserved parts of Berkeley, or had a staff and board composition reflective of diverse communities.

BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS AND FESTIVALS (2022)

In 2022, the City of Berkeley distributed over $1.5 million in one-time Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (BARG) to 74 nonprofit arts organizations and recurring festivals as part of its broader pandemic recovery strategy. Funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars, the BARG program was designed to support sustainable recovery for Berkeley's arts sector after nearly two years of widespread disruption in the sector as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Award amounts ranged from $3,000 to $33,000, with an average award of approximately $20,700 per organization.

Eligible applicants included Berkeley-based nonprofit or fiscally sponsored arts organizations and recurring festivals that had experienced a decline in revenue between 2019 and 2020. Awards were determined through a scoring system that prioritized organizations serving or led by historically marginalized communities, with 70% of the evaluation focused on cultural equity factors such as programming by or for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, low-income, disabled, senior, or unhoused populations. Funds could be used to offset lost revenue, support safe reopening efforts, or invest in long-term sustainability through marketing, consulting, or business planning.

Figure 4: Summary of Berkeley Pandemic Relief and Recovery Grants for Arts & Culture Organizations

	PROGRAM YEAR	RECIPIENT TYPE	NUMBER OF GRANTEES	TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED	AVERAGE GRANT AWARDED
ARTS ORGANIZATION CONTINUITY GRANTS	2020	Nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored arts and culture organizations	63	$954,543	$15,151
BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS AND FESTIVALS	2022	Nonprofit or fiscally-sponsored arts and culture organizations and festivals	74	$1,532,345	$20,707

Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.



PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY GRANT IMPACT FOR ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

Although grantees varied in focus, size, and diversity, all Berkeley organizations faced acute financial hardships resulting from the pandemic, and for many, this persists into the present day. The scale of these challenges is underscored by the grantees themselves, who reported widespread disruptions to programming, facilities, and core revenue streams as the pandemic unfolded.

To better understand how Berkeley's pandemic relief and recovery funding shaped the local arts ecosystem, CVL Economics surveyed grantee organizations. Of the 88 organizations that received support through the Arts Organization Continuity Grant (2020) or the Berkeley Arts Recovery Grant (BARG; 2022), 30 completed the survey, providing valuable insights into both the immediate and lasting effects of the City's investment.[6]

COVID-19 Disruptions

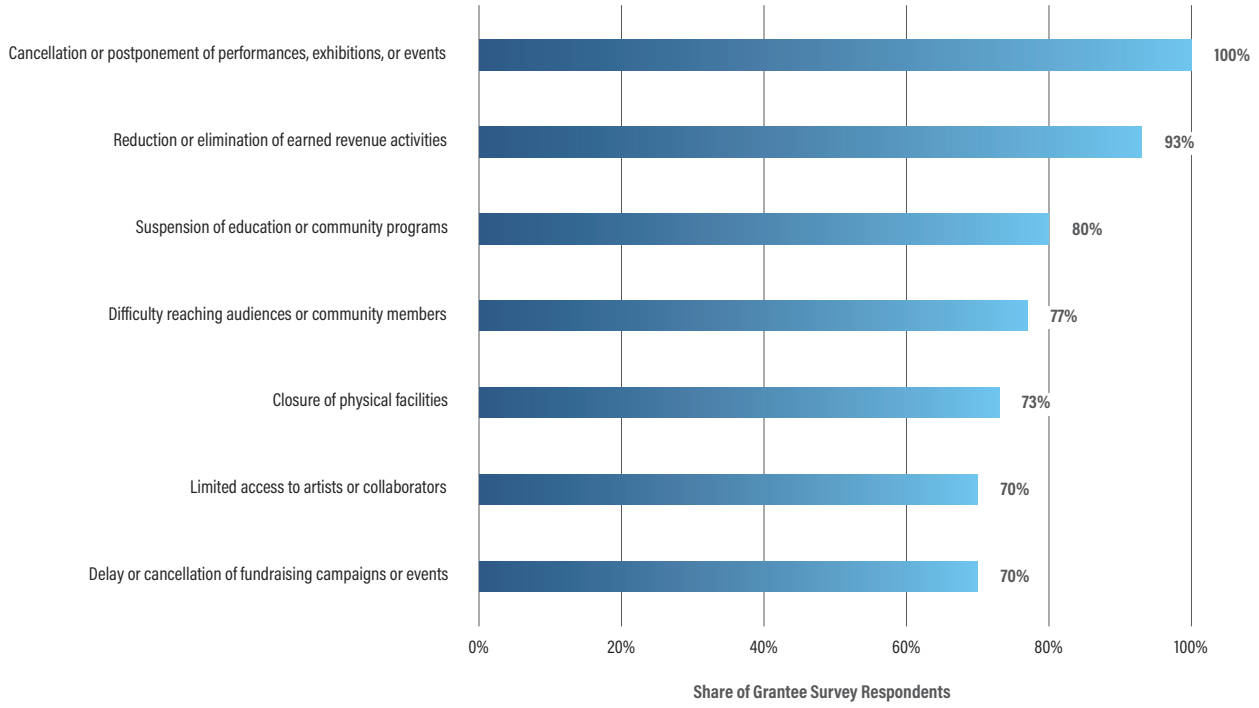
At the onset of the pandemic in mid-March 2020, every grantee organization had to cancel or postpone performances, exhibitions, or events. In a survey of grant recipients conducted five years later, in June 2025, 80% reported suspended education or community programs; and more than 73% were forced to close their physical facilities, resulting in the reduction or elimination of key earned revenue activities (Figure 5). Another 70% reported having to delay or cancel critical fundraising campaigns, cutting off vital revenue streams at a moment when operational expenses remained constant or, in some cases, increased due to safety measures.

Community connection was also severely disrupted by the pandemic in Berkeley. Nearly 77% of respondents reported difficulties reaching audiences or community members, a challenge compounded by the digital divide and the learning curve associated with pivoting to online programming. Limited access to artists, collaborators, and essential partners was cited by 70% of organizations, underscoring how the pandemic fractured the networks that sustain creative production.

The employment landscape in Berkeley in this sector shifted dramatically as well (Figure 6). Forty-three percent (43%) of arts organizations implemented temporary layoffs or furloughs, 40% imposed hiring freezes, and 13% faced permanent position eliminations. These staffing impacts not only affected the livelihoods of arts workers but also reduced organizational capacity, making recovery more difficult even after restrictions eased.

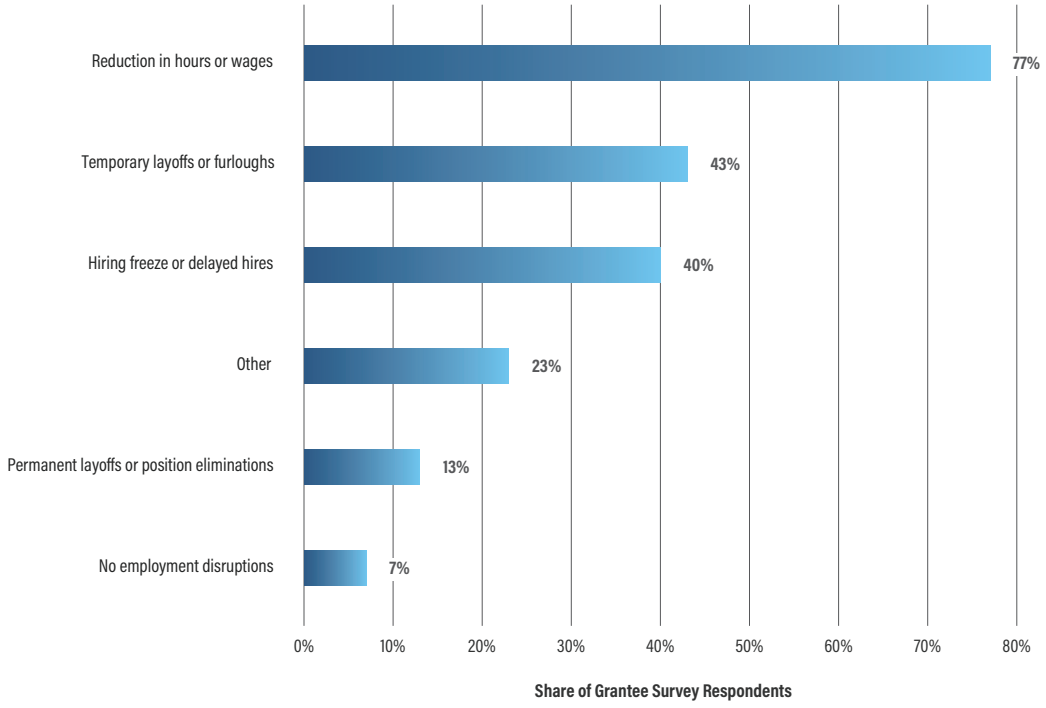
[6] See Appendix A.1 for more details on survey methodology.

Figure 5: Immediate COVID-19 Disruptions Experienced by Berkeley Arts Organizations



N=30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

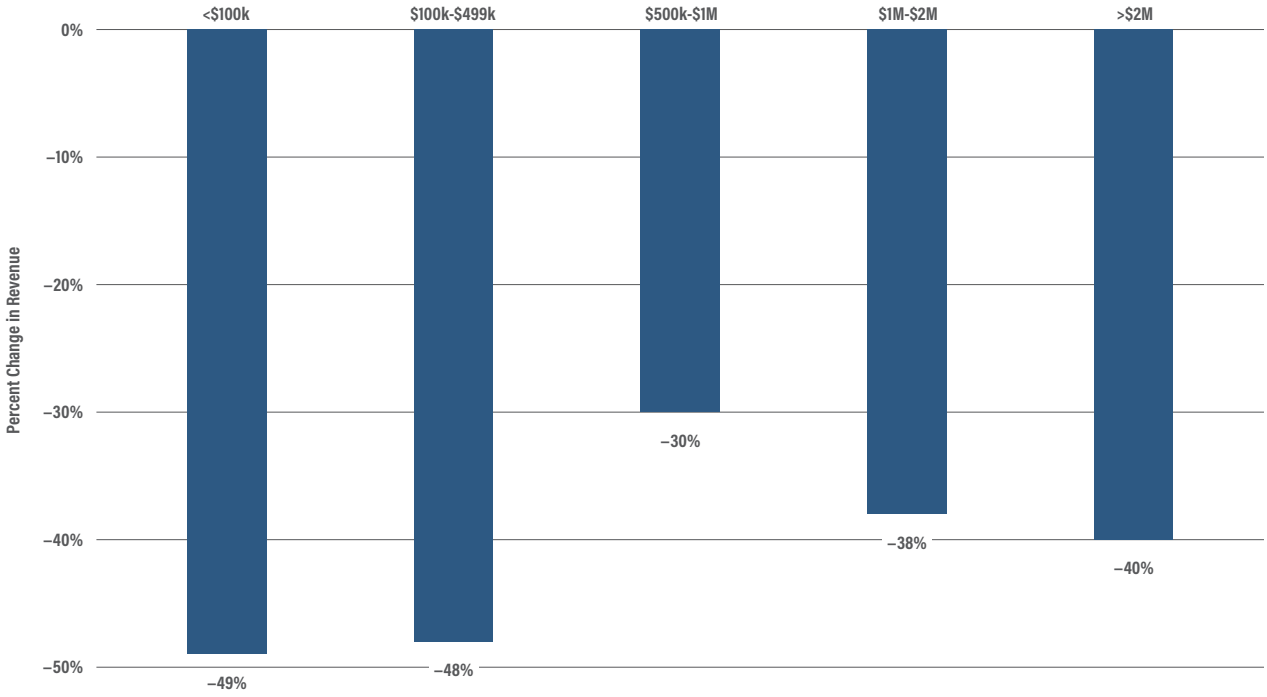
Figure 6: Immediate COVID-19 Employment Disruptions Experienced by Berkeley Arts Organizations



N=30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

The financial toll of these disruptions is reflected in the immediate revenue loss experienced by grantee organizations (Figure 7). Across the 74 BARG grantees, average revenue fell by 44% between 2019 and 2020. The depth of these losses varied significantly by organization size. The smallest organizations—those with annual budgets under $100,000—were hit the hardest, with revenues dropping nearly 50% on average. Mid-sized organizations with budgets between $500,000 and $1 million saw the least severe declines, though they still averaged a 30% loss. Large organizations with budgets over $2 million were not immune either, facing an average revenue reduction of 40% at the onset of the pandemic.

Figure 7: Grantee Revenue Loss by Organization Size | 2019–2020



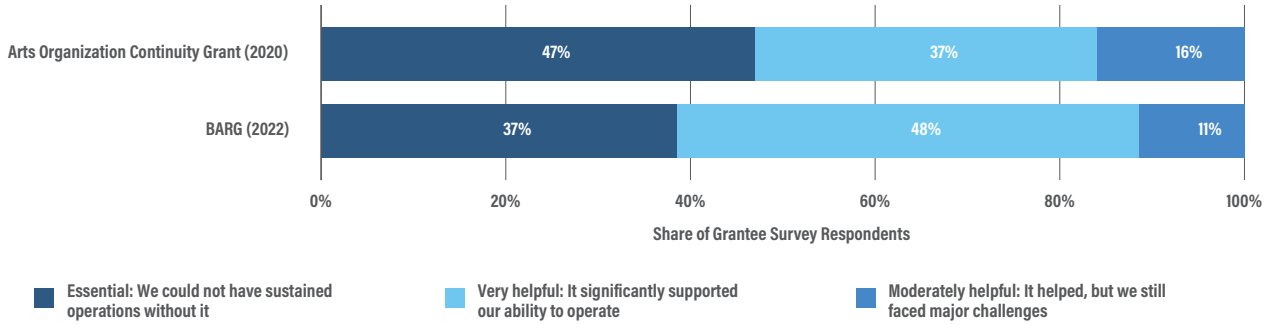
Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

IMMEDIATE IMPACTS: ROLE OF PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUNDING

Berkeley's pandemic relief and recovery grants for arts and cultural organizations were not just helpful but essential for many grantees (Figure 8). Nearly half of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients (47%) and more than a third of BARG recipients (37%) said they could not have sustained operations without the grant. Another 37% of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients and 48% of BARG grantees reported that the funding was very helpful, significantly supporting their ability to continue operating.

The grants played a pivotal role in preventing widespread layoffs and closures. Eighty-four percent (84%) of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients and 70% of BARG recipients said the grants helped them avoid workforce reductions, protecting jobs during the most precarious months of the pandemic (Figure 9). Similarly, 84% of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients and 74% of BARG recipients said the funding prevented them from permanently shutting down (Figure 10).

Figure 8: Extent to Which Pandemic Relief and Recovery Funding Was Essential Among Berkeley's Grant Recipients



N=30
Note: Responses were measured on a five-point scale from "Not at all helpful" to "Essential." No respondents selected either of the two ratings below "Moderately helpful."
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure 9: Share of Grantees That Avoided Layoffs Due to the Grants

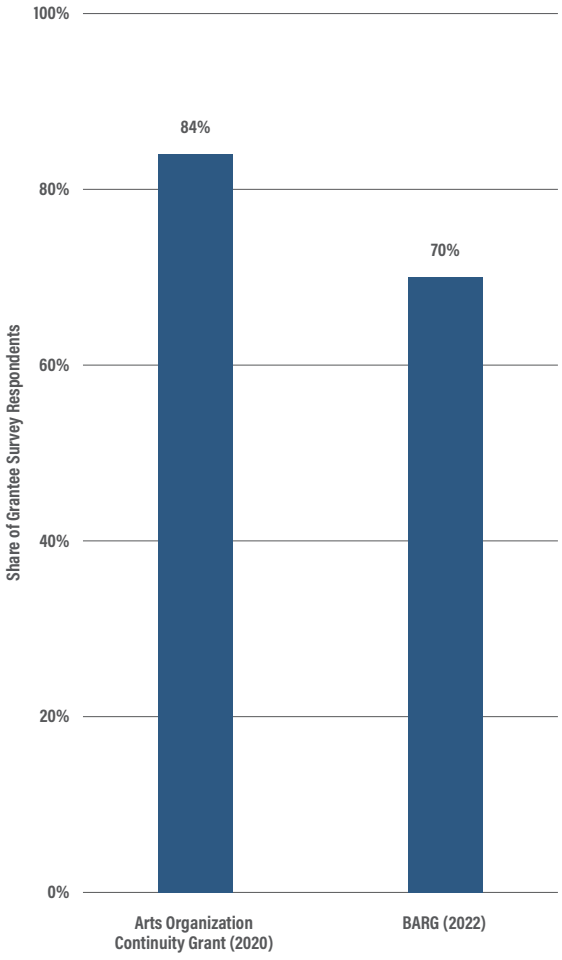
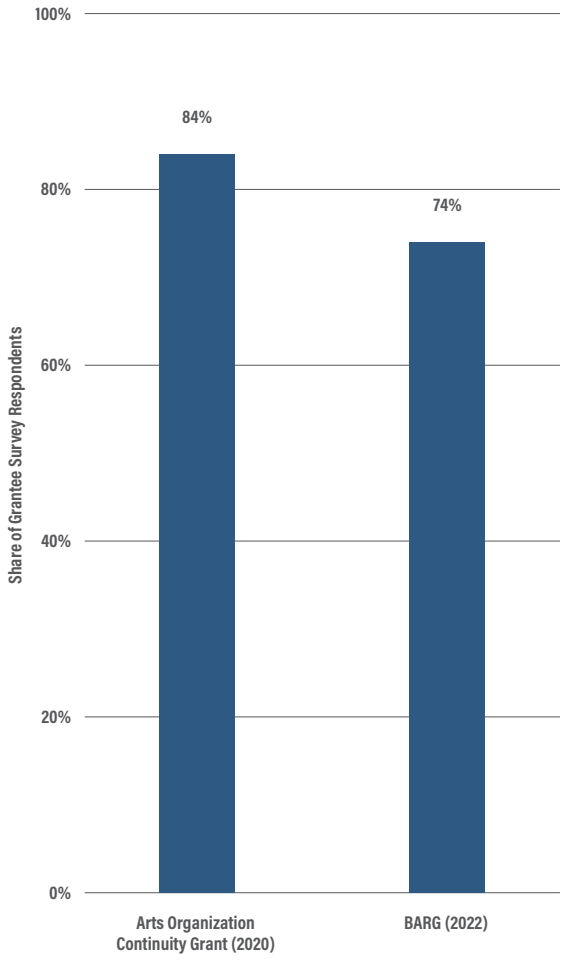


Figure 10: Share of Grantees That Avoided Closure Due to the Grants

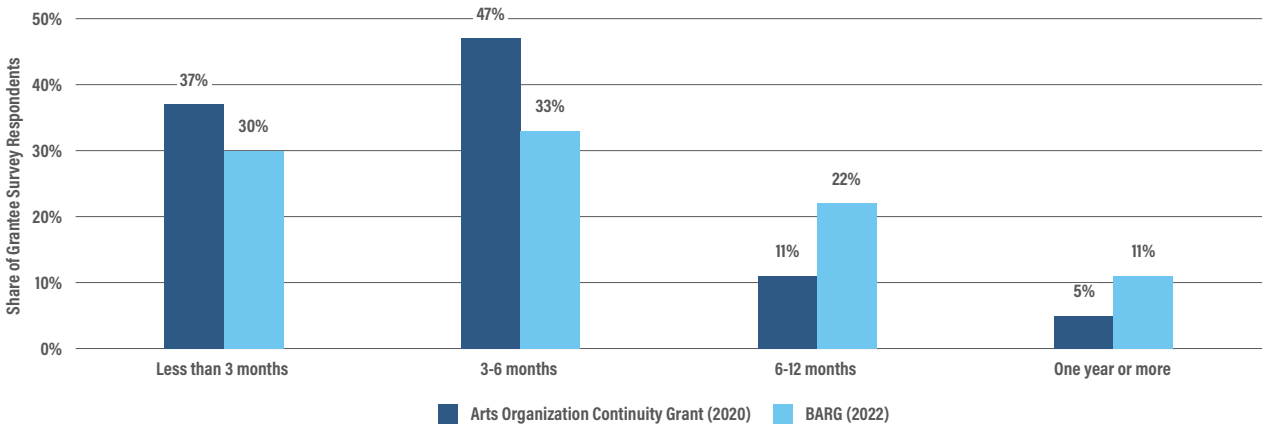


N=30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Given their distribution in the earliest stages of the pandemic, the Arts Organization Continuity Grants provided critical short-term relief, serving as a bridge during the early days of the pandemic and sustaining arts organizations until other assistance programs became available. For many organizations, the funding was the difference between survival and immediate closure. That said, the support tended to last for a shorter duration and left fewer long-term organizational changes in place than the BARG program. Most (84%) Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients said the funding lasted less than 6 months (Figure 11). More than half (53%) of recipients reported that the funds helped them survive the pandemic but did not generate lasting impact, and only 5% described the funding as transformative (Figure 12).

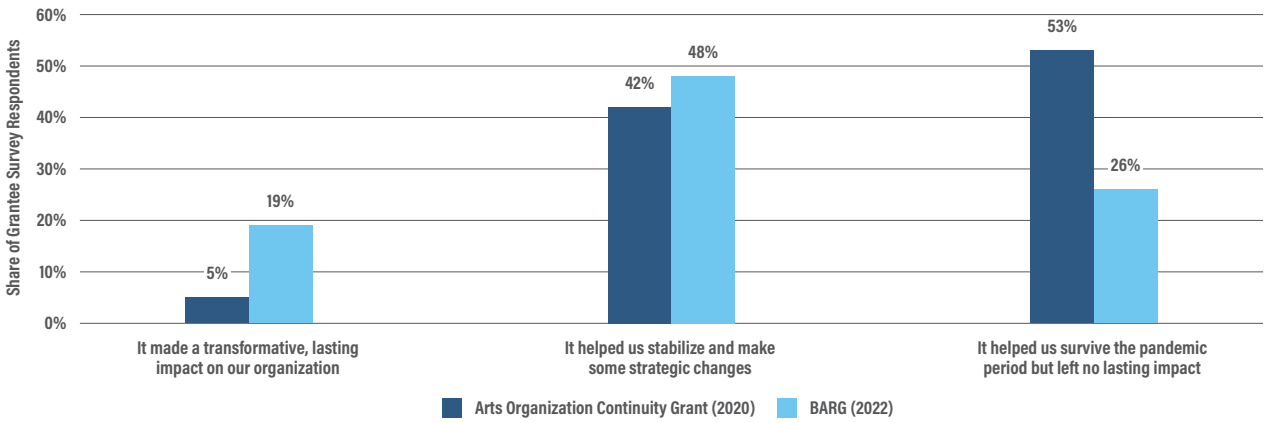
By contrast, BARG—issued at a time when most organizations had transitioned from response to recovery phases— tended to have a broader effect. The grants were generally larger, conditions had shifted toward reopening, the "new normal" was settling in, and organizations were positioned to leverage fiscal support for longer-term stability. Reflecting this, nearly half of BARG recipients (48%) said the grants helped them stabilize and make strategic changes, and almost one in five (19%) reported transformative, lasting impacts. Even in terms of duration, BARG funding stretched further: a third of recipients reported that it sustained operations for six months or more.

Figure 11: Length of Time Grants Sustained Operations in Berkeley



N=30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure 12: Scale of Grant Impact on Berkeley Arts and Culture Organizations



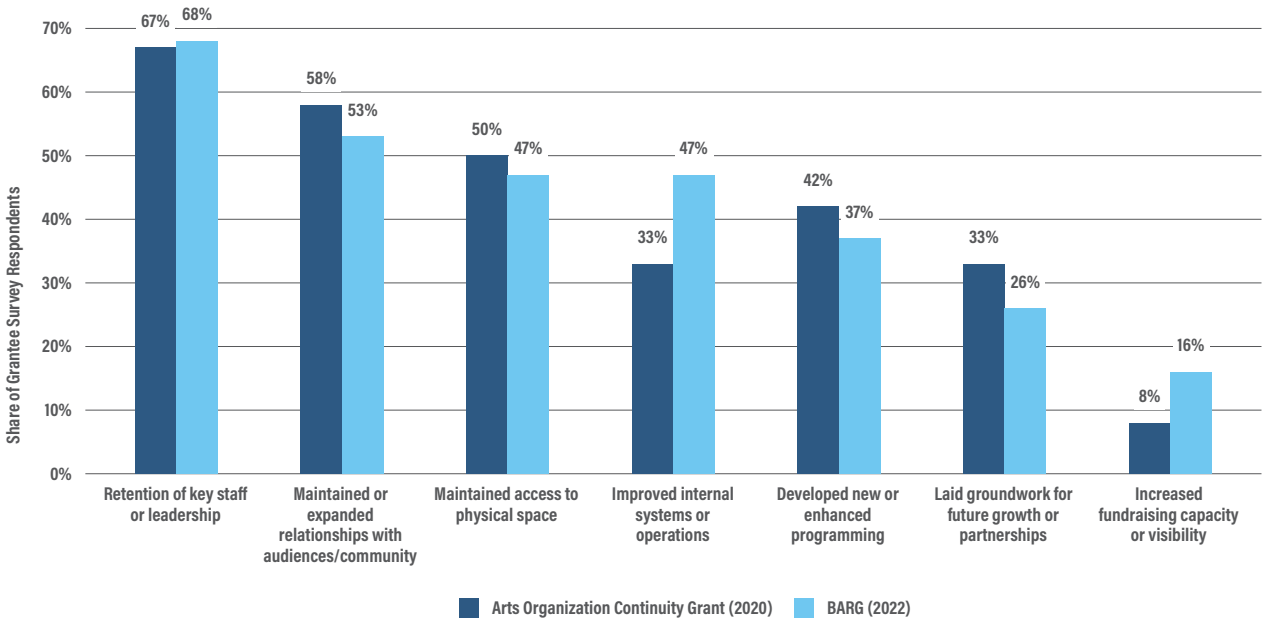
N=30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Organizations reported that relief and recovery funding helped them retain staff and leadership (67% of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients and 68% of BARG recipients) (Figure 13). More than half credited the grants with enabling them to maintain or expand relationships with their audiences and communities (58% and 53%, respectively), and nearly half of grantees noted that the funding allowed them to sustain access to physical spaces.

Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients were more likely than BARG recipients to report developing new or enhanced programming (42% vs. 37%). This difference likely reflects the urgent pivot many organizations were forced to make at the height of the pandemic crisis—rapidly adapting to online or hybrid formats, experimenting with digital content, and reimagining community engagement in a socially distanced world. In other words, the Arts Organization Continuity Grant helped seed immediate programmatic adjustments that allowed organizations to stay connected with their audiences under extraordinary circumstances.

By contrast, the BARG program in 2022 was more about strengthening internal systems, fundraising, and longer-term stabilization as organizations adjusted to a new operating environment. Nearly half of BARG recipients (47%) reported using funds to improve internal systems and operations, compared to just a third of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients. Additionally, 16% of BARG grantees said the funds helped increase fundraising capacity or visibility, compared to 8% of Arts Organization Continuity Grant recipients.

Figure 13: Detailed Impact of Relief and Recovery Grants for Berkeley Arts and Culture Organizations



N=30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

The distinction between the two grant programs points to a critical shift in focus of the City's approach to pandemic relief and recovery across the arts and culture sector. While the earlier Arts Continuity Grant program was more focused on immediate survival, the BARG program was better positioned to help organizations adapt to a new normal by strengthening infrastructure and building capacity to generate new revenue. Notably, most organizations (49 out of the 88 grantees) were able to benefit from both rounds of relief and recovery funding. This compounded support allowed grantees not only to weather the initial crisis but also to remain afloat during the prolonged and unpredictable recovery period, extending the effect of the funding well beyond a single grant cycle.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES: WHERE GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS STAND IN 2025

Five years since the onset of the pandemic, we can begin to see the longer-term impacts on Berkeley's arts and culture ecosystem. The initial shock was compounded by rising costs for labor, rent, and production; challenges rebuilding and retaining staff; slower-than-expected audience and consumer engagement recovery; and changes in the funding landscape.

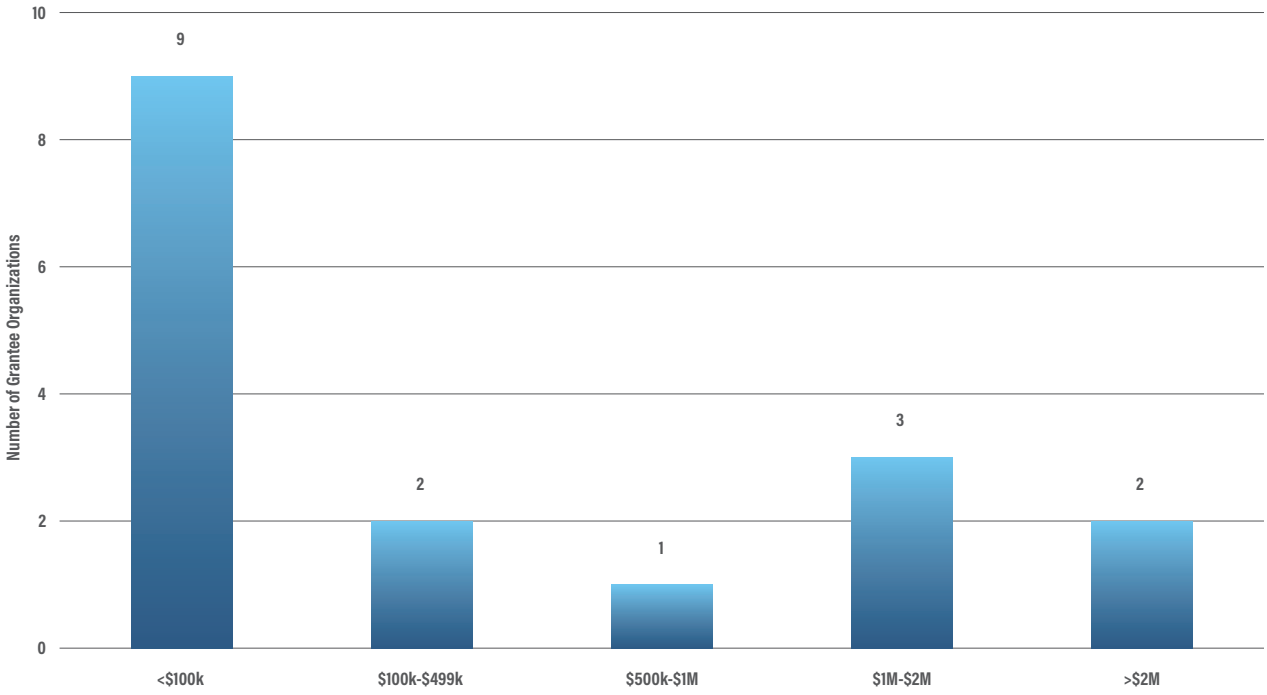
Organizational Closures

Despite the critical role of relief and recovery funding, not all grantee organizations were able to withstand the prolonged pressures of the pandemic and its aftermath. Between 2020 and 2024, 17 grantee organizations ultimately closed. Of those 17 organizations, the vast majority were small (Figure 14). The steepest losses were among grantees with annual budgets under $100,000: nine organizations of this size were unable to continue operating. Mid-sized organizations fared better, with only one organization closing with a budget between $500,000 and $1 million. Larger organizations also experienced notable losses: five organizations with budgets over $1 million closed during this period. Among the closures were two of Berkeley's established and well-known institutions: the Bay Area Children's Theatre in 2023 (which had an operating budget exceeding $3 million) and the Aurora Theatre Company in 2025.[7]

This pattern shows that while scale and resources provided some resilience, no segment of the sector was fully insulated. For larger organizations—typically those with the broadest audiences or consumer base, most extensive programming, and greatest fundraising capacity—such losses underscore the vulnerability of even the city's most established cultural institutions.

[7] At the time of writing, Aurora Theatre Company has not officially announced a permanent closure, but it has announced staff layoffs and the closure of its venue; for the purposes of this analysis, we are considering it closed. See: Lily Janiak, "Bay Area Theater Moves to Lay Off Staff, Vacate Downtown Berkeley Venue," August 12, 2025, San Francisco Chronicle, https://www.sfchronicle.com/entertainment/article/aurora-theatre-layoffs-venue-vacate-20813096.php.

Figure 14: Closures Among Berkeley Arts Relief and Recovery Grantee Organizations by Revenue Size



Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

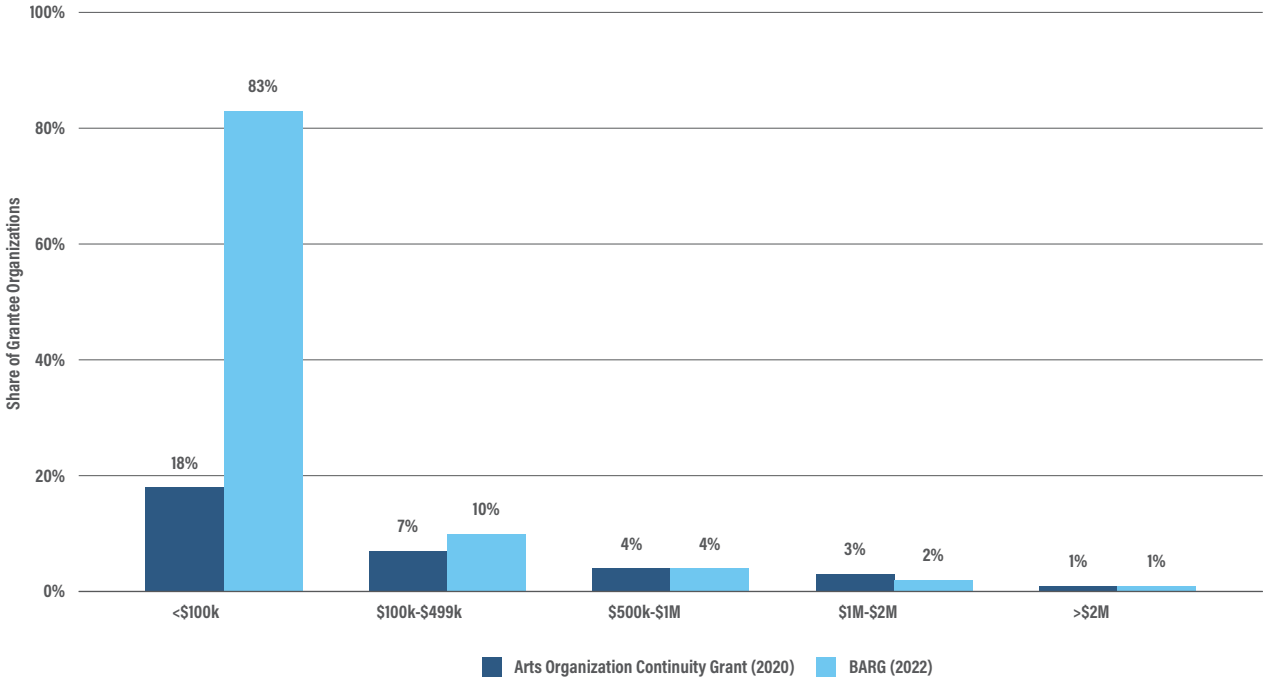
While small organizations were more likely than larger ones to face permanent closure, those that survived often reported that pandemic relief and recovery funding was especially critical to their survival. For organizations with annual budgets under $100,000, the grants represented a larger share of their total operating revenue (Figure 15).

By contrast, larger organizations tended to view the grants as moderately helpful—providing short-term relief without fundamentally altering their financial trajectory. For institutions with budgets exceeding $2 million, the grants made up less than 1% of annual revenue. Notably, because award criteria emphasized equity and demonstrated revenue loss rather than organizational size, some of the smallest organizations received equal or even greater funding amounts than their much larger counterparts. This approach magnified the impact of relief and recovery funds for smaller organizations, and it aligned with the intent of the American Rescue Plan Act (the BARG program leveraged ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds dollars), which explicitly recognized the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities of color and sought to direct resources toward advancing equity in recovery.[8]

The significance of this support comes in light of the fact that more than one-quarter (28%) of grantee organizations reported receiving no other forms of pandemic-related financial assistance (Figure 16). For these organizations, the City of Berkeley's grants meant the difference between survival and closure, particularly for smaller organizations that may have lacked the capacity or access to other federal, state, or county-level programs.

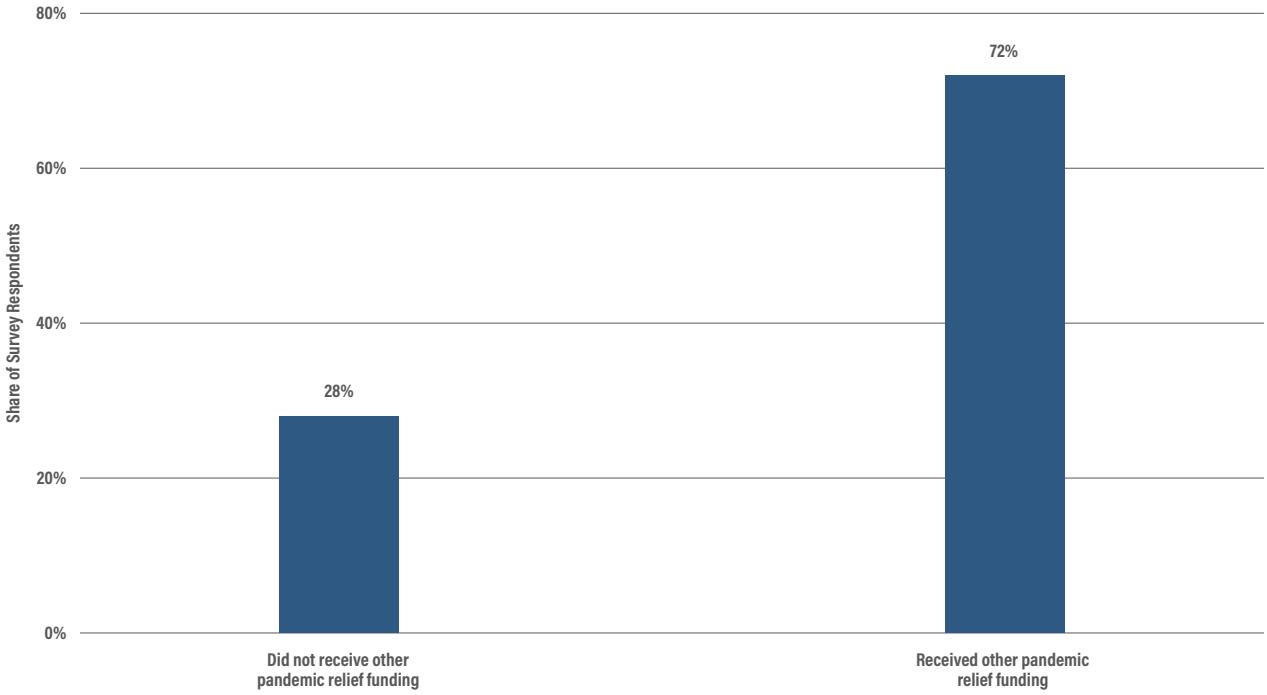
[8] U.S. Department of the Treasury, Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Interim Final Rule, Federal Register, 86(93), 26786–26861 (2021), https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/05/17/2021-10283/coronavirus-state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds.

Figure 15: Average Size of Grant in Proportion to Total Operating Budget by Organization Size



Source: City of Berkeley, Internal Revenue Service, CVL Economics.

Figure 16: Share of Respondents that Received Other Pandemic Relief Support

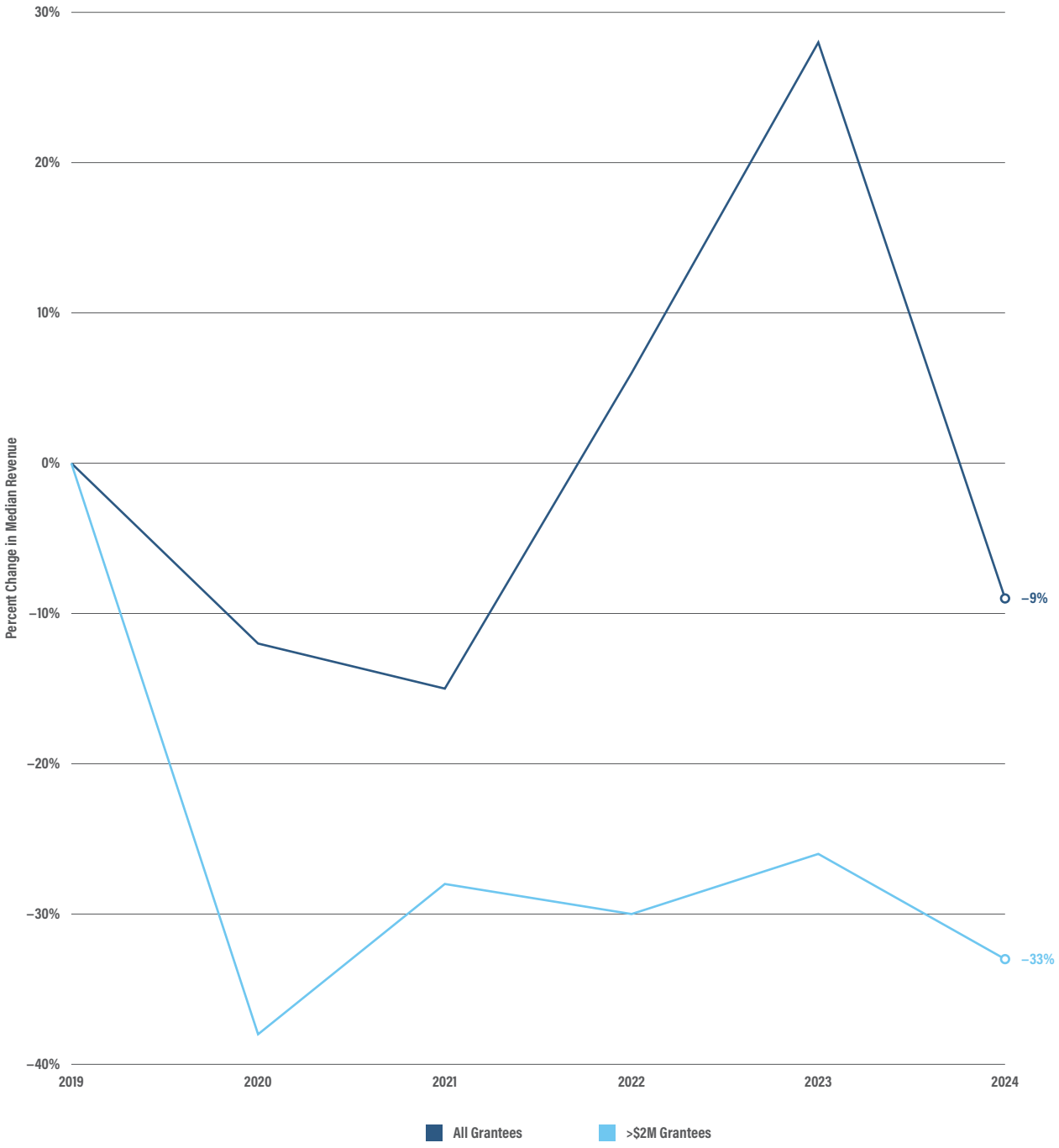


N=30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Evolving Revenue Streams and Rising Costs

By 2024, the median revenue across all surviving grantees was still 9% below pre-pandemic levels—although this was still an improvement from the sector's low point in 2021, when the median revenue had fallen 15% from 2019 (Figure 17). While smaller organizations were far more likely to close their doors permanently, those that survived fared relatively better than the largest organizations over time; the median revenue for grantee organizations with budgets above $2 million, on the other hand, is still one-third below 2019 benchmarks.

Figure 17: Percent Change in Median Surviving Berkeley Grantee Revenue Since 2019



Note: Based on the median inflation-adjusted (2024 dollars) revenue across the 71 surviving grantee organizations.
Source: Internal Revenue Service, CVL Economics.

These patterns map onto broader regional trends: smaller organizations tended to show greater resiliency in recovery than their larger counterparts. A 2024 report on the sustainability of Bay Area performing arts organizations post-pandemic found that micro-organizations (defined as very small organizations, often characterized as those with fewer than 10 employees)—despite being largely excluded from federal relief programs—remained nimble by expanding programs and attendance, maintaining or growing their artistic workforce, and prioritizing community engagement and mission-focused recovery, even as expenses outpaced revenue growth.[9] By contrast, while larger organizations experienced the highest increase in government funding during the pandemic and exceptional federal relief programs kept many of these institutions afloat, those temporary funds are now waning, leaving structural financial gaps behind.

Across the Bay Area, arts organization expenses have risen much faster than income. Between 2022 and 2023, total expenses for regional arts organizations increased by 21% while revenues fell 12%. Earned revenue rebounded by 42% in 2023 but remained 26% below pre-pandemic levels after adjusting for inflation. In-person attendance more than doubled between 2022 and 2023, yet still sat 42% below 2019 levels. As a result, organizations have grown increasingly dependent on contributed income.[10]

These local trends reflect broader national patterns in the nonprofit performing arts sector. Nationwide, total income dropped sharply during the pandemic and, while it has begun to recover, expenses have risen at a much faster pace since 2021 (Figure 18). Regional theaters also report losing 20–30% of subscribers since 2019, eroding a dependable source of earned revenue and compounding these financial pressures.[11]

At the same time, the funding mix has shifted: as earned income has struggled to rebound, contributed income now accounts for a larger share of organizational budgets (Figure 19). Even so, recent budget cycles have become more challenging, with heightened competition for contributed dollars. Many foundations are shifting priorities away from the arts, while federal uncertainty has created a chilling effect nationwide. Proposals from the executive branch to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, to condition or cancel awarded grants, and to impose new ideological restrictions on future eligibility have further undermined confidence for arts organizations across the country.

Locally, these trends are echoed by the experiences of the grantee organizations in Berkeley. Over 81% reported that financial stability remains their most pressing challenge today, followed closely by rising costs (74%) (Figure 20). Nearly half cited the intensifying competition for limited public and private funding as a major barrier and 30% reported access to affordable space as a top challenge. Some organizations also included rebuilding audience engagement and attendance, difficulty retaining or hiring qualified staff, and limited capacity for grant writing or fundraising as top challenges. Understanding these specific challenges helps inform local grantmaking by highlighting where support is most urgently needed—not only in covering rising operating costs, but also in building organizational capacity, sustaining workforce pipelines, and ensuring that cultural offerings remain accessible in Berkeley.

Feedback from stakeholder outreach reinforced these findings. As one organization leader put it, "It's more expensive than ever to operate in the Bay Area. Meanwhile, federal and state support is drying up and audiences have not returned to pre-pandemic levels." This illustrates the compounding pressures organizations now face: not only are operating costs escalating, but audience behavior has shifted in ways that directly affect earned revenue and long-term sustainability.

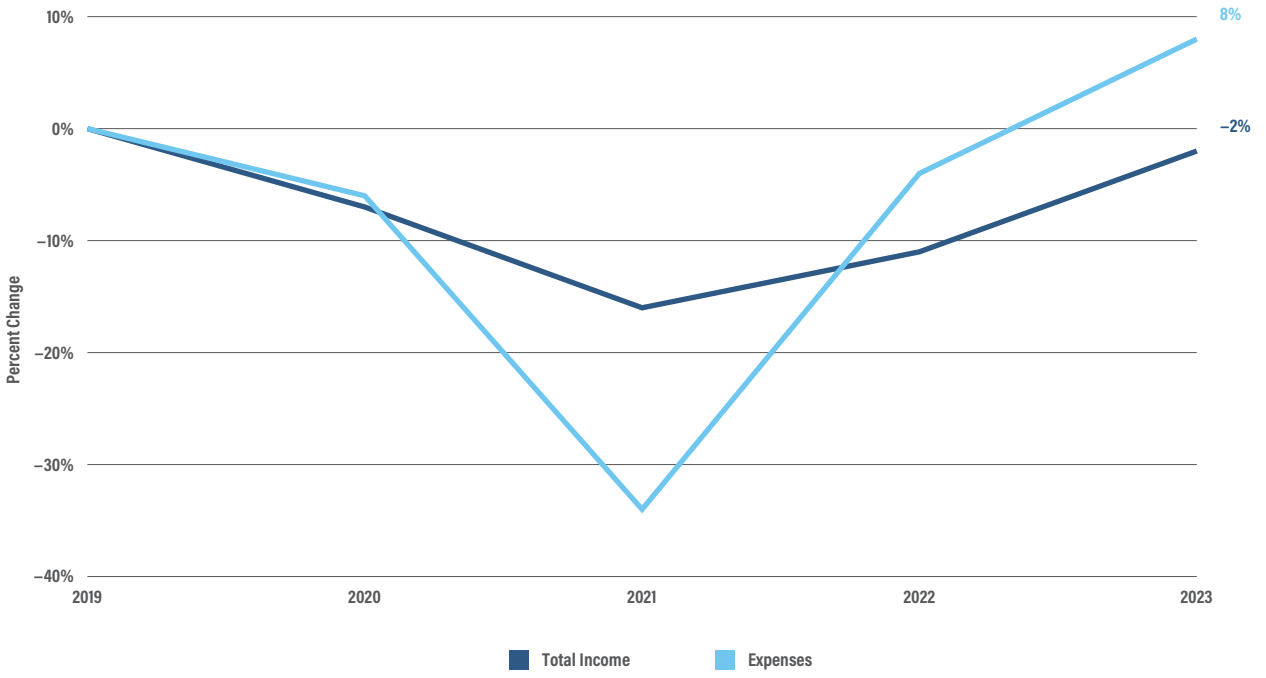
For many, this includes challenges rebuilding traditional subscriber bases. While theatre subscribers had already been in steady decline over a long horizon, the pandemic accelerated this trend—leaving older and more risk-averse audiences slower to return and making it increasingly difficult to rely on subscription revenue as a notable income stream. Berkeley Rep illustrates this shift: at its

[9] Kenneth Rainin Foundation & SMU DataArts at Southern Methodist University, Bay Area Arts and Culture Organizational Sustainability Survey Report: Top line findings, 2019–2023 (2024), https://culturaldata.org/learn/data-at-work/2025/kenneth-rainin-foundation-smu-dataarts-bay-area-sustainability-assessment

[10] Ibid.

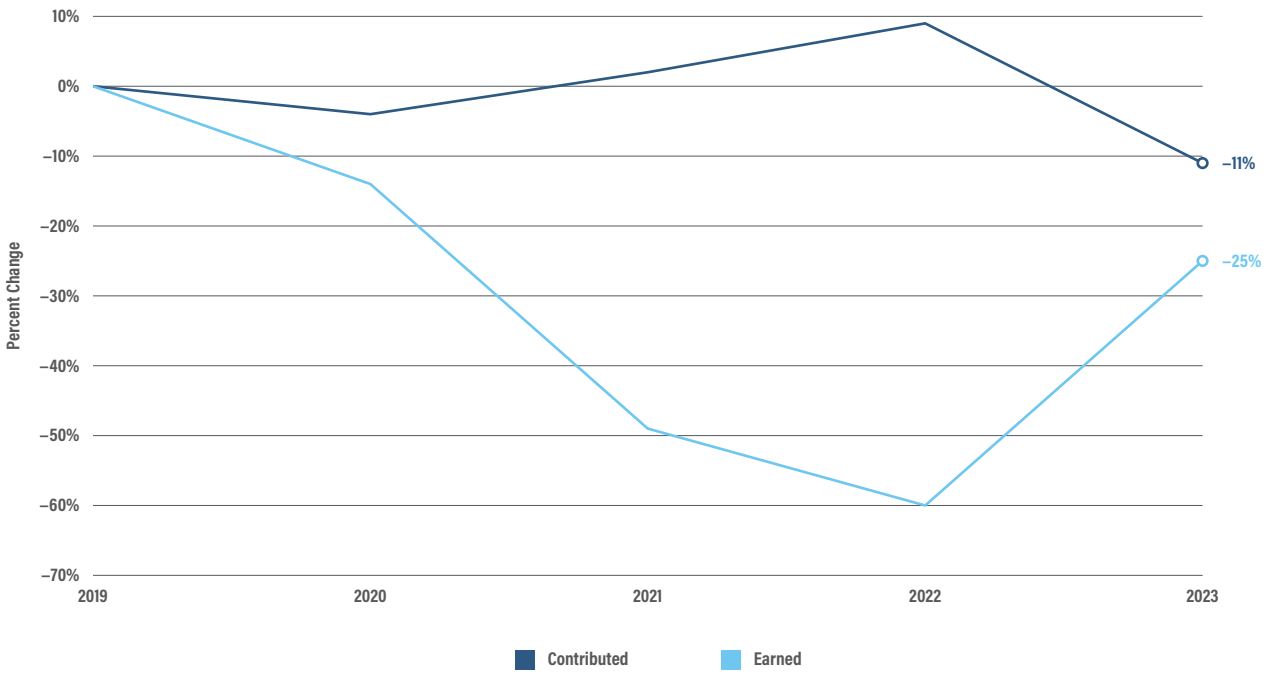
[11] Michael Paulson, "A Crisis in America's Theaters Leaves Prestigious Stages Dark," The New York Times, July 23, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/23/theater/regional-theater-crisis.html.

Figure 18: Percent Change in Total Income and Expenses of Nationwide Nonprofit Performing Arts Organizations Since 2019



Source: Theatre Communications Group, CVL Economics.

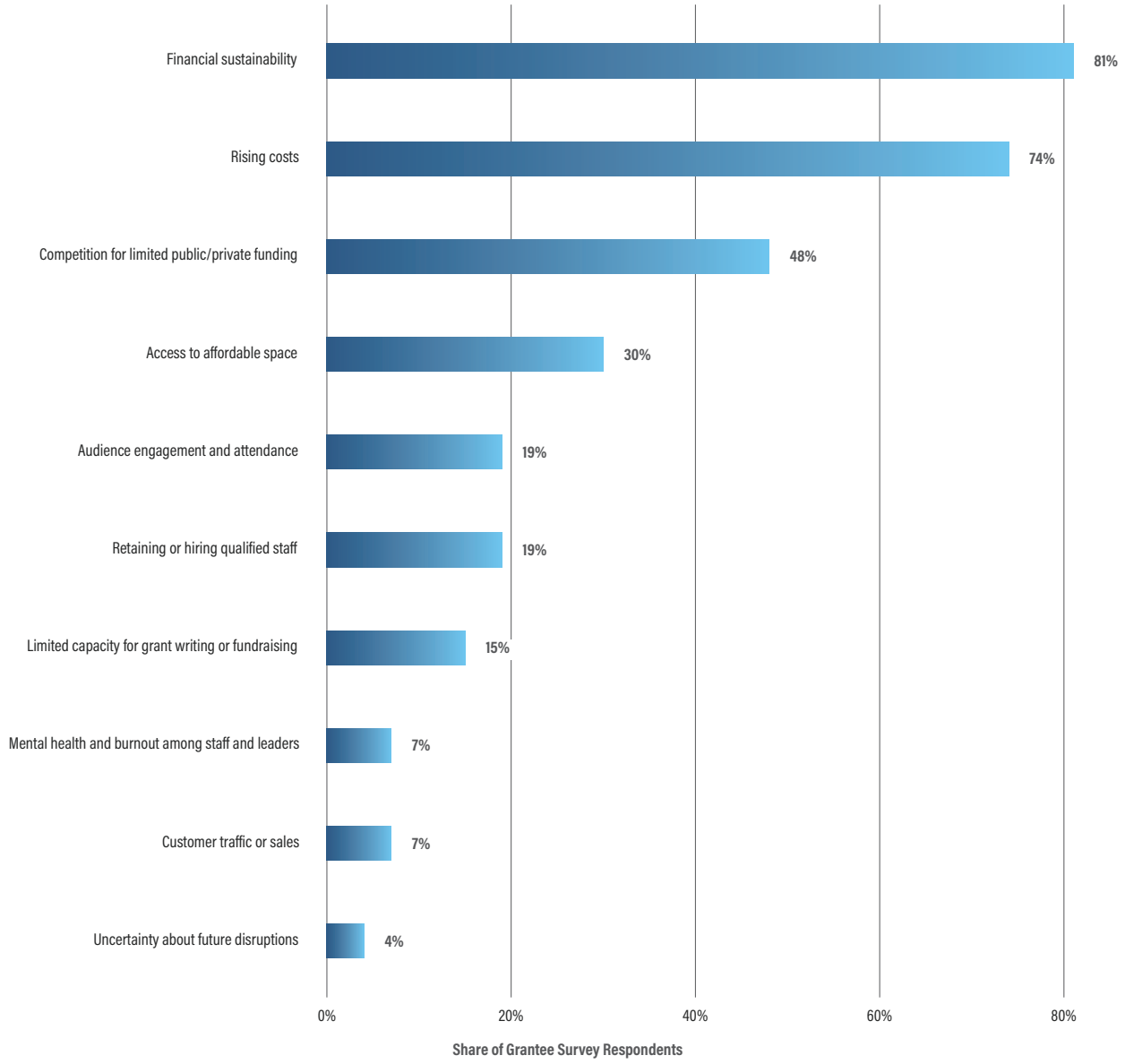
Figure 19: Percent Change in Income Type of Nonprofit Performing Arts Organizations Nationwide since 2019



Source: Theatre Communications Group, CVL Economics.

peak the theatre had about 22,000 season ticket holders, compared to roughly 12,000 just before the pandemic; today subscriptions hover closer to 9,000, with the goal of stabilizing around 10,000—acknowledging it is unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels. While subscriptions rarely make up the majority of a theatre company's revenue, they serve as a critical pipeline for cultivating individual donors—a major source of contributed income. A shrinking subscriber base not only reduces reliable ticket revenue but also weakens the sense of loyalty that often leads patrons to become long-term donors, making fundraising even more difficult.[12]

Figure 20: Top Challenges Berkeley Art and Culture Organization Grantees Face Today



N=30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

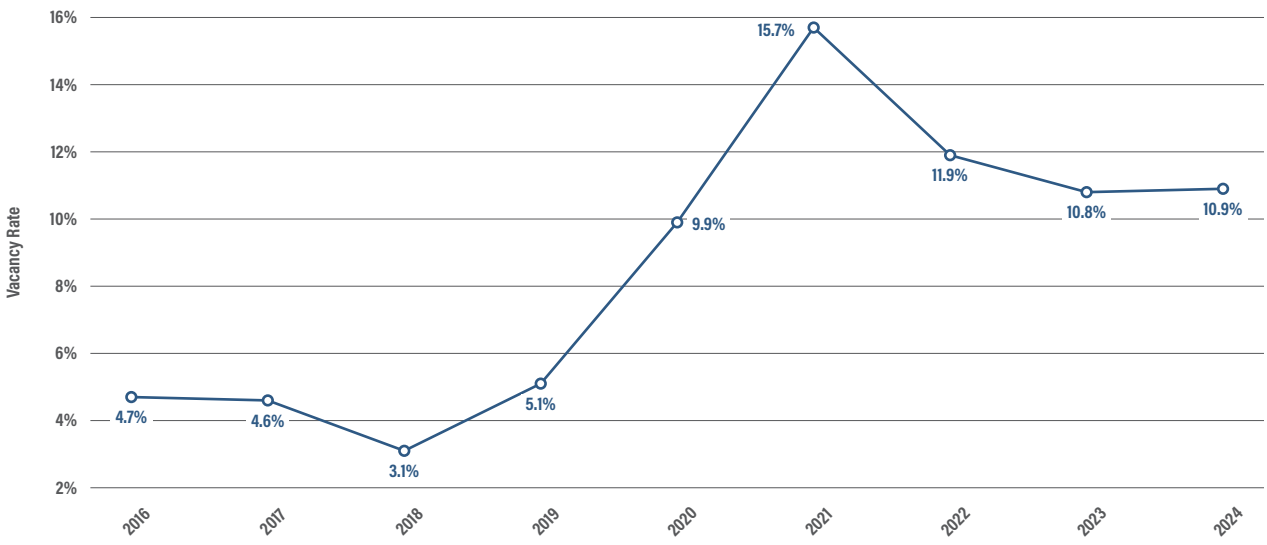
[12] Lily Janiak. "Can Bay Area Theaters Make Subscriptions Sexy Again? A Quick Survey Shows Subscription Declines of 23% to 61% Since the Pandemic." Datebook/San Francisco Chronicle, July 26, 2023. https://datebook.sfchronicle.com/theater/bay-area-theater-subscription-18197863.

Ecosystem Challenges

These financial and audience pressures are compounded by the broader struggles facing Berkeley's urban environment. Empty storefronts, shuttered restaurants, and declining foot traffic have weakened the vibrancy that cultural districts depend on to attract and sustain audiences. As one stakeholder noted, "The Downtown area, like many downtown areas, is visibly struggling to retain tenants and drive foot traffic, which is concerning." "In 2024, Downtown Berkeley's ground floor commercial vacancy rate sat well above pre-pandemic levels (Figure 21). At 10.9%, the vacancy rate was more than double its 3.1% rate in 2019 — driven in large part by the enduring shift to remote and hybrid work, which has sharply reduced demand for traditional office space across the Bay Area. Fewer daily office workers have also meant fewer customers to nearby restaurants, cafés, and shops, which has in turn contributed to a rise in retail vacancies. These economic pressures are compounded by heightened safety concerns and ongoing transportation limitations, which have further reduced accessibility. The result is a more difficult operating environment for cultural organizations: even well-resourced institutions face added headwinds, while smaller and midsize groups struggle most to regain stability.

Across all of these challenges, the recent suspension of Aurora Theatre Company activities in mid-2025 exemplifies how these pressures converge: leadership has pointed to attendance never fully recovering from the pandemic, skyrocketing costs, and shifting philanthropic priorities as factors threatening its future.[13] The theatre joins a growing list of Berkeley organizations that have already closed or gone dormant—including the Bay Area Children's Theatre, TheatreFirst, and the Youth Musical Theatre Company. The precarity extends to the city's remaining flagship organizations as well: Berkeley Repertory Theatre faces a $5 million deficit, Berkeley Symphony is operating with a reported $500,000 structural deficit, and Freight & Salvage has a $200,000 deficit—illustrating how fragile the ecosystem remains.[14]

Figure 21: Downtown Berkeley Groundfloor Commercial Vacancy Rate | 2016–2024



Note: Includes office and retail properties.
Source: City of Berkeley Office of Economic Development, CVL Economics.

[13] Lily Janiak, "Bay Area theater moves to lay off staff, vacate downtown Berkeley venue," San Francisco Chronicle, August 12, 2025, https://www.sfchronicle.com/entertainment/article/aurora-theatre-layoffs-venue-vacate-20813096.php

[14] Stakeholder interviews.



THE CITY OF BERKELEY'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY DURING THE PANDEMIC (2020–2022)

While revenues across Berkeley's arts and culture ecosystem remain below pre-pandemic levels, it is important to consider not only what was lost but also what was preserved. Every organization that received Arts Organization Continuity Grant or BARG funding was required to demonstrate clear financial hardship as a condition of eligibility. In the case of Arts Organization Continuity Grants, for example, applicants had to show at least a 25% decline in earned revenue. Half of the grantee organizations experienced revenue loss of over 40%, and some organizations experienced a 100% decline in earned revenue.

Survey results highlight the critical role of the City of Berkeley's funding intervention. More than one-quarter of grantees (28%) reported receiving no other pandemic relief. For these organizations, the City's programs were their only source of external support. Without this funding, it is reasonable to assume that many would have been unable to sustain operations in Berkeley—likely joining the 17 organizations that ultimately closed between 2020 and 2024.

Over a five-year period (2020–2024), **the absence of City relief and recovery support would have resulted in an estimated additional $12.9 million in revenue losses across the local arts and culture ecosystem by 2024.[15] As such, the preservation effect of the City of Berkeley's $2.5 million investment in pandemic relief and recovery support to arts and culture organizations in Berkeley extended far beyond the immediate crisis.**

[13] CVL Economics quantified the value of organizations preserved by City funding using organizational operating revenue as the basis, drawing from a master grantee revenue dataset compiled by our firm. This dataset integrates IRS Form 990 filings for each organization and supplementing with revenue data from the City of Berkeley's grant application database and grantee survey responses to fill in gaps. Applying the 28% figure of Berkeley grantees who reported receiving no other pandemic relief to the revenue data as a baseline, and weighting by organizational size (since smaller groups found Berkeley's funds more impactful), $12.9 million is the estimated total revenue value of the at-risk organizations.



When taking into account direct and ripple effects across the local supply chain, **every $1 in City funding leveraged at least $5.64 in ongoing arts and culture economic activity.** This figure was derived using IMPLAN (Impact Analysis for Planning) input–output modeling, which captures not only the direct impacts on grantee organizations and their employees, but also the supply chain effects on local vendors, contractors, and service providers, as well as the induced effects of household spending by arts and related workers.[16] In this way, the estimate reflects the broader ecosystem value preserved by the City's relief and recovery efforts—extending beyond the prevention of immediate closures to safeguarding a network of organizations that continue to generate jobs, sustain community programming, and contribute to local tax revenues today.

While emergency relief and recovery support alone cannot address the sector's long-term structural challenges—particularly around rising costs and audience recovery—the City of Berkeley's intervention illustrates how targeted municipal support can serve as an effective bridge during periods of acute disruption, maintaining cultural capacity that might otherwise be permanently lost.

[16] See Appendix A.2 for more details on return on investment methodology.



PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FOR ARTS & CULTURE INDIVIDUALS

In addition to pandemic relief and recovery grants awarded to arts and culture organizations, the City of Berkeley awarded $523,089 across three grant programs between 2020 and 2022 for Berkeley-based individuals engaged in the arts (Figure 22).

These programs aimed to sustain the livelihoods of artists, performers, and cultural practitioners who faced significant income loss due to COVID-19 disruptions. In particular, they prioritized support for lower-income individuals and those from historically underrepresented communities, providing direct financial assistance at a time when creative work opportunities were severely limited.

THE EAST BAY/OAKLAND RELIEF FUND FOR INDIVIDUALS IN THE ARTS (2020)

This program was a regional emergency grant launched in May 2020 to support artists and cultural workers in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Administered by the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI), the fund included $49,000 directly from the City of Berkeley, which ultimately leveraged a total of $64,500 in awards to Berkeley artists. The additional dollars came from unrestricted contributions by local foundations,[17] meaning Berkeley's participation drew in more resources to benefit the local community than the City invested directly. In total, 515 individuals received grants of up to $1,500—including 47 Berkeley artists. The program prioritized BIPOC, immigrant, disabled, and trans individuals and was designed to provide fast, non-taxable relief without requiring tax or citizenship documentation.

THE BERKELEY ART WORKS PROJECTS GRANTS (2021)

First launched in 2021 by the City's Civic Arts Program, the Berkeley Art Works Projects (BAWP) grants awarded nearly $182,339 in grants to 32 Berkeley-based artists, performers, and community members to create temporary public art projects. These works addressed themes of public health, economic resilience, and community belonging. The program's name was a deliberate play on the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the New Deal–era initiative that employed artists to create public works during the Great Depression. In a similar spirit, BAWP was designed not simply as relief funding but as an employment initiative—providing income to artists while generating public benefit through new creative works.

Funded through the City's Cultural Trust Fund (Fund 148) BAWP supported creative responses to the emotional and social toll of the pandemic and produced public artworks across the city. Unlike the other pandemic grant programs for individual artists and cultural workers, these awards functioned more like compensation for services rendered, including related material costs—ensuring that artists were paid to create projects that directly engaged and benefitted the Berkeley community.

BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS (2022)

Aimed at supporting individual artists and cultural practitioners impacted by the pandemic, this program was administered in partnership with the CCI and funded through ARPA. In 2022, it awarded $276,250 to 114 Berkeley-based recipients, with grant amounts ranging from $1,250 to $8,000. Priority was given to those experiencing significant financial hardship, particularly from historically marginalized communities, and applicants were evaluated based on income loss from arts-related work, geographic distribution, and residence in underserved neighborhoods. Grants were unrestricted and designed to sustain creative practitioners during a period of prolonged economic instability.

[17] Berkeley Relief Fund, "About the Berkeley Relief Fund," https://berkeleyrelieffund.org/about/.

Figure 22: Summary of Berkeley Pandemic Relief and Recovery Grants for Individuals in Berkeley

	PROGRAM YEAR	RECIPIENT TYPE	NUMBER OF GRANTEES	TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED	AVERAGE GRANT AWARDED
EAST BAY/OAKLAND RELIEF FUND FOR INDIVIDUALS IN THE ARTS*	2020	Individual artists and arts workers	47	$64,500	$1,372
BERKELEY ART WORKS PROJECT (BAWP)	2021	Individual artists, performers, and community members	32	$182,339	$5,698
BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS	2022	Individual artists, culture bearers, teaching artists	114	$276,250	$2,423

*Table includes only the program's Berkeley allocations.
Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

Pandemic Relief and Recovery Grant Impact for Arts & Culture Individuals in Berkeley

These awards reached artists across a wide range of creative disciplines spanning visual and performing arts, literary arts, design, digital media, education, and folk/traditional practices. This diversity highlights how the relief and recovery programs not only sustained individual incomes, but also helped preserve the city's rich and multifaceted cultural landscape during a time of widespread disruption.

Direct-to-artist pandemic support played a vital role in stabilizing household budgets during an unprecedented crisis. The awards—ranging from an average of $1,372 through the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund to $5,698 through the Berkeley Art Works Projects—provided a critical bridge for individual artists, teaching artists, and culture bearers to cover essential living costs. For many, this meant helping to cover essential household expenses, such as rent or mortgage payments, groceries, utilities, or medical bills, at a time when other income sources had collapsed. In this way, relief and recovery dollars not only stabilized artists and their families but also circulated quickly back into Berkeley's local economy, sustaining neighborhood grocery stores, restaurants, landlords, and service providers during a broader period of contraction.



To put their value into context, the scale of the grants becomes especially clear when measured against local housing costs. The median monthly individual housing payment (including renters and owners) for Berkeley arts and culture workers is $1,100.[18] Housing is often the single largest expense for artists and cultural workers, and in the context of widespread income loss, even short-term support provided critical stability.

In May 2020, the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund arrived during the immediate aftermath of shutdowns when uncertainty was at its peak. The average $1,372 awarded to each individual

[18] This is the median per capita housing payment for Berkeley arts and culture workers, which adjusts for household size. This figure is calculated from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), which averages data collected between 2019 and 2023.

represented the equivalent of just over one month of rent (Figure 23). Although smaller in size than the other individual grants, this was a meaningful bridge for artists facing a sudden collapse of earned income, helping them cover essential living expenses when opportunities were limited.

The Berkeley Art Works Projects (2021) provided the most substantial lifeline for awarded individuals, with average grants of $5,698. Assuming 25% of each grant was allocated toward material costs, the BAWP grant covered nearly four months of average individual housing costs. At a moment when the sector was still struggling with extended closures, this level of support allowed artists to stabilize their personal circumstances while working on their creative practice and benefiting the general Berkeley public by improving the public realm with works of art and performances.

Finally, the Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (2022) offered average awards of $2,423, or the equivalent of more than two months of rent. While smaller than the BAWP program, this support was still critical in providing paid opportunities for artists at a time when many venues remained closed and other sources of work were scarce.

Figure 23: Average Grant Value in Terms of Individual Housing Costs

	AVERAGE GRANT AWARD	EQUIVALENT MONTHS OF INDIVIDUAL HOUSING COSTS *
EAST BAY/OAKLAND RELIEF FUND FOR INDIVIDUALS IN THE ARTS**	$1,372	1.3 Months
BERKELEY ART WORKS PROJECTS (BAWP)	$5,698	3.9 Months***
BERKELEY ARTS RECOVERY GRANTS (BARG) FOR ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRACTITIONERS	$2,423	2.2 Months

* Based on the median monthly per capita housing payment for Berkeley arts and culture workers, averaged across 2019–2023.
**Table includes only the program's Berkeley allocations.
*** Since BAWP grants covered paid public art projects, this reflects the assumption that 25% of the grant covered material costs for the project.

Source: City of Berkeley, U.S. Census Bureau 5-Year American Community Survey Public-Use Microdata Sample (2023), CVL Economics.

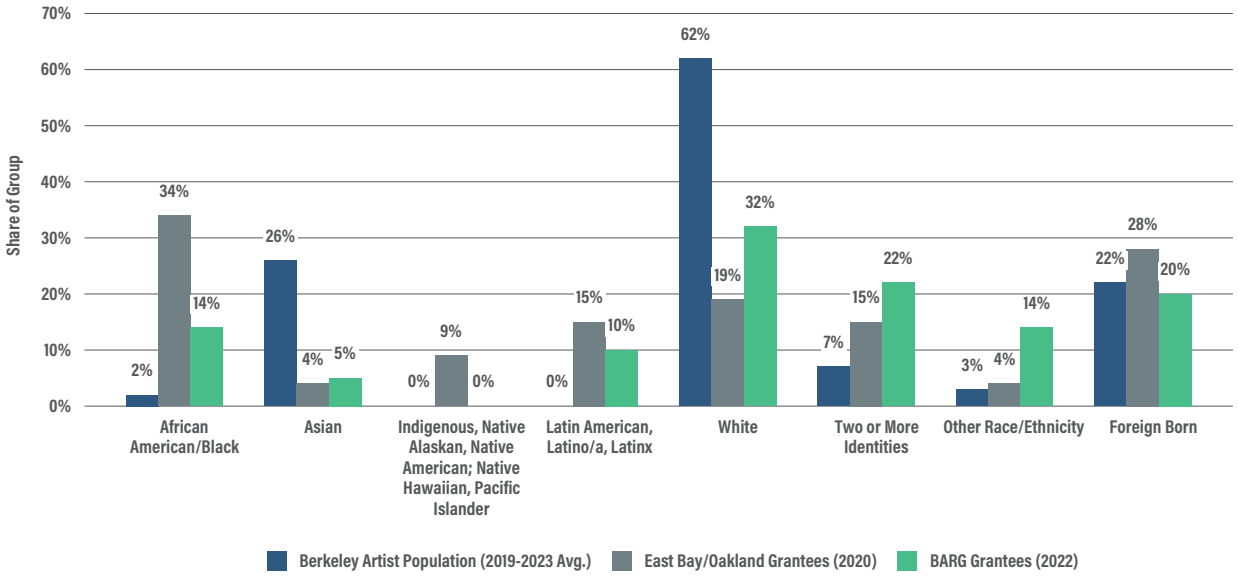
AN EQUITABLE FUNDING APPROACH

The demographic makeup of individual artist grantees in Berkeley reflects the City of Berkeley's commitment to cultural equity and inclusion in its pandemic relief and recovery efforts. In terms of race and ethnicity distribution, while African American or Black residents make up just 2% of Berkeley's artist population,[19] they represented 14% of BARG grantees and 34% of East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund grantees (Figure 24). Similarly, individuals identifying as Latinx, Indigenous or Native, and those of two or more racial identities were represented at significantly higher rates than their proportions in the general population, suggesting that relief and recovery funds were effectively prioritized for historically marginalized communities.

Although Asian residents comprised only 5% of BARG and 4% of East Bay/Oakland grantees while accounting for 26% of Berkeley's general population, this disparity reflects the composition of the applicant pool, and awards largely mirrored the share of Asian-identifying applicants. Additionally, foreign-born individuals made up 28% of East Bay/Oakland grantees and 20% of BARG grantees, compared to 22% of Berkeley's artist population.

These trends highlight how the City of Berkeley's cultural relief and recovery programs for individual artists during the pandemic not only addressed economic precarity, but also advanced racial and cultural equity by investing in artists who have been historically excluded from opportunities and in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

Figure 24: Demographic Distribution of Pandemic-Era Grantees Compared to Berkeley's Total Artist Population | 2019–2023



Note: Includes grantee data for the BARG and East Bay/Oakland programs; these were the two largest programs in terms of number of grant recipients. See Appendix A.3 for detailed methodology on defining the Berkeley artist population.
Source: City of Berkeley, U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (2023), CVL Economics.

[18] The Berkeley artist population is defined as individuals working in selected occupations identified by the federal Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes, which includes jobs in visual arts and design; media and communications; performing arts; film, television, and digital media; and other creative technical roles. See Appendix A.3 for a detailed methodology and list of SOC codes.



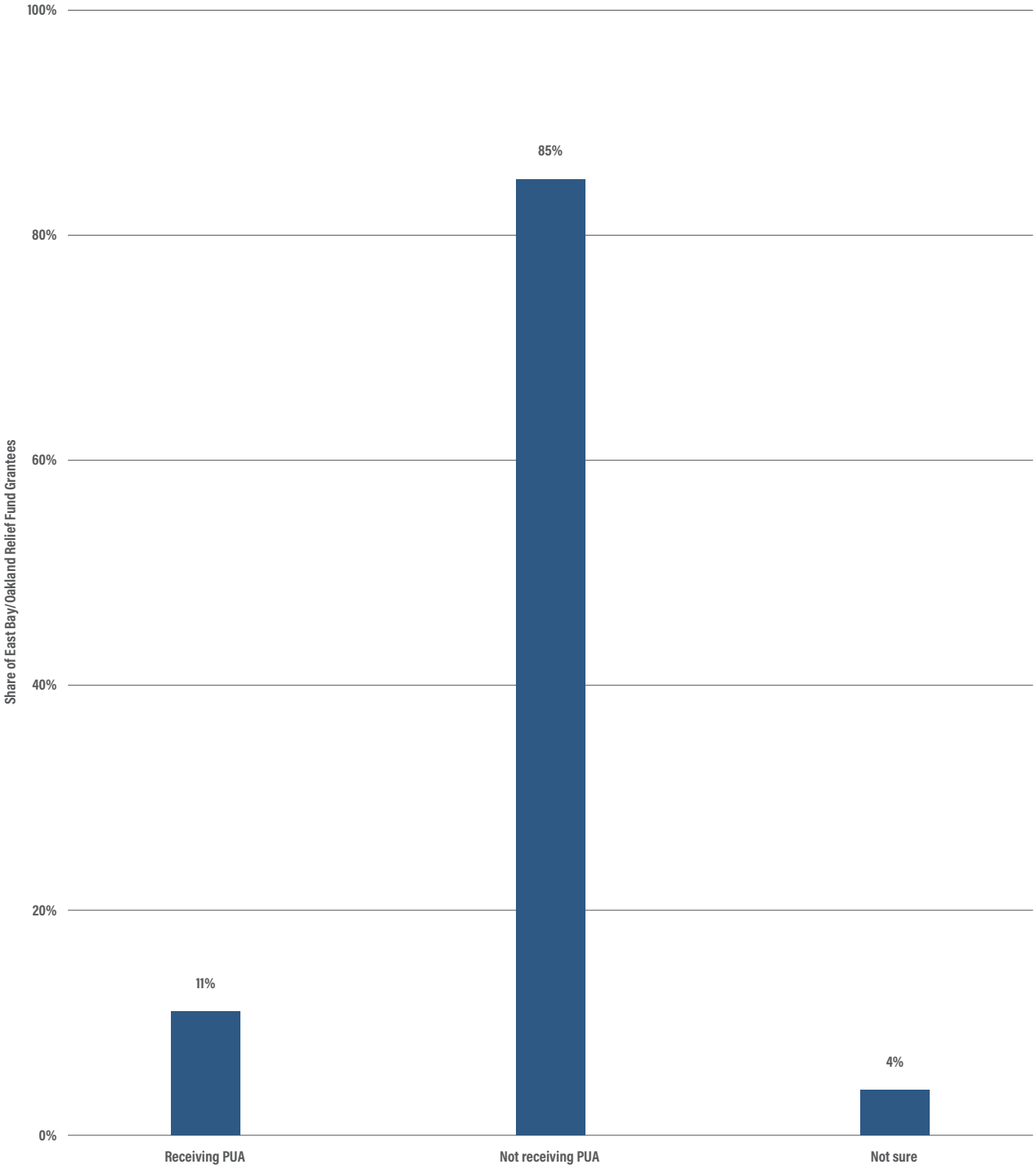
Understanding Artist Needs

Creative work is often characterized by freelance, gig-based, or self-directed employment—forms of labor that typically fall outside traditional systems of worker protections and public benefits. During the pandemic, federal programs like Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) were created to extend eligibility to independent contractors and self-employed workers, offering critical relief for many in the arts. Yet in the earliest months of the shutdown, PUA was slow to roll out and many applicants faced delays or administrative hurdles before receiving payments.

This made the City of Berkeley's early intervention in funding this population all the more vital. Nearly 85% of East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund grantees reported they had not yet received PUA at the time of their City of Berkeley grant application (Figure 25). By moving quickly, Berkeley's contribution to this regional relief effort ensured that artists received immediate support when other aid was not yet available. These local grants filled a critical gap, helping to cover housing, food, and other essentials at the peak of uncertainty, and allowing many artists to remain in Berkeley when displacement was a real risk.

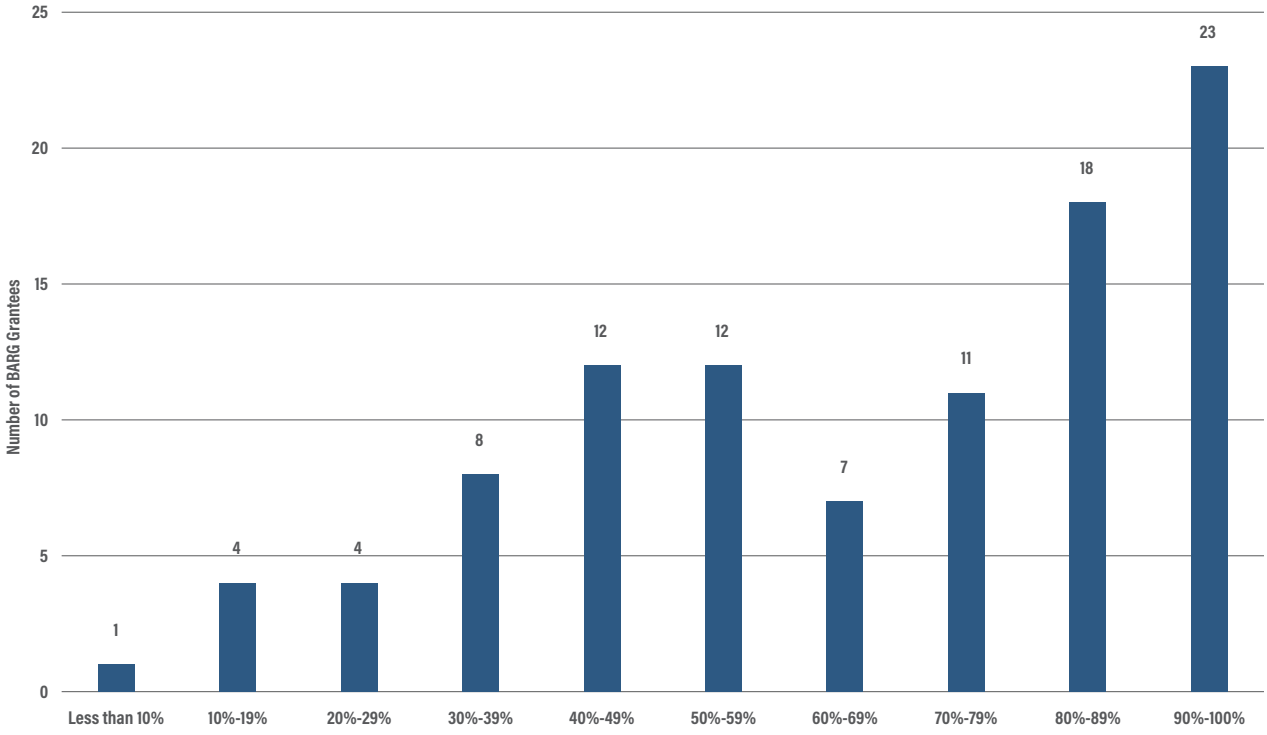
Berkeley's pandemic relief and recovery grants reached artists who were among the hardest hit by the crisis. More than half of all grantees experienced a loss of 50% or more in their arts-related income between 2019 and 2020, including nearly one-quarter who lost 90% to 100% of their income during that period (Figure 26). Indeed, two-thirds of grantees reported making less than $10,000 in arts-related income in 2020, and over 90% earned under $30,000 that year (Figure 27).

Figure 25: Share of Grantees Receiving Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) Benefits at Time of Grant Application | May–June 2020



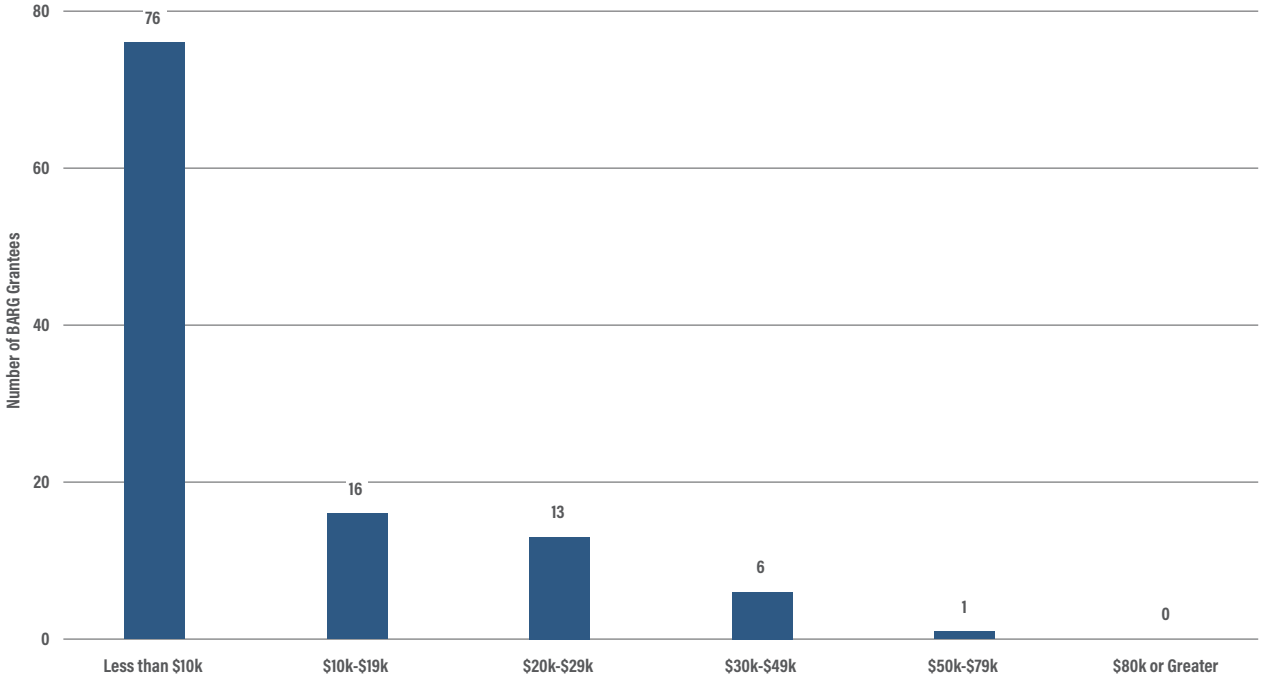
Note: Includes grantee data for the East Bay/Oakland Relief Fund program.
Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

Figure 26: Number of BARG Grantees by Percentage of Arts-Related Income Lost between 2019–2020



Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

Figure 27: Number of BARG Grantees by 2020 Arts-Related Income Bracket



Source: City of Berkeley, CVL Economics.

CONCLUSION: SUSTAINING BERKELEY'S ARTS & CULTURE ECOSYSTEM

Arts and culture form a vital part of Berkeley's community life—shaping the city's identity, enriching public spaces, and providing opportunities for connection, creativity, and expression.

A thriving cultural ecosystem depends on many interlocking parts from individual artists and small collectives to established organizations and major venues. When this ecosystem is under strain, the effects ripple outward, limiting opportunities for participation, weakening creative networks, and eroding the cultural vibrancy that defines the city.

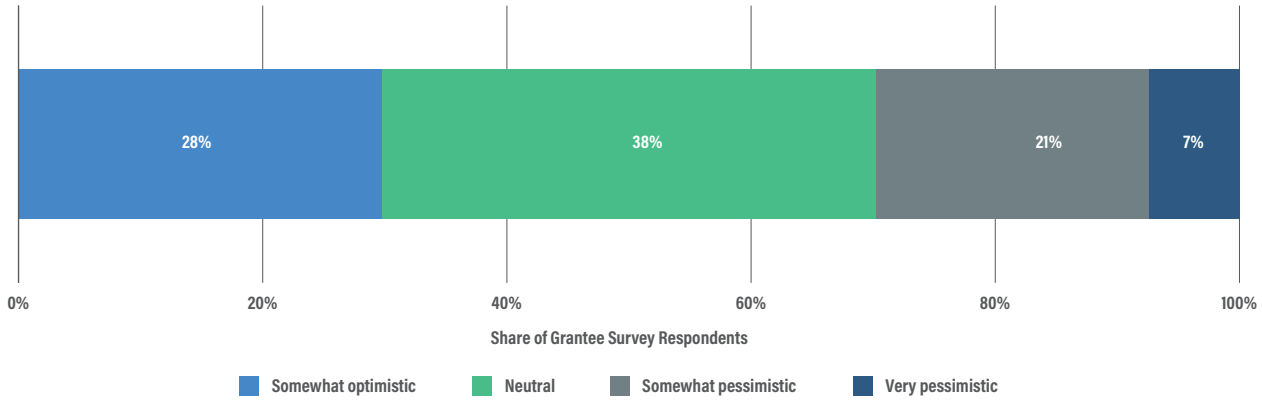
The stability of cornerstone cultural institutions is critical not just for their own survival, but for the vitality of the entire artistic ecosystem. When even established organizations are at risk, it threatens Berkeley's identity as a cultural center and sends discouraging signals to smaller companies and emerging artists working to establish themselves. Protecting these institutions is therefore about more than sustaining current programming—it is about safeguarding pathways for future generations and ensuring that the region continues to foster creativity, innovation, and community engagement.

Berkeley's pandemic relief and recovery efforts were extraordinary in both scale and impact. By mobilizing more than $3 million for both individuals and organizations in emergency grants, the City provided lifelines to dozens of arts and culture organizations and nearly 200 individual artists during one of the most disruptive crises in modern history. These funds helped prevent permanent closures, sustained creative practices, and ultimately enabled Berkeley to prevent its creative fabric from completely fraying.

Yet the road ahead remains uncertain. One-time relief and recovery funding helped many organizations and artists survive the immediate crisis, but long-term sustainability will require ongoing attention and investment. High operating costs—commercial rents, wages, utilities, insurance—remain a persistent burden. At the same time, philanthropic support is tightening and public funding sources remain limited and highly competitive.

Survey responses reflect both resilience and fragility on the outlook of Berkeley's arts & culture sector (Figure 28 and Figure 29). Many see renewed energy, community demand, and resilience across Berkeley's cultural landscape. At the same time, others remain deeply concerned about financial sustainability, affordability, and the slow pace of recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020. This split outlook underscores the importance of funding continuity: without sustained support, hard-won gains may erode, but with targeted continued investment, the City of Berkeley can solidify its reputation as a cultural hub while ensuring equitable access to arts for future generations.

Figure 28: Outlook on Berkeley's Arts & Culture Sector from Grant Recipients | June 2025



N = 30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure 29: Detailed Outlook on Berkeley's Arts & Culture Sector from Grant Recipients | June 2025

OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOKS	UNCERTAIN OUTLOOKS
Strong interest and engagement in the arts; hopeful audiences are returning.	Many feel it's "too early to tell" which direction things are headed.
Community demand and momentum despite challenges.	Concerned about long-term sustainability, closures, and diminished philanthropy.
Commitment from City of Berkeley and collaborative spirit cited as positive drivers.	Rising Bay Area costs, lack of viable performance space, and drying up of public support noted as major risks.
Seeing demand for mid-size venues and opportunities for new spaces.	Downtown struggles (e.g., reduced foot traffic, empty storefronts, crime) hurting recovery.
Confidence in sector resilience, innovation, and interdependence.	Audiences slower to return; uncertain policy environment and ongoing affordability crisis.

N = 30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

APPENDIX

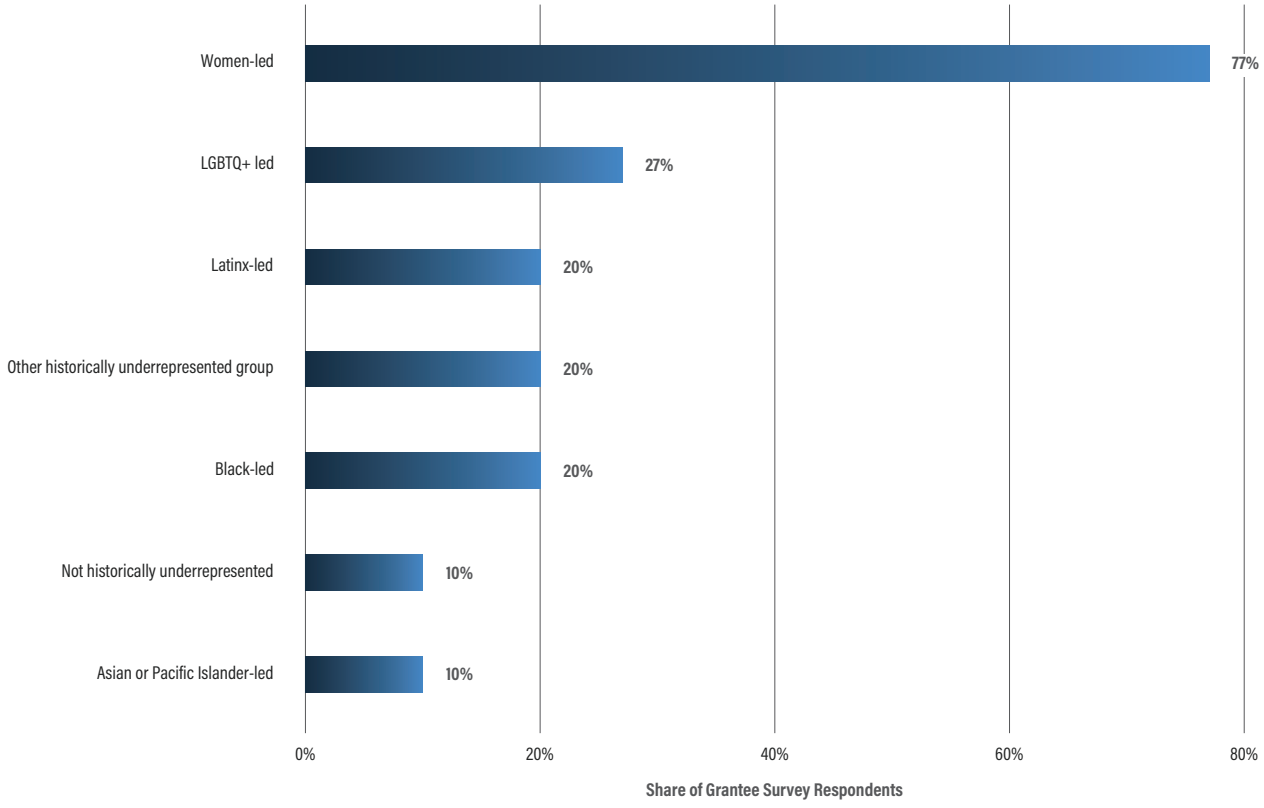
A.1: SURVEY OF BERKELEY ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATION GRANT RECIPIENTS

To better understand how Berkeley's pandemic relief and recovery funding shaped the local arts ecosystem, CVL Economics surveyed grantee organizations. Of the 88 organizations that received support through the Arts Organization Continuity Grants (2020) or the Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (BARG, 2022), 30 (34%) completed the survey, providing valuable insights into both the immediate and lasting effects of the City's investment.

The survey captured a diverse mix of organizations in terms of size, discipline, and leadership demographics. Respondents ranged from very small, community-based nonprofits with annual budgets under $100,000 to larger institutions with multimillion-dollar operations. Disciplines represented included performing arts, visual arts, festivals, and educational organizations, reflecting the broad spectrum of Berkeley's creative ecosystem. Responses also included organizations led by people of color, LGBTQ+ leaders, and women, ensuring that a range of perspectives and experiences were reflected in the findings.

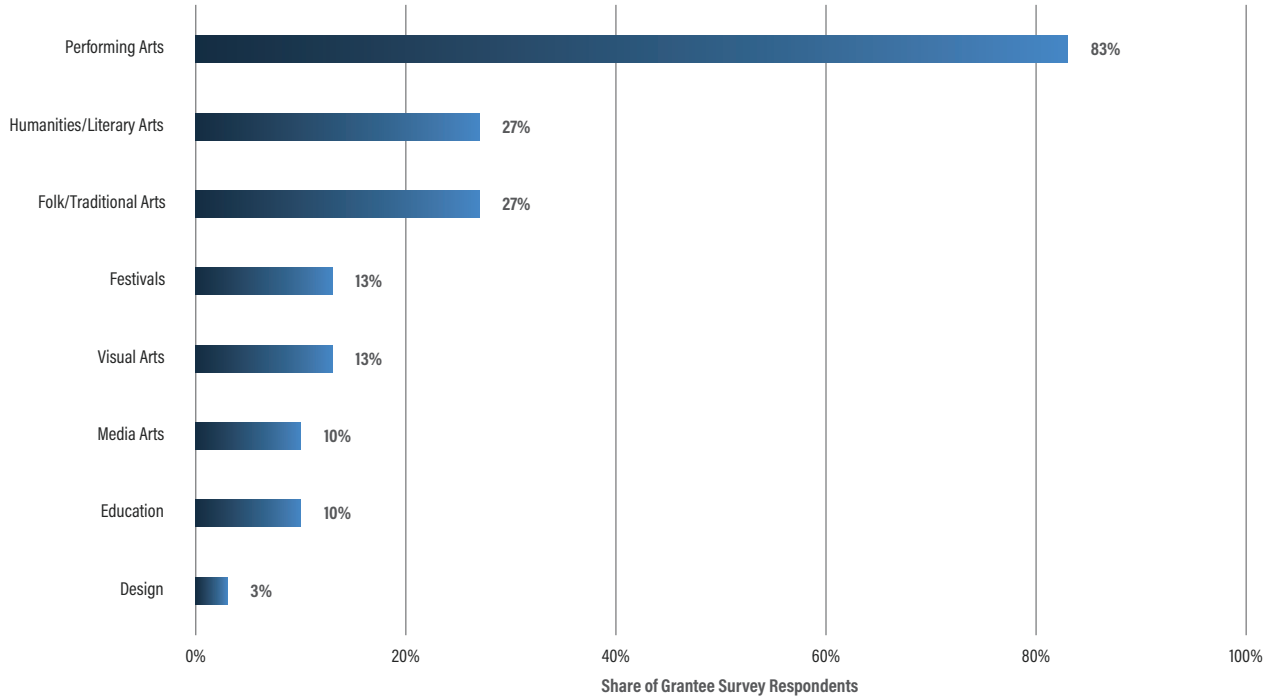
Additional survey responses can be found below.

Figure A.1.1 Share of Respondents by Leadership Demographics



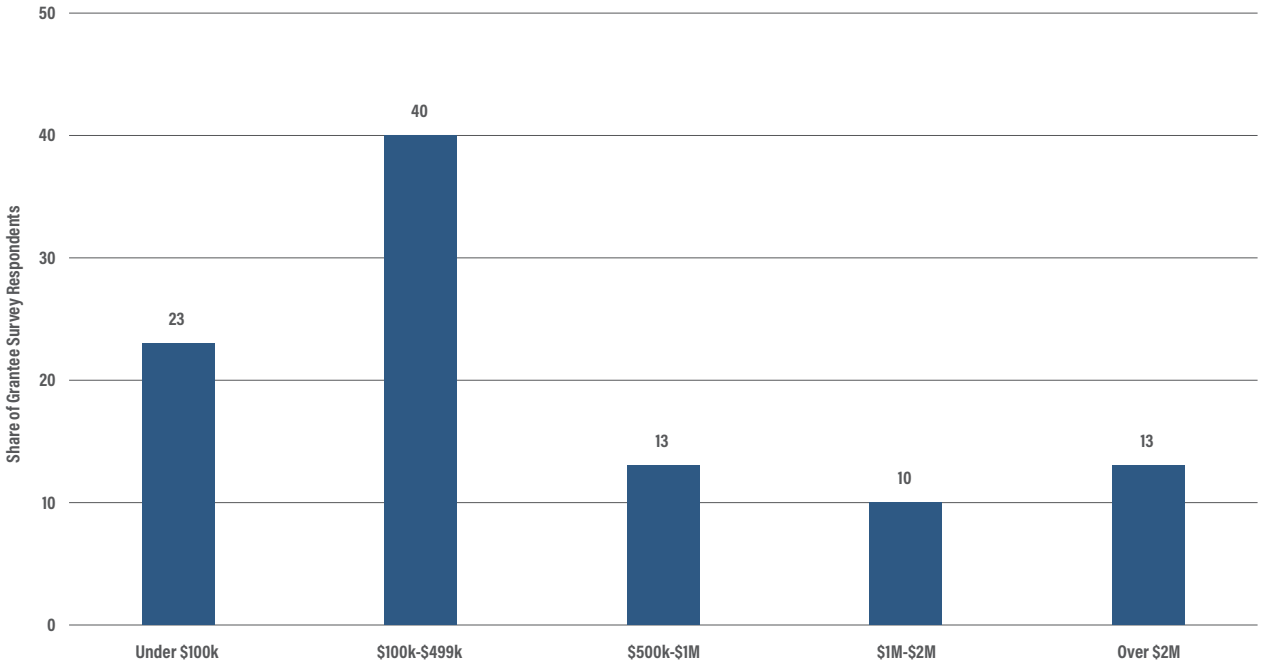
N = 30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure A.1.2 Share of Respondents by Arts & Culture Discipline (Multi-Choice)



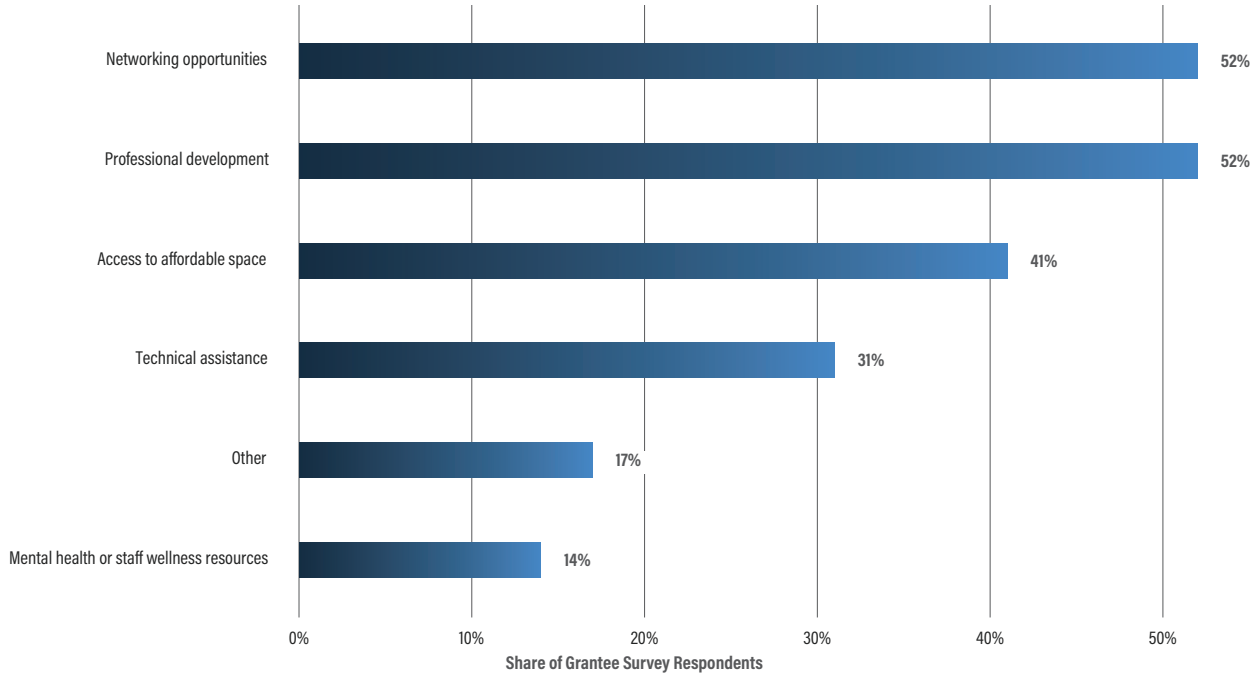
N = 30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure A.1.3 Share of Respondents by Organization Size



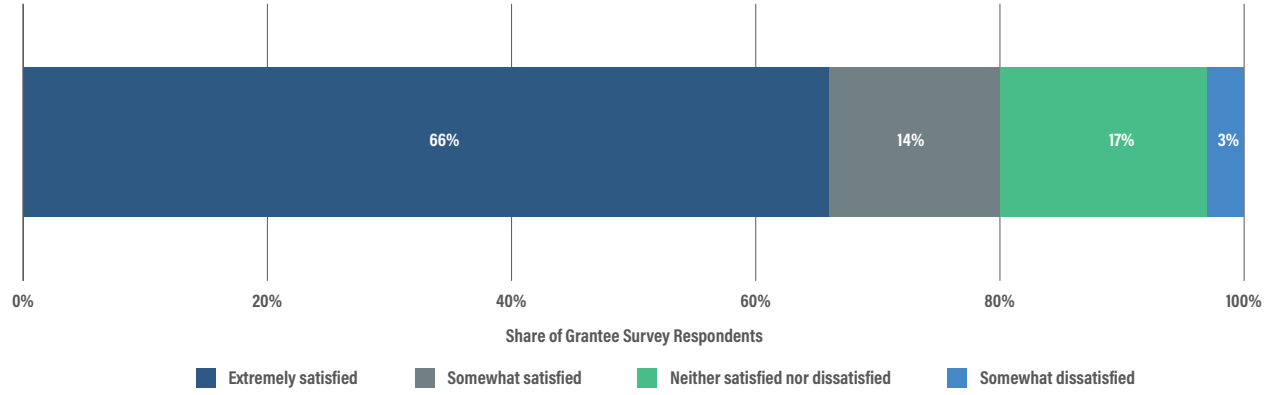
N = 30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure A.1.4 Top Organizational Support Needs Beyond Funding for 2025–2030



N = 30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

Figure A.1.5 Degree of Satisfaction with Administration of Pandemic Relief and Recovery Grants in Berkeley | 2020–2022



N = 30
Source: CVL Economics Survey (2025).

A.2: BERKELEY'S RETURN ON INVESMENT ON PANDEMIC RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUNDING TO ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

The City of Berkeley's relief and recovery funding for arts and culture organizations was evaluated through a return on investment (ROI) framework, designed to measure not only immediate stabilization but also the longer-term value preserved in the local economy.

The first step was to define the scope of the creative economy in order to capture impacts across the entire creative ecosystem. Economic data are reported using the standardized North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which allows for consistency and comparability across datasets. Because no single NAICS code fully captures this sector, CVL Economics developed a curated set of industries spanning performing arts, visual arts, film, media, design, and related support services (see below for a detailed list of NAICS codes).

We quantified the value of organizations preserved by City funding using organizational revenue as the basis, drawing from a master grantee revenue dataset compiled by CVL Economics. This dataset integrates IRS Form 990 filings for each organization and supplementing with revenue data from the City of Berkeley's grant application database and grantee survey responses to fill in gaps. Grantee surveys and applications also established a baseline of financial hardship: all recipients of Arts Organization Continuity Grants and Berkeley Arts Recovery Grants (BARG) documented significant revenue losses. Survey results further revealed that 28% of grantees received no other pandemic relief, making the City of Berkeley's support their sole external lifeline.

Using the master revenue dataset and the 28% figure as a baseline for the additional organizations that would have closed without funding (and weighting by organizational size to reflect the greater impact of funding on smaller groups), we estimate that the combined annual revenues of these at-risk organizations totaled $12.9 million.

To translate these preserved revenues into economic ROI, we employed IMPLAN's input–output modeling system. IMPLAN is widely used by governments and researchers to quantify the total value of an investment, capturing not only the direct benefits to grantees, but also the indirect benefits to vendors, contractors, and service providers, as well as the induced effects from household spending by arts workers. This analysis found that these preserved arts organizations generated a total of $14 million in economic output in the City of Berkeley, reflecting the full ripple effects across the local economy.

Through this framework, we estimate that every $1 invested by the City leveraged at least $5.64 in ongoing arts and culture economic activity. This ratio represents the ROI of Berkeley's $2.5 million in relief and recovery funding to arts and culture organizations.

Figure A.2 Creative Economy Industry Classification Codes

INDUSTRY CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION	NAICS
ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN	
Ornamental and Architectural Metal Work Manufacturing	332323
Architectural Services	541310
Landscape Architectural Services	541320
Drafting Services	541340
Interior Design Services	541410
Industrial Design Services	541420
COMMUNICATION DESIGN	
Graphic Design Services	541430
Advertising Agencies	541810
Photography Studios, Portrait	541921
Commercial Photography	541922
ENTERTAINMENT & DIGITAL MEDIA	
Motion Picture and Video Production	512110
Motion Picture and Video Distribution	512120
Teleproduction and Other Postproduction Services	512191
Sound Recording Studios	512240
Software Publishers	513210
Radio Broadcasting Stations	516110
Television Broadcasting Stations	516120
Media Streaming Distribution Services, Social Networks, Other Media Networks and Content Providers	516210

INDUSTRY CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION	NAICS
FASHION	
Fiber, Yarn, and Thread Mills	313110
Broadwoven Fabric Mills	313210
Narrow Fabric Mills and Schiffli Machine Embroidery	313220
Nonwoven Fabric Mills	313230
Knit Fabric Mills	313240
Textile and Fabric Finishing Mills	313310
Fabric Coating Mills	313320
Apparel Knitting Mills	315120
Cut and Sew Apparel Contractors	315210
Cut and Sew Apparel Manufacturing (except Contractors)	315250
Apparel Accessories and Other Apparel Manufacturing	315990
Footwear Manufacturing	316210
Other Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	316990
Toilet Preparation Manufacturing	325620
Jewelry and Silverware Manufacturing	339910
Jewelry, Watch, Precious Stone, and Precious Metal Merchant Wholesalers	423940
Piece Goods, Notions, and Other Dry Goods Merchant Wholesalers	424310
Footwear Merchant Wholesalers	424340
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Merchant Wholesalers	424350
Other Specialized Design Services	541490
FINE ARTS SCHOOLS	
Fine Arts Schools	611610
FURNITURE, TOYS & DECORATIVE ARTS	
Carpet and Rug Mills	314110
Curtain and Linen Mills	314120
Textile Bag and Canvas Mills	314910
Rope, Cordage, Twine, Tire Cord, and Tire Fabric Mills	314994
All Other Miscellaneous Textile Product Mills	314999
Pottery, Ceramics, and Plumbing Fixture Manufacturing	327110
Other Pressed and Blown Glass and Glassware Manufacturing	327212
All Other Miscellaneous Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	327999
Wood Kitchen Cabinet and Countertop Manufacturing	337110
Upholstered Household Furniture Manufacturing	337121
Nonupholstered Wood Household Furniture Manufacturing	337122
Household Furniture (except Wood and Upholstered) Manufacturing	337126
Institutional Furniture Manufacturing	337127

INDUSTRY CATEGORY AND DESCRIPTION	NAICS
Wood Office Furniture Manufacturing	337211
Custom Architectural Woodwork and Millwork Manufacturing	337212
Office Furniture (except Wood) Manufacturing	337214
Showcase, Partition, Shelving, and Locker Manufacturing	337215
Mattress Manufacturing	337910
Blind and Shade Manufacturing	337920
Doll, Toy, and Game Manufacturing	339930
Furniture Merchant Wholesalers	423210
Home Furnishing Merchant Wholesalers	423220
Toy and Hobby Goods and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	423920
PUBLISHING & PRINTING	
Commercial Printing (except Screen and Books)	323111
Commercial Screen Printing	323113
Books Printing	323117
Support Activities for Printing	323120
Book, Periodical, and Newspaper Merchant Wholesalers	424920
Newspaper Publishers	513110
Periodical Publishers	513120
Book Publishers	513130
Directory and Mailing List Publishers	513140
Greeting Card Publishers	513191
All Other Publishers	513199
Libraries and Archives	519210
VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS	
Musical Instrument Manufacturing	339992
Art Dealers	459920
Theater Companies and Dinner Theaters	711110
Dance Companies	711120
Musical Groups and Artists	711130
Other Performing Arts Companies	711190
Agents and Managers for Artists, Athletes, Entertainers, and Other Public Figures	711410
Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers	711510
Museums	712110

A.3: DEFINING BERKELEY'S ARTIST POPULATION

To analyze Berkeley's artist workforce, we defined an "artist population" within the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) based on occupational classifications. Specifically, we restricted the dataset to individuals whose Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes align with creative, cultural, and artistic work.

The SOC codes were used to capture a wide spectrum of artistic and creative occupations, including:

- **Visual arts and design fields** (e.g., art directors, fine artists, designers, animators, architects)
- **Media and communication occupations** (e.g., writers, editors, reporters, broadcasters, public relations specialists)
- **Performing arts and entertainment** (e.g., performers, dancers, musicians)
- **Film, television, and digital media production** (e.g., producers, directors, camera operators, sound technicians, editors)
- **Other creative technical roles** (e.g., computer occupations in visual effects/animation, printing workers, sound engineering, lighting technicians).

The following SOC codes were included in our definition:

- **112011** – Advertising and Promotions Managers
- **112021** – Marketing Managers
- **112030** – Public Relations and Fundraising Managers
- **119041** – Architectural and Engineering Managers
- **131011** – Agents and Business Managers of Artists, Performers, and Athletes
- **151251** – Software Developers, Applications
- **151252** – Software Developers, Systems Software
- **151253** – Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers
- **151254** – Web Developers
- **151255** – Web and Digital Interface Designers
- **171011** – Architects (Except Landscape and Naval)
- **171012** – Landscape Architects
- **171020** – Surveyors, Cartographers, and Photogrammetrists
- **173011** – Architectural and Civil Drafters
- **254010** – Postsecondary Teachers, Art, Drama, and Music
- **271010** – Artists and Related Workers
- **271021** – Animators and Special Effects Artists
- **271022** – Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators
- **271024** – Graphic Designers
- **271025** – Industrial Designers
- **271026** – Fashion Designers
- **272011** – Actors
- **272012** – Producers and Directors
- **272030** – Dancers and Choreographers
- **272041** – Music Directors and Composers
- **272042** – Musicians and Singers
- **272099** – Entertainers and Performers, All Other
- **273011** – Broadcast Announcers and Radio Disc Jockeys
- **273031** – News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists
- **273042** – Media and Communication Workers, All Other
- **273043** – Public Relations Specialists

- **273099** – Media and Communication Occupations, All Other
- **274021** – Photographers
- **274022** – Camera Operators, Television, Video, and Film
- **274023** – Film and Video Editors
- **274024** – Audio and Video Technicians
- **274025** – Lighting Technicians
- **274026** – Sound Engineering Technicians
- **274027** – Broadcast, Sound, and Lighting Technicians, All Other
- **274028** – Motion Picture Projectionists
- **274029** – Media Equipment Workers, All Other
- **274030** – Television, Video, and Film Camera Operators and Editors
- **393011** – Motion Picture Projectionists
- **393012** – Ushers, Lobby Attendants, and Ticket Takers
- **393013** – Entertainment Attendants and Related Workers, All Other
- **393019** – Miscellaneous Entertainment Attendants and Related Workers
- **515111** – News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists
- **515112** – Editors
- **515113** – Technical Writers
- **516021** – Commercial and Industrial Designers
- **516031** – Floral Designers
- **516040** – Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers
- **516050** – Set and Exhibit Designers
- **516093** – Costume Attendants
- **516099** – Media and Communication Equipment Workers, All Other
- **517011** – Radio Operators
- **517021** – Sound Engineering Technicians
- **517031** – Broadcast Technicians
- **517041** – Media and Communication Equipment Workers, All Other
- **517099** – Media and Communication Workers, All Other
- **519071** – Jewelers and Precious Stone and Metal Workers
- **519194** – Musical Instrument Repairers and Tuners

Assessment of Berkeley Arts & Culture Pandemic Relief and Recovery Funding

DECEMBER 2025

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was made possible through the leadership and support of the City of Berkeley, including the Office of Economic Development and its Civic Arts Program, the Civic Arts Commission, and Berkeley City Council, whose commitment to advancing the city's creative and cultural vitality guided this work. We also extend our appreciation to the many nonprofit arts and culture organizations, creative practitioners, and community stakeholders who generously contributed their time, insights, and experiences.

PREPARED BY:

CVL Economics is an economic consulting firm that takes a data-driven, human-centric approach to equitable development and sustainable growth. Founded in 2021, CVL Economics partners with communities, municipalities, organizations, and institutions to address today's most complex challenges and foster bold action. Coupling robust economic models with innovative research methodologies, we provide decision-makers with the actionable insights needed to effect change, expand opportunity, and improve economic well-being.

Event Producer's Rights & Policy Recommendations

DRAFT

11-21-25

1. The Right to Partnership

Producers have the right to be recognized in partnership with the City of Berkeley in creating civic vitality.

• Event Producers are vital partners in building the civic identity, economic health, and cultural vibrancy of the City of Berkeley and should be acknowledged as such.

• From neighborhood block parties to city-wide festivals, their work transforms public spaces into places of connection, creativity, and pride.

• As an economic driver, Event Producers bring a great deal of funding into the City, which should be considered when allocations for festival grants and fees are appropriated.

• Events should be encouraged, not discouraged. We do not want to lose cultural events to other more welcoming cities.

• Event Producers have the right to meet in a quarterly forum with City Event Staff.

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2. The Right to Competent and Efficient Service

Producers have the right to adequate City staffing and professional courtesy.

• Event Producers have the right to an adequately staffed special events department to encourage, as opposed to discourage, events in Berkeley. The City of Berkeley Arts and Culture Plan specifically states that a major goal is to expand the staff capacity for the arts.

• Discussions should be encouraged to create a Special Events Department under Civic Arts leadership. Since the vetting and funding for festivals is here, it would make sense for the permitting to be here as well.

• Discussion should be encouraged to create Event Zones in each district, simplifying mapping and permitting for multiple events. Event Zones would be tailored to each district and would include established requirements from City departments for that area, simplifying the permitting process.

• Event Producers have the right to informed, solution-oriented guidance from the City.

• Event Producers have the right to receive coordinated feedback from the various City departments rather than conflicting directives.

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3. The Right to Clarity and Efficiency

Producers have the right to a timely, consistent, and transparent process for event approval.

• Event Producers have the right to a single, accessible, online source detailing all required permits, documents, fees, and deadlines. Fees should be payable online or in person at the Permit Center.

• Event Producers have the right to consolidated Park and Street Permits.

• Event Producers have the right to clear points of contact in each department with defined response timelines.

• Event Producers have the right to a unified workflow from the City that minimizes redundant paperwork and repetitive plan reviews.

• Event Producers have the right to reasonable expectations that allow event producers to plan responsibly and confidently as many events require a long planning timeframe.

• Event Producers have the right to a simple online questionnaire form to allow event producers, City staff, and affected businesses to submit feedback after each major event cycle to continuously improve clarity and efficiency.

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4. The Right to Fair and Proportionate Fees

Producers have the right to fees that reflect both real costs and public benefits.

• Event Producers have the right to transparent, standardized, and equitable costs across all event types that are scaled appropriately to event size and impact.

• Any fee increases should correspond to measurable improvements in City service, such as faster processing, better field support, and clearer public communication.

• Event Producers should know precisely what services are covered for the fees paid.

• Fees should be compared to other cities of comparable size.

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5. The Right to Equitable Access

Producers of all large, small, commercial, nonprofit, and neighborhoods have the right to fair access to public space.

• Event Producers have the right to processes that accommodate first-time organizers and grassroots events, not just professional producers.

• Event Producers have the right to clear policy from the City to determine when, and if, an entry fee (‘gate’) may be charged.

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6. The Right to Safe, Clean Public Spaces

Producers have the right to event-ready streets, parks, and plazas that meet baseline safety, cleanliness, and accessibility standards.

• Event Producers have the right to a clean, landscaped, public space prior to the event. Event producers should be responsible for leaving it in the condition in which it was found.

• Event Producers have the right to clear, documented guidelines for emergency access, electrical availability, ADA compliance, and sanitation needs in public event spaces.

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7. The Right to Reliable Safety Coordination

Producers have the right to predictable and professional collaboration with public safety departments.

• Fire, Police, Transportation, Public Works and other impacted City department representatives should coordinate through clear, standardized protocols.

• Event Producers have the right to reusable Traffic Management plans created by the City and paid for as part of the event permit fee.

• Event Producers have the right to well documented and uniformly enforced requirements for crowd management, propane use, tents, fire watchmen, etc.

• City field staff should be trained to support, not obstruct, safe event operations.

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8. The Right to Marketing Support

Producers have the right to be included in City marketing.

• Event Producers have the right to the promotion of permitted events through the City's own channels to encourage attendance and community pride.

• Public reports should highlight the positive economic and cultural impacts of community events.

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9. The Right to Predictability and Continuity

Producers have the right to stable rules and consistent expectations from year to year.

• Permitting criteria and fees should not change mid-season or without adequate notice.

• Event producers have the right to be notified well in advance of any regulatory adjustments to allow proper budgeting and planning. When appropriate, detailed explanation(s) of major changes in standards and/or procedures should be provided. Large events need lead time of 6-12 months prior to the event date.

• An annual calendar and timeline for citywide events should help departments and producers plan efficiently, discouraging overlap and dilution of resources.

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10. The Right to Joy

Above all, producers have the right to bring joy to Berkeley's residents and visitors without unnecessary barriers.

• Regulations should protect public safety while encouraging celebration, art and culture, community building, and expression.

• The City should view cultural events not as logistical burdens, but as opportunities to strengthen civic life and local business vitality.

Protecting Berkeley's Vibrancy: A Call for Partnership on Special Event Policy

November 10, 2025

Dear Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers,

We are writing as members of Berkeley's event-producing community organizers, cultural leaders, artists, and business partners who create the events and experiences that make Berkeley vibrant. This letter is in response to the **City Council meeting on October 14**, when the **Information Report on Changes to Special Events Permitting Fees and Requirements** was presented.

We want to first acknowledge and thank staff for their work in compiling the report and for recognizing the strain on City departments tasked with managing an increasing number of special events. We also want to be clear that we **support the City's effort to adjust fees responsibly** to ensure cost recovery and public safety.

However, as written, these policy changes and new cost structures would have the unintended consequence of making it **prohibitively expensive, time-consuming, and discouraging** to produce many of the very events that define Berkeley's cultural identity and economic vibrancy.

The City's own report notes that these new regulations will make "nearly all events in Berkeley more expensive and demanding to plan and host," and that this could result in fewer events citywide. For Berkeley, that loss is not abstract, it is deeply tangible.

If implemented without a broader strategy for partnership and process improvement, these changes would jeopardize many of the cornerstone events that anchor community life in every district, including:

- **Bay Area Book Festival** – A nationally recognized literary gathering that draws tens of thousands of visitors downtown each spring.
- **Berkeley Juneteenth Festival** – Promoting community pride and bringing together South Berkeley businesses and residents in the celebration of a major African American cultural event.
- **Berkeley Farmers' Markets** – Among the longest-running in the region and critical to Berkeley's food culture and local economy.
- **Downtown Berkeley Programming** – Including the Front Row Festival, Roller Boogie, and seasonal activations that support local merchants and bring people into the city center.
- **Gilman District Street Fair and Music Events** – Which have helped revitalize one of the city's most historic industrial corridors.
- **Neighborhood and Park Festivals** – Such as those at Civic Center Park, Live Oak, Willard, and the Marina each provide vital community connection and accessible family programming.
- **Persian Festival** – A festival that plays a vital civic role bringing thousands of residents and visitors into the heart of the city, supporting small businesses and local restaurants, while fostering cross-community understanding and pride.
- **Solano Stroll** – A free local tradition since 1974, drawing over 100,000 attendees. The event showcases the talents, goods, and services of local artists, musicians, entertainers, and businesses, serving as a lasting cultural and economic cornerstone of the community.
- **Telegraph Holiday Street Fair** – A decades-long Berkeley tradition supporting artists, makers, and local businesses.
- **Telegraph Second Sundays** – The summer event series following the long-tradition of activating the Telegraph Ave. business district with street fairs, entertainment and free, fun attractions.

Losing even a few of these events would mean more than empty streets; it would mean a loss of **community cohesion, small business vitality, and civic pride**.

We recognize that the City's intent is not to discourage events, but to manage resources and ensure public safety. Yet as structured, these changes, particularly the expanded fee schedules, new Fire and Public Works charges, and professional traffic control plan mandates risk doing exactly that.

There is, however, a constructive path forward. The City's own report references the potential to develop **streamlined, pre-approved event frameworks** and "common applications" that could reduce staff workload, ensure safety, and improve efficiency. With Event Producers and the City of Berkeley working together, we can design a system where cost recovery and community vibrancy are not competing goals.

We respectfully request your support for a collaborative partnership between both parties so that we can create a Special Events Policy that is beneficial to all. We are currently working with the Civic Arts Commission and plan to present to them community-led Event Producers Special Events Recommendations that would protect what makes Berkeley special and build a permitting system that works for everyone: City staff, event organizers, small businesses and residents alike.

We ask the Council to acknowledge that Berkeley's events are essential public goods, driving economic activity, public safety through activation, and cultural vitality across every district.

Before significant changes are made to the Special Events fee process, we ask the Berkeley City Council to recommend to the Civic Arts Commission to create **a collaborative committee of Event Producers, staff, and members of the Civic Arts Commission** to create a predictable, equitable, and transparent events permitting process that relieves staff burden while supporting producers, and **ensures that fee increases are paired with measurable service improvements** including timely communication, competent customer service, and coordinated interdepartmental support.

Events are not a logistical burden; they are an investment in Berkeley's identity. They generate joy, revenue, and connection, and they make this city feel like itself.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and commitment to a thriving, joyful Berkeley.

With respect,

The undersigned Berkeley Event Producers on behalf of the community of cultural organizers, artists, and business districts who bring joy and vitality to Berkeley's public spaces:

Lisa Bullwinkel, Berkeley Civic Arts Commission
Event Producer, Another Bullwinkel Show

Allen Cain, Executive Director
Solano Avenue Assn. and Solano Stroll

Jacob Cohen, Event Producer
North Shattuck Association

Delores Nochi Cooper, Executive Manager
Berkeley Juneteenth

Duane E. deJoie, Board of Directors
Berkeley Juneteenth

J.K. Fowler, Executive Director
Bay Area Book Festival

Matthew Jervis, Director of Downtown Vitality
Downtown Berkeley Association

Alex Knox, Executive Director
Telegraph Business Improvement District

Daniel McChesney-Young, Berkeley Farmers' Market Program Manager
Ecology Center

Niloo Nouri, Founder and Board Member
Persian Center and Festival

FY27 Individual Artist Projects Grant

For dance, folk and traditional arts, literary arts, music, and theater projects

City of Berkeley | Civic Arts Grant Guidelines

APPLY HERE

Important Dates (Subject to change)

Applications Open	January 5, 2026
Apply Before	March 4, 2026, 11:59 pm
Grant Review Panel Meeting	April - May 2026
Grants Subcommittee Meeting – Funding Recommendations	June 5, 2026
Civic Arts Commission Meeting – Grant Awards Approval	June 24, 2026, 6:00 pm
Grant Activity Period	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027
Final Report Due	July 30, 2027

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Purpose – Why these grants are offered.

The Civic Arts program supports a culturally vibrant and diverse arts ecosystem within the City of Berkeley by funding grants to artists, arts organizations, and festivals.

Individual Artist Project grants support artists living in Berkeley with project-based funding. Projects must include original work created during the Grant Activity Period and a public presentation that engages Berkeley residents in a meaningful way.

1.2 Land Acknowledgment

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. We acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

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1.3 Cultural Equity Statement

The City of Berkeley Civic Arts program commits to equity within the arts and culture sector by consistently evaluating its programs and practices. The City recognizes the multiple benefits the arts provide, regardless of race, color, religion, age, disability, national origin, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Beyond ensuring access to the arts, the City of Berkeley commits to supporting artists and arts organizations that represent diverse cultures, life experiences, and socio-economic backgrounds. The City supports the empowerment of perspectives and identities that have been historically and systemically underrepresented.

1.4 Eligibility – Who can apply?

Applicants must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Individual artist and *not* applying as a partnership, group, or collective
- Resident of the City of Berkeley
- Artist working in film and new media, multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary arts, social practice, or visual arts
- 18 years of age or older

NEW: This grant category is discipline-specific. **You must select the primary artistic discipline that aligns with your proposed project. If you applied for this grant in FY26, you are not eligible to apply in FY27.**

The following disciplines are considered for the FY27 and FY26 grant cycles:

FY27 (*this application period*):

- Dance
- Folk and Traditional Arts
- Literary Arts
- Music
- Theater

FY26 (*previous application period*):

- Film and New Media
- Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Arts
- Social Practice
- Visual Arts

1.5 Eligibility – Who can't apply?

- City of Berkeley employees employed at the time of the application or during any part of the Grant Activity Period
- Full-time students enrolled at the time of the application or during any part of the Grant Activity Period
- Individual Artist Project grantees from the last two grant cycles (previous two Fiscal Years)
- Artists with proposed projects in film and new media, multidisciplinary / interdisciplinary arts, social practice, and visual arts
- Individuals who do not live in the City of Berkeley
- Organizational applicants (for example, festivals, nonprofit organizations, businesses, etc.)

1.6 Who is encouraged to apply?

- Artists in any phase of their artistic career including emerging, midcareer, and established artists
- Individuals representing systemically marginalized identities, including but not limited to: Arab, MENASA (Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian); Asian; Black, African American; California Native American, Indigenous, Tribal; Disabled; Elders, Seniors; Latinx, Chicanx;

LGBTQIA2S+; Low Income; Neuro-Divergent; Pacific Islander; People of Color; Trans and/or Non-Binary People; Immigrants (Documented and/or Undocumented), Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrants; Unhoused; Unsheltered; Veterans; or Youth 18 years of age or older

1.7 Grant Amount

The Individual Artist Project grant is a **$5,000** award.

Ten (10) awards will be given in this grant category, totaling a $50,000 allocation for individual artists.

Final award amounts are contingent upon City Council's adoption of the Fiscal Year 2027 budget and Civic Arts Grants allocation; amounts are subject to change.

1.8 Funding Use – Grant money can be used for these things.

A project budget is not required for this application. Examples of eligible expenses for this funding include, but are not limited to:

- Artist fees
- Equipment rentals
- Living expenses during the Grant Activity Period (for example, rent, utilities, childcare, etc.)
- Stipends for collaborators
- Supplies and materials needed for the project
- Venue or studio fees

1.9 Funding Use Restrictions – Grant money can't be used for these things.

Grant funds may not be used for the following:

- Expenses incurred outside of the Grant Activity Period
- Joint projects funded by two or more Individual Artist Project awards
- Political advocacy or lobbying
- Project production and presentation activities outside of the City of Berkeley
- Projects for which the main intent is curation, archiving, or journalism

1.10 Project Requirements

- All project components must be completed within the Grant Activity Period (July 1 – June 30)
- Public presentation. A public presentation of the new artwork within the City of Berkeley is required. The presentation must engage a defined Berkeley audience/community in a meaningful way.
    - Presentations may include but are not limited to: performing arts productions; visual art presentations, exhibitions or public art projects; social practice projects; media arts or film screenings; literary readings; or artist talks.

Please note: All proposed artwork installed on or within City-owned property must be temporary and not permanently installed. These public art projects must be reviewed and approved by the Civic Arts Commission and its Public Art Subcommittee. This process, found in the Community Initiated Public Art Proposals Guidelines, must be accounted for in the project narrative and completed before the project starts. This applies to murals, sculptures, displays, and similar project proposals.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 Grant Application Materials

All application materials must be submitted electronically before the deadline. The Individual Artist Project grant application consists of the following components:

- Proof of Berkeley residency
  - Examples include a current lease agreement, utility bill, or property tax bill.
  - Unhoused and unsheltered artists may provide a letter from a Berkeley-based shelter or a Berkeley-based homeless service program as proof of Berkeley residency.
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae (C.V.)
- Work samples and descriptions
- Narrative questions

2.2 Grants Management System

All application materials must be submitted electronically using the grants management system, Submittable. Technical assistance creating a Submittable account or navigating this platform is available through Submittable's Customer Support.

Please note: Paper or physical applications are not accepted at this time.

2.3 Technical Assistance

Technical assistance for grant program-specific inquiries is available from Civic Arts staff by email, phone or virtual appointment. Technical assistance can provide guidance around eligibility, application requirements, or review criteria.

Application resources available on the Civic Arts website are a FAQs (frequently asked questions) page and a recording of the Grant Program Webinar.

Staff contact: Hilary Amnah, Grants Program Lead
hamnah@berkeleyca.gov
510-981-7539
Schedule a virtual appointment

2.4 Accommodations for Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations to apply should make their requests to the Civic Arts staff at civicarts@berkeleyca.gov. Staff works with the Disability Compliance Program (ada@berkeleyca.gov) to review and fulfill the request. **Disability-related accommodation requests should be made at least 72 hours in advance of deadlines or meetings**. TTY users can dial 7-1-1 to be connected to a specially trained communications assistant from a state relay provider.

2.5 Translation Services

Translation services for the grant guidelines are available upon request. Requests can be emailed to Civic Arts staff at civicarts@berkeleyca.gov. If the application is submitted in a language other than English, a third-party translation service will be used to translate application answers into English for Grant Review Panelists.

3. EVALUATION AND SCORING

3.1 Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by Grant Review Panelists using the following criteria:

Artistic Practice and Experience (30%)

- Work samples demonstrate high-quality or promise
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae (C.V.) demonstrates high-quality or promise through its artistic history and accomplishments
- Reasoning for how funding will enhance, develop, and/or transform the applicant's artistic practice is compelling

Project Narrative (30%)

- Project goals, plan, timeline, and how funds will be spent demonstrate clarity and feasibility
- Project processes demonstrate originality, skill, and depth of concepts
- Proposed final work is impactful for the artist and City of Berkeley

Cultural Equity (30%)

- Applicant clearly conveys how their personal experiences and/or identities are rooted in and reflective of historically marginalized communities
- Applicant demonstrates an appropriate relationship between their creative practice and a historically marginalized community(ies)

Community Impact (10%)

- A venue for the required public presentation is identified; feasibility of using identified venue is articulated
- Proposed public presentation is appropriate to the project goals and engages a defined Berkeley audience/community in a meaningful way

3.2 Scoring Scale

Grant Review Panelists use the following scale to assess how well the application meets the review criteria. Numerical values are calculated to the appropriate weight for each criterion.

5	**Exceptional**	meets review criteria to the highest degree
4	**Strong**	strongly meets review criteria
3	**Good**	adequately meets review criteria; average
2	**Fair**	moderately meets some of the review criteria; needs some improvement
1	**Underdeveloped**	minimally meets the review criteria; greatly needs improvement
0	**Weak**	does not meet any elements of the review criteria

4. REVIEW PROCESS

4.1 Eligibility Screening

Civic Arts staff reviews each application submitted before the deadline for eligibility. Eligible applications are evaluated by a Grant Review Panel in accordance with the review criteria.

4.2 Grant Review Panel

The Grant Review Panel is comprised of individuals located in the greater Bay Area with diverse backgrounds in the cultural sector. Individuals apply to be included in the panelist pool through an open call. The Civic Arts Commission approves the pool of individuals that can be selected to serve as a panelist.

Any Panelist who has a conflict of interest with an application(s) must recuse themselves from reviewing that application(s). **A 'conflict of interest' is defined as a situation in which a Panelist has a competing professional, financial, or personal interest that could impair their ability to perform their evaluation responsibilities objectively.**

The Grant Review Panel meeting is public and facilitated through a Zoom Webinar. All applicants receive information regarding the panel meeting's date, time, and order in which applications will be reviewed. Applicants are encouraged to attend the panel meeting.

Applicants are permitted three (3) minutes at the end of the panel's discussion of their application to clarify any aspects that may have been misunderstood by the panelists. The allotted three minutes may not be used to communicate additional information not included in the application.

Applicants may request their panel comments after they receive official notice of award or decline.

4.3 Civic Arts Commission Approval

After the Grant Review Panel meets to review all applications, the Civic Arts Commission's Grants Subcommittee meets to develop funding recommendations based on scores and availability of funds. The Subcommittee ensures proposed grant awards are aligned with granting policies and guidelines before sending the recommendations to the full Civic Arts Commission.

Funding recommendations by the Grants Subcommittee are sent directly to applicants and are made public at least five (5) days prior to the Civic Arts Commission approval. The Civic Arts Commission reviews the funding recommendations and votes on final approval.

4.4 Appeal Process

Applicants who have evidence of misconduct or technical error in the panel review process may appeal the Grant Subcommittee's proposed funding scenario by completing an appeal form. Appeal forms must be received at least 10 days in advance of the June 24, 2026 Civic Arts Commission meeting. Applicants can email appeal forms to civicarts@berkeleyca.gov.

Once an appeal form is received, Civic Arts staff reviews the appeal form for evidence of misconduct or technical error. If misconduct or technical error is evident, the appeal is reviewed by the Grants Subcommittee, and forwarded to the Civic Arts Commission for final appeal decision.

Please note: Dissatisfaction with a final score or award amount is not grounds for appeal.

5. GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

5.1 Invoicing

Grantees must complete a Demographics Survey to receive their grant award invoice from Civic Arts. Staff will provide an invoice for 100% of the grant amount following City Council's approval of the Fiscal Year's budget and after July 1.

Please note**:** Grantees should be aware of the tax implications for awarded funds and maintain documents required for state and federal income taxes.

5.2 Final Report

All grantees must submit a completed Final Report form within 30 days after the Grant Activity Period ends. **Final Reports are due by July 30** unless otherwise noted. The Final Report demonstrates how the grant-funded project was developed and implemented. The Final Report also includes quantitative questions and space to make suggestions for improving the program. Grantees who do not submit a Final Report are ineligible from applying for any future Civic Arts grants.

5.3 Grant Activity Period Extension Requests

Grantees who experience circumstances that prevent them from completing their project before the end of the Grant Activity Period (June 30) may request a Grant Activity Period Extension. A Grant Activity Period Extension may be requested for up to one (1) year beyond the original end-date. **Extension requests must be received before June 30 and approved by Civic Arts staff.**

5.4 Artist Showcase

Individual Artist Project grantees are required to participate in an Artist Showcase to present their final project processes and products as a cohort. The Artist Showcase is an opportunity to see other grantees' work and share their work with the Civic Arts community. The Artist Showcase may be recorded and used for Civic Arts promotional purposes.

5.5 Acknowledging City Support

Grant recipients must acknowledge the City's financial support by using the phrase "Supported in part by a Civic Arts Grant from the City of Berkeley" or including the "City of Berkeley" in lists of supporters. Grantees must display the City's logo in all promotional materials and media.

5.6 City Permits and Permissions

Receiving a grant does not imply that Civic Arts or any other City department will produce, exhibit, or promote artwork(s) created with grant funds. It is the responsibility of the grantee to secure a venue and appropriate insurance for public presentations.

The grantee is solely responsible for securing the necessary City permits or approvals for project elements such as publicly installed art, street closures, sound amplification in public space, or murals. Planning for this should be reflected in the application narrative.

All proposed artwork installed on or within City-owned property must be temporary and not permanently installed. These public art projects must be reviewed and approved by the Civic Arts Commission and its Public Art Subcommittee. This proposal review process, found in the *Community Initiated Public Art Proposals Guidelines*, must be completed before the project starts. This review and approval process

applies to murals, sculptures, displays, and similar projects.

5.7 Incomplete Projects

Failure to complete the grant-funded project, required public presentation, Final Report, or participate in the Artist Showcase will result in a forfeiture of grant funds. Grantees with incomplete projects must return their awarded funds to the City of Berkeley.

FY27 Community Festivals Grant

City of Berkeley | Civic Arts Grant Guidelines

APPLY HERE

Important Dates (Subject to change)

Applications Open	January 5, 2025
Apply Before	March 11, 2026, 11:59 pm
Grant Review Panel Meeting	April - May 2026
Grants Subcommittee Meeting – Funding Recommendations	June 5, 2026
Civic Arts Commission Meeting – Grant Awards Approval	June 24, 2026, 6:00 pm
Grant Activity Period	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027
Final Report Due	July 30, 2027

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Purpose – Why these grants are offered.

The Civic Arts program supports a culturally vibrant and diverse arts ecosystem within the City of Berkeley by funding grants to artists, arts organizations, and festivals.

Community Festival grants fund community festivals and special events that:

- celebrate and preserve a rich variety of cultural opportunities for Berkeley's residents;
- bolster Berkeley's vitality;
- increase Berkeley's reputation as a vibrant destination for visitors;
- create meaningful experiences that build community.

Community Festival grants support a range of events throughout the City, from small-scale and first-time events to large-scale and established festivals. Funded events must be open to the entire public and have a free component.

Please note: This grant is for festivals that are one- or multi-day events, but generally events that occur one time per year. **This grant is not intended to fund ongoing programming**.

1.2 Land Acknowledgment

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. We acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and

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occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

1.3 Cultural Equity Statement

The City of Berkeley Civic Arts program commits to equity within the arts and culture sector by consistently evaluating its programs and practices. The City recognizes the multiple benefits the arts provide, regardless of race, color, religion, age, disability, national origin, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Beyond ensuring access to the arts, the City of Berkeley commits to supporting artists and arts organizations that represent diverse cultures, life experiences, and socio-economic backgrounds. The City supports the empowerment of perspectives and identities that have been historically and systemically underrepresented.

1.4 Festival Definition

A festival is defined as a public event that celebrates a community, neighborhood, historically significant day, or shared cultural interest. It must have a broad intended audience that is accessible and engaging for a wide range of attendees. This may include arts fairs, celebrations of cultural heritage, and other events that occur over a limited time period.

1.5 Eligibility – Who can apply?

Applicants must meet one of the following eligibility requirements:

- Nonprofit 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), or 501(c)(6) organization
- Applicant is an organizational entity that is nonprofit in nature (for example, artist collectives and guilds) and using a Fiscal Sponsor to apply. Fiscal Sponsors must be a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.
    - See additional requirements regarding the use of Fiscal Sponsors in section 1.12 Fiscal Sponsors

1.6 Eligibility – Who can't apply?

- City of Berkeley government departments or units
- For-profit businesses and sole proprietorships
- Individuals
- Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs)

1.7 Who is encouraged to apply?

Organizations representing systemically marginalized identities, including but not limited to: Arab, MENASA (Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian); Asian; Black, African American; California Native American, Indigenous, Tribal; Disabled; Elders, Seniors; Latinx, Chicanx; LGBTQIA2S+; Low Income; Neuro-Divergent; Pacific Islander; People of Color; Trans and/or Non-Binary People; Immigrants (Documented and/or Undocumented), Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrants; Unhoused; Unsheltered; Veterans; or Youth 18 years of age or older are strongly encouraged to apply.

1.8 Grant Amount

All applicants may request up to **$7,000** for festival-related expenses.

A projected total of $156,315 is allocated for this grant category. Award amounts and the number of awards be determined by the amount of applications received, request amounts, and final scores.

Final award amounts are contingent upon City Council's adoption of the Fiscal Year 2027 budget and Civic Arts Grants allocation; amounts are subject to change.

1.9 Funding Use – Grant money can be used for these things.

A project budget is required for this application. Examples of eligible expenses for this funding include, but are not limited to:

- Artist and performer stipends
- Equipment rentals
- Production or technical staff contractors
- Supplies and materials needed for the festival
- Venue and permit fees

1.10 Funding Use Restrictions – Grant money can't be used for these things.

Grant funds may not be used for the items or events in the following list. Applications that include expenses related to the following will be deemed ineligible.

- Activities not available to the general public
- Activities occurring outside the City of Berkeley
- Administrative or other organizational costs unrelated to production of the event
- Capital improvement projects
- Conferences and symposia
- Events in schools during school hours
- Events on university campuses that are primarily for enrolled students
- Events where fundraising is the primary purpose
- Events where sporting is the primary purpose (for example, tournaments, marathons, etc.)
- Open houses and recruitment events
- Ongoing programming (for example, regular programs or events that occur throughout the year and would not be considered a festival or special event)
- Political advocacy or lobbying

1.11 Festival Requirements

- Festival must have a free component
- Festival must be open and accessible to the public
- Festival must take place in the City of Berkeley
- Festival must take place within the Grant Activity Period

1.12 Fiscal Sponsors

For the purposes of Civic Arts grants, a Fiscal Sponsor is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, nonprofit organization that receives awarded funds on behalf of an organizational entity that does not have Federal Tax-Exempt status. Fiscal sponsorship is unique to each circumstance and may take the form of processing a single check, providing complex accounting services, and/or project oversight. Fiscals Sponsors may have an official business address anywhere in the United States.

Organizational entities applying with a Fiscal Sponsor must be nonprofit in nature and have their own

accounting documentation. These organizational entities must also be comprised of more than one staff member or volunteer.

Fiscally sponsored applicants and Fiscal Sponsors should note the following:

- Proof of the Fiscal Sponsor's nonprofit status is due at the time of application
- A Letter of Agreement between the applicant organization and the Fiscal Sponsor outlining the conditions of the fiscal sponsorship is due at the time of application
    - The Letter of Agreement must be valid through the end of the Grant Activity Period
- Grant application questions and materials—including all budget information—apply to the applicant organization, not the Fiscal Sponsor
- The primary point of contact between Civic Arts and the fiscal sponsorship is the applicant organization, not the Fiscal Sponsor
- Fiscal Sponsors are responsible for all fiscal obligations of the applicant's awarded funds

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 Grant Application Materials

All application materials must be submitted electronically before the deadline. The Community Festivals grant application consists of the following components:

- Proof of nonprofit status for applicant or Fiscal Sponsor
- Narrative questions
- Key staff and/or event personnel qualifications
- Board of directors or festival committee biographies
- Event budget form and budget notes
- Work samples and support materials
- If fiscally sponsored: Letter of Agreement between the applicant and Fiscal Sponsor

2.2 Grants Management System

All application materials must be submitted electronically using the Office of Economic Development's grants management system, Submittable. Technical assistance creating a Submittable account is available through Submittable's Customer Support.

Please note: Paper or physical applications are not accepted at this time.

2.3 Technical Assistance

Technical assistance for grant program-specific inquiries is available from Civic Arts staff by email, phone or virtual appointment. Technical assistance can provide guidance around eligibility, application requirements, or review criteria.

Application resources available on the Civic Arts website are a FAQs (frequently asked questions) page and a recording of the Grant Program Webinar.

Staff contact: Hilary Amnah, Grants Program Lead
hamnah@berkeleyca.gov
510-981-7539
Schedule a virtual appointment

2.4 Accommodations for Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations to apply should make their requests to the Civic Arts staff at civicarts@berkeleyca.gov. Staff works with the Disability Compliance Program (ada@berkeleyca.gov) to review and fulfill the request. **Disability-related accommodation requests should be made at least 72 hours in advance of deadlines or meetings**. TTY users can dial 7-1-1 to be connected to a specially trained communications assistant from a state relay provider.

2.5 Translation Services

Translation services for the grant guidelines are available upon request. Requests can be emailed to Civic Arts staff at civicarts@berkeleyca.gov. If the application is submitted in a language other than English, a third-party translation service will be used to translate application answers into English for Grant Review Panelists.

3. EVALUATION AND SCORING

3.1 Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by Grant Review Panelists using the following criteria:

Festival Narrative and Community Significance (25%)

- Festival celebrates Berkeley's cultural richness, historical significance, or community/neighborhood identity
- Festival goals are clearly defined
- Festival planning and activity timeline demonstrate clarity and feasibility
- Festival activities and programming are clear and directly relate to the defined goals

Festival Management and Production (30%)

- Key personnel have a history of producing similar festivals or events to the one proposed
- Applicant demonstrates ability to acquire necessary permits and insurance
- Applicant demonstrates financial responsibility through receiving diversified sources of funding relative to the budget-size and expenses
- Effectiveness of marketing and outreach strategies
- Effectiveness of festival's evaluation strategies

Community Engagement and Impact (25%)

- Extent to which the festival and festival activities are free
- Extent to which community members, local businesses, and local nonprofit organizations in the neighborhood are involved in the planning and implementation of the festival
- Community and/or neighborhood benefit is clearly demonstrated
- Extent to which the festival and festival activities are accessible to people with mobility-related disabilities

Cultural Equity (20%)

- Extent to which the festival supports diverse event personnel and performers through paid opportunities
- Extent to which the festival's content is rooted in historically marginalized communities and geographically underserved areas of the city
- Extent to which the festival engages economically-disadvantaged individuals

3.2 Scoring Scale

Grant Review Panelists use the following scale to assess how well the application meets the review criteria. Numerical values are calculated to the appropriate weight for each criterion.

5	**Exceptional**	meets review criteria to the highest degree
4	**Strong**	strongly meets review criteria
3	**Good**	adequately meets review criteria; average
2	**Fair**	moderately meets some of the review criteria; needs some improvement
1	**Underdeveloped**	minimally meets the review criteria; greatly needs improvement
0	**Weak**	does not meet any elements of the review criteria

4. REVIEW PROCESS

4.1 Eligibility Screening

Civic Arts staff reviews each application submitted before the deadline for eligibility. Eligible applications are evaluated by a Grant Review Panel in accordance with the review criteria.

4.2 Grant Review Panel

The Grant Review Panel is comprised of individuals located in the greater Bay Area with diverse backgrounds in the cultural sector. Individuals apply to be included in the panelist pool through an open call. The Civic Arts Commission approves the pool of individuals that can be selected to serve as a panelist.

Any Panelist who has a conflict of interest with an application(s) must recuse themselves from reviewing that application(s). **A 'conflict of interest' is defined as a situation in which a Panelist has a competing professional, financial, or personal interest that could impair their ability to perform their evaluation responsibilities objectively.**

The Grant Review Panel meeting is public and facilitated through a Zoom Webinar. All applicants receive information regarding the panel meeting's date, time, and order in which applications will be reviewed. Applicants are encouraged to attend the panel meeting.

Applicants are permitted three (3) minutes at the end of the panel's discussion of their application to clarify any aspects that may have been misunderstood by the panelists. The allotted three minutes may not be used to communicate additional information not included in the application.

Applicants may request their panel comments after they receive official notice of award or decline.

4.3 Civic Arts Commission Approval

After the Grant Review Panel meets to review all applications, the Civic Arts Commission's Grants Subcommittee meets to develop funding recommendations based on scores, number of applications, and availability of funds. The Subcommittee ensures proposed grant awards are aligned with granting policies and guidelines before sending the recommendations to the full Civic Arts Commission.

Funding recommendations by the Grants Subcommittee are made public at least five (5) business days prior to the Civic Arts Commission approval. The Civic Arts Commission reviews the funding recommendations and votes on final approval.

4.4 Appeal Process

Applicants who have evidence of misconduct or technical error in the panel review process may appeal the Grant Subcommittee's proposed funding scenario by completing an appeal form. Appeal forms must be received at least 10 days in advance of the June 24, 2026 Civic Arts Commission meeting. Applicants can email appeal forms to civicarts@berkeleyca.gov.

Once an appeal form is received, Civic Arts staff reviews the appeal form for evidence of misconduct or technical error. If misconduct or technical error is evident, the appeal is reviewed by the Grants Subcommittee, and forwarded to the Civic Arts Commission for final appeal decision.

Please note: Dissatisfaction with a final score or award amount is not grounds for appeal.

5. GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

5.1 Invoicing

Grantees must complete a Demographics Survey to receive their grant award invoice from Civic Arts. Staff will provide an invoice for 100% of the grant amount following City Council's approval of the Fiscal Year's budget and after July 1.

5.2 Final Report

All grantees must submit a completed Final Report form within 30 days after the Grant Activity Period ends. **Final Reports are due by July 30** unless otherwise noted. The Final Report should demonstrate how the grant-funded project was developed and implemented. The Final Report also includes evaluation questions for self-reflection and for Civic Arts staff to make improvements to the program. Grantees who do not submit a Final Report are ineligible from applying for any future Civic Arts grants.

5.3 Grant Activity Period Extension Requests

Grantees who experience circumstances that prevent them from producing their festival before the end of the Grant Activity Period (June 30) may request a Grant Activity Period Extension. A Grant Activity Period Extension may be requested for up to one (1) year beyond the original end-date. **Extension requests must be received before June 30 and approved by Civic Arts staff.**

5.4 Business License

Awarded organizations or Fiscal Sponsors must have a current City of Berkeley Business License.

5.5 Acknowledging City Support

Grant recipients must acknowledge the City's financial support by using the phrase "Supported in part by a Civic Arts Grant from the City of Berkeley" or including the "City of Berkeley" in lists of supporters. Grantees must display the City's logo in all promotional materials and media.

5.6 City Permits and Permissions

Receiving a grant does not imply that Civic Arts or any other City department will produce, exhibit, or promote artwork(s) created with grant funds. It is the responsibility of the grantee to secure a venue and appropriate insurance for public presentations.

The grantee is solely responsible for securing the necessary City permits or approvals for project elements such as publicly installed art, street closures, sound amplification in public space, or murals. Planning for this should be reflected in the application narrative.

All proposed artwork installed on or within City-owned property must be temporary and not permanently installed. These public art projects must be reviewed and approved by the Civic Arts Commission and its Public Art Subcommittee. This proposal review process, found in the *Community Initiated Public Art Proposals Guidelines*, must be completed before the project starts. This review and approval process applies to murals, sculptures, displays, and similar projects.

5.7 Incomplete Projects

Failure to complete the grant-funded festival or Final Report will result in a forfeiture of grant funds. Grantees with incomplete projects must return their awarded funds to the City of Berkeley.

FY27 Arts Programs Grant

City of Berkeley | Civic Arts Grant Guidelines

APPLY HERE

Important Dates (Subject to change)

Applications Open	January 5, 2026
Apply Before	February 26, 2026, 11:59 pm
Grant Review Panel Meeting	April - May 2026
Grants Subcommittee Meeting – Funding Recommendations	June 5, 2026
Civic Arts Commission Meeting – Grant Awards Approval	June 24, 2026, 6:00 pm
Grant Activity Period	July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027
Final Report Due	July 30, 2027

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Purpose – Why these grants are offered.

The purpose of the Arts Programs grant is to support arts and cultural programming in the City of Berkeley that falls within one of two categories:

- **Non-arts nonprofit organizations located in the City of Berkeley** producing arts/cultural programming in the City of Berkeley led by a Berkeley-based partnering arts organization or teaching artist
- **Arts nonprofit organizations located in the Greater Bay Area (outside of Berkeley)** producing arts/cultural programming in the City of Berkeley

This funding opportunity aims to (1) allow cross-sector collaborations and opportunities for non-arts organizations to hire arts and cultural workers or partner with Berkeley-based arts organizations, and (2) allow Berkeley residents to engage in Greater Bay Area programming offered by non-Berkeley arts organizations.

Please note: This grant is funded in part with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and is not guaranteed to be offered in future Civic Arts grant cycles.

Applicants in this grant category are not eligible for other Civic Arts grant opportunities.

1.2 Land Acknowledgment

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. We acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant

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community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

1.3 Cultural Equity Statement

The City of Berkeley Civic Arts program commits to equity within the arts and culture sector by consistently evaluating its programs and practices. The City recognizes the multiple benefits the arts provide, regardless of race, color, religion, age, disability, national origin, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

Beyond ensuring access to the arts, the City of Berkeley commits to supporting artists and arts organizations that represent diverse cultures, life experiences, and socio-economic backgrounds. The City supports the empowerment of perspectives and identities that have been historically and systemically underrepresented.

1.4 Definitions

Artistic Excellence and Artistic Merit: A review criterion required for grant awards using National Endowment for the Arts funds. For this grant program, this can mean a mastery of skills and techniques; communication of a unique vision or perspective; professional approaches to process and presentation; the artistic work(s)' contribution to the development of the community members involved, the art form, and the arts generally; or, the artistic services' contribution to developing a vibrant arts and cultural community. Artistic Excellence and Artistic Merit is considered within the context of the arts program and any community identities associated with the program.

Arts Organization: A nonprofit 501(c)3 organization with a primary purpose of providing arts, creative, or cultural programming/services. The organization's purpose is assessed and verified by staff using the organization's website, mission, core activities, and IRS National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) codes.

Greater Bay Area: The geographic area comprised of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, or Sonoma counties.

Non-arts Organization: A nonprofit 501(c)3 with a primary purpose *other* than providing arts, creative, or cultural programming/services. For example: environmental, health, or human service organizations.

1.5 Eligibility – Who can apply?

Applicants must meet one of the following eligibility requirements:

- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) *non-arts* organization with its official business address in the City of Berkeley
- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) arts organization with its official business address in the Greater Bay Area but outside of Berkeley city limits

1.6 Eligibility – Who can't apply?

- Applicants seeking or receiving Civic Arts funding in other grant categories
- City of Berkeley government departments or units

- For-profit businesses or sole proprietorships
- Individual artists
- Public or private school districts
- Non-arts nonprofit organizations located outside of the City of Berkeley
- Organizations disbarred, suspended, or have any other exclusions or disqualifications from receiving federal funds

1.7 Who is encouraged to apply?

Organizations representing systemically marginalized identities, including but not limited to: Arab, MENASA (Middle Eastern, North African, South Asian); Asian; Black, African American; California Native American, Indigenous, Tribal; Disabled; Elders, Seniors; Latinx, Chicanx; LGBTQIA2S+; Low Income; Neuro-Divergent; Pacific Islander; People of Color; Trans and/or Non-Binary People; Immigrants (Documented and/or Undocumented), Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrants; Unhoused; Unsheltered; Veterans; or Youth 18 years of age or older are strongly encouraged to apply.

1.8 Grant Amount and Investment

All applicants may request up to **$5,000** for eligible program-related expenses.

Final award amounts are contingent upon City Council's adoption of the Fiscal Year 2027 budget and Civic Arts Grants allocation; amounts are subject to change.

1.9 Funding Use – You can use the grant money for these things.

A program budget is required for this application. Examples of eligible expenses for this funding include, but are not limited to:

- Administrative costs related to the program
- Artist and performer stipends
- Equipment rentals
- Production or technical staff contractors
- Supplies and materials needed for the program
- Venue and permit fees
- Up to 10% of award for indirect costs

1.10 Funding Use Restrictions – You can't use the grant money for these things.

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Activities occurring outside the City of Berkeley
- Administrative or other organizational costs unrelated to the program
- Capital improvement projects
- Festivals
- Fundraising
- Political advocacy or lobbying
- Programs in schools during school hours
- Programs on university campuses that are primarily for enrolled students
- Programs with religious or evangelical purposes

1.11 Program Requirements

- Program must have a free component
- Program must take place in the City of Berkeley

- Program must take place within the Grant Activity Period
- Program must follow the National Endowment for the Arts sub-awardee regulations

1.12 Fiscal Sponsors

The use of Fiscal Sponsors is not permitted for this grant program.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 Grant Application Materials

All application materials must be submitted electronically before the deadline. The Arts Programs grant application consists of the following components:

- Proof of nonprofit status for applicant
- Narrative questions
- Key program staff, teaching artist(s), or partnering organization qualifications
- Program budget form and budget notes
- Work samples and support materials
- If applicable, Letter of Agreement between Applicant Organization and Arts Provider

2.2 Grants Management System

All application materials must be submitted electronically using the Office of Economic Development's grants management system, Submittable. Technical assistance creating a Submittable account is available through Submittable's Customer Support.

Please note: Paper or physical applications are not accepted at this time.

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3. EVALUATION AND SCORING

3.1 Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by Grant Review Panelists using the following criteria:

Program Narrative and Timeline (25%)

- Clearly defined goals and/or proposed outcomes and an appropriate plan to determine if those goals and/or outcomes are met
- Ability to carry out the program based on such factors as the appropriateness of the budget, clarity of the project activities, resources involved, and the qualifications of the program's personnel and/or partnerships

Artistic Excellence and Artistic Merit (25%)

- Quality of the artists and other key individuals, creative process, works of art, organizations, arts education providers, artistic partners, and/or services involved in the program and their relevance to the audience/communities the project aims to serve
- Value and appropriateness of the program to the organization's mission, artistic field, artists, audience, community, and/or constituency

Community Engagement and Impact (25%)

- Extent to which community members, local businesses, and local nonprofit organizations in the neighborhood are involved in the planning and implementation of the program
- Community and/or neighborhood benefit is clearly demonstrated
- Extent to which the program activities are free
- Extent to which the program activities are accessible to people with physical disabilities

Cultural Equity (25%)

- Extent to which the program supports diverse personnel, teaching artists, and/or cultural workers through paid opportunities
- Extent to which the program's content is rooted in institutionally underserved communities and geographically underserved areas of the city
- Extent to which the program engages economically-disadvantaged individuals

3.2 Scoring Scale

Grant Review Panelists use the following scale to assess how well the application meets the review criteria. Numerical values are calculated to the appropriate weight for each criterion.

5	**Exceptional**	meets review criteria to the highest degree
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4.1 Eligibility Screening

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Please note: Dissatisfaction with a final score or award amount is not grounds for appeal.

5. GRANTEE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

5.1 Federal Requirement for Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)

All grantees must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Grantees can request a UEI in SAM.gov. Grantees are NOT required to have a full registration in SAM.gov. A UEI must be provided to Civic Arts before payment can be issued.

5.2 Invoicing

Grantees must complete a Demographic Survey to receive their grant award invoice from Civic Arts. Staff will provide an invoice for 100% of the grant amount following City Council's approval of the Fiscal Year's budget and after July 1.

5.3 Final Report

All grantees must submit a completed Final Report form within 30 days after the Grant Activity Period ends. **Final Reports are due by July 30** unless otherwise noted. The Final Report should demonstrate how the grant-funded project was developed and implemented. The Final Report also includes evaluation questions for self-reflection and for Civic Arts staff to make improvements to the program. Grantees who do not submit a Final Report are ineligible from applying for any future Civic Arts grants.

5.4 Grant Activity Period Extension Requests

Grantees who experience circumstances that prevent them from completing their program before the end of the Grant Activity Period (June 30) may request a Grant Activity Period Extension. A Grant Activity Period Extension may be requested for up to six (6) months beyond the original end-date. **Extension requests must be received before June 30 and approved by Civic Arts staff.**

5.5 Business License

Awarded organizations must have a current City of Berkeley Business License.

5.6 Acknowledging City Support

Grant recipients must acknowledge the City's financial support by using the phrase "Supported in part by a Civic Arts Grant from the City of Berkeley" or including the "City of Berkeley" in lists of supporters. Grantees must display the City's logo in all promotional materials and media.

5.7 Acknowledging National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Support

For print and online program materials, the basic requirement is a phrase acknowledging support from the National Endowment for the Arts using the following language: "This program is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts."

- We encourage you to include "To find out more about how National Endowment for the Arts grants impact individuals and communities, visit www.arts.gov."
- In addition, we encourage you to use the National Endowment for the Arts current logo whenever possible to accurately indicate that your program has been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.
- You may also use social media to indicate National Endowment for the Arts support of your program, such as "This program is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts." It is also acceptable to include the agency in a list among other program supporters. (On X [formerly Twitter] and Instagram, you may use @NEAarts instead of spelling out the full name of the agency.)

5.8 City Permits and Permissions

Receiving a grant does not imply that Civic Arts or any other City department will produce, exhibit, or promote artwork(s) created with grant funds. It is the responsibility of the grantee to secure a venue and appropriate insurance for public presentations.

The grantee is solely responsible for securing the necessary City permits or approvals for project elements such as publicly installed art, street closures, sound amplification in public space, or murals. Planning for this should be reflected in the application narrative.

All proposed artwork installed on or within City-owned property must be temporary and not permanently installed. These public art projects must be reviewed and approved by the Civic Arts Commission and its Public Art Subcommittee. This proposal review process, found in the *Community Initiated Public Art Proposals Guidelines*, must be completed before the project starts. This review and approval process applies to murals, sculptures, displays, and similar projects.

5.9 Incomplete Programs

Failure to complete the grant-funded program or Final Report will result in a forfeiture of grant funds. Grantees with incomplete programs must return their award funds to the City of Berkeley.

2026 - 2027 Civic Arts Grant Panelist Pool

Name	City	Organization	Artistic Discipline(s)	Biography
Abby Ha (she/her/they/them)	Vacaville	The UC Theatre, Women's Audio Mission	Music Social Practice Dance	Abby is a nonprofit development professional and performing artist passionate about fostering community connection through live music and the arts. Since 2017, she has built a career working and volunteering with young people in her communities to educate, advocate, and create inclusive spaces, bringing people together through creativity and collaboration. Abby holds a High Honors B.A. in Anthropology from UC Berkeley, where she researched the intersection of DIY culture, guerrilla community building through arts, and underground music scene behavior. After graduating, she joined The UC Theatre's Concert Career Pathways workforce development program as a Community Development Intern and was later promoted to Grant Writer and Community Development Associate, in support of donor engagement, grassroots fundraising, and workforce development initiatives in the arts. In tandem, she is also the Community Development Coordinator of the award-winning SF-based nonprofit Women's Audio Mission. Beyond her nonprofit work, Abby is an electric bassist and cellist who has performed in jazz bands, a dancer, and a longtime participant in community theatre, both onstage and behind the scenes as a stagehand. She brings a holistic, informed perspective to her development work, believing in the transformative power of accessible education in the arts.
Abigail Rocha Carlisle (She/They)	Berkeley	East Bay BIPOC Cartoonists	Visual Arts Literary Arts	Abby Rocha (She/They) is an artist and community organizer from San Diego who has settled in the coastal embrace of the East Bay. They create from the intersection of their Latinidad and the multifaceted subject of death as well as the world around them. Graduating from CCA with a B.A. in Illustration, she focused on art activism for her thesis, writing and illustrating a five story compendium, "VOICES: A Comic Anthology About Immigrant Interviews, Stories, And Reflections." She's continued this work with her visual and writing practice creating comics, images and graphic essays for local and national publications. She's also a member of the collective, the East Bay BIPOC Cartoonists(EBBIPOCC) and has helped organize, market and showcase the public reading series, "HELLA COMIX" in Berkeley and at various Bay Area libraries, giving BIPOC indie artists a platform to read their creative original work. In her spare time she also volunteers as an art teacher at her local preschool, The New School of Berkeley. The curriculum focuses on fostering confidence, self expression while developing fine motor skills and a lifelong love of creating. She is currently working on her debut graphic novel, "Hearts in Mictlan".
Aisha Rivera (They/Them)	Napa	N/A	Literary Arts Theater Visual Arts	Aisha Rivera, (they/them/elle) is an Artist, Writer, and Actor. Aisha. Their first full length, a Spanish adaptation of "It's a Wonderful Life" premiered with Shakespeare Napa Valley in 2023. Their second full-length play "Belly of the Beast" premiered with SF Playground's Free Play Festival in 2025. Favorite acting credits include R&J (Marin Shakespeare Co.), Yerma (Shotgun Players), Cymbeline (Berkeley Shakespeare Company), and Dead Man's Cellphone (Upstage Napa Valley). Aisha is also the current Poet Laureate for Napa County. Aisha's term was renewed in 2025 for another two years. In this position Aisha creates valuable community programming and education regarding the literary arts in Napa. They also have served as a Board Member for Arts Council Napa Valley for the previous 5 years. With Arts Council, they focus on equity and increasing diversity for artists in Napa County. They review grant applications for Arts Council Napa Valley on a yearly basis.
Alisa Polischuk (She/Her/Hers)	San Francisco	Creativity Explored	Visual Arts	Alisa Polischuk is the Exhibitions Coordinator at Creativity Explored, a non-profit gallery and studio in San Francisco that partners with artists with developmental disabilities to create, exhibit, and sell their artwork. In this role, she matches artists with opportunities in the art world, including open calls, awards, and public art commissions, helping artists navigate the process following a person-centered thinking model. In addition, she is currently developing a free, comprehensive resource on respectfully partnering with artists with IDD in the exhibition planning process, made possible by a research grant through the Teiger Foundation. Prior to pursuing exhibitions, Alisa worked in museum education departments across the country, including the SFMoMA, de Young, and the Smithsonian. In addition to her nonprofit work, Alisa served as Director of Craig Krull Gallery in Santa Monica, California, where she worked closely with contemporary artists across Los Angeles. Alisa has served as a juror for the Creative Growth Fellowship Program through the city of Sacramento (2025), Santa Cruz Open Studios (2024, 2025), and as a student juror for Apex Arts (2018). She graduated with a BA from the San Francisco State History Department and holds an MA in Art and Museum Studies from Georgetown University.

Name	City	Organization	Artistic Discipline(s)	Biography
Anna-Isabelle Bruey-Sedano (Her/She/They)	San Francisco	NA	Visual Arts Architecture / Design	Anna-Isabelle Gabrielle Bruey-Sedano, is a French and first-generation American sculptor whose work explores the intersections of industrialism, consumerism, and the domestic sphere. Working with materials such as steel, aluminum, bronze, and reclaimed ceramics, she reimagines functional objects to question how design reflects systems of power, labor, and value. Currently pursuing her MFA at San Francisco State University, she brings a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspective to the evaluation of artistic practices. Her background in both academic and studio settings informs a sensitivity to material innovation, craftsmanship, and critical inquiry. As a panelist, she offers an inclusive, research-driven approach that values experimentation and the social impact of contemporary art.
Beril Or (she/her/o)	Oakland	N/A	Visual Arts	Beril Or is a visual artist, curator, and educator from Türkiye, based in Oakland, California. Her interdisciplinary practice explores time, memory, and healing through rest, often balancing between comfort and disturbance. She has exhibited nationally and internationally at venues such as Marin MOCA, ICA SF, SOMArts, Root Division, Berkeley Art Center, Palo Alto Art Center, Galeri Nev, and Zilberman Gallery. Her awards include the State Contemporary Artist Award in Türkiye, the Sher-Right Scholarship, the Christine Tamblyn Award, the Steve Wilson Award, and the Cadogan Contemporary Art Award. She holds an MFA in Art Practice from San Francisco State University and a BFA in Sculpture from Hacettepe University. Before moving to the United States, Or worked in galleries in Türkiye, supporting exhibition programming, artist communication, and curatorial projects, experiences that continue to shape her collaborative approach. She is a co-founder of MUZ, a Bay Area collective that supports emerging artists through accessible exhibitions and educational programs, fiscally sponsored by Independent Arts and Media. At City College of San Francisco, she teaches 3D Design and Sculpture, creating spaces where experimentation and curiosity are encouraged. She aims to build an environment that values care, dialogue, and the different ways people learn and make.
chani bockwinkel (she/her)	Berkeley	chani	Dance Film / Media Arts	Chani Bockwinkel is a dancer and filmmaker based in the Bay Area. She makes interdisciplinary-collaborative-queer feminist imagery for the stage, gallery, and internet. Balancing reverence and irreverence, her work braids historical tales, somatic storytelling, and queer absurdity. She is often found working with dancers, drag queens, musicians and community activists. Her feature film “Those Who Wait”, a poetic retelling of the Millerite doomsday movement that swept across America in the 1840’s, premiered in 2023. She also teaches an internationally roving queer dance class SAPPHO and SWEAT. Her work has recently been shown at the Contemporary Jewish Museum SF, The Roxie, Hudson Gallery, Portland Museum of Art, BAMPFA, SOMArts, Acre TV, BRIC NYC, SF Trans film Festival, ODC Theatre, SF Dance Film Festival, Dock 11, Berlin. She was also a member of SALTA- ia collective of dancers that curated a free monthly mobile performance series in the East Bay From 2012 to 2016. This series that took place in a different venue each month, collaborating with an ever-expanding network of public and private spaces, institutions, communities, and performers Chani is currently a member at Real Time and Space, a collective of artist studios in Oakland.
Christina Azahar (she/her/hers)	El Cerrito	La Peña Cultural Center	Folk / Traditional Arts Music Social Practice	Christina Azahar is a scholar, educator, and musician of Salvadoran descent with expertise in Latinx music, ethnic studies, gender and sexuality, and feminist theory. Born and raised on Muscogee land in Milledgeville, GA, she moved to the Bay Area in 2013 and holds a PhD in ethnomusicology from UC Berkeley. She also has deep experience in archiving and cultural stewardship through multiple collaborations with the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. Since 2020 Christina has been deeply involved in the community-driven efforts to preserve, catalog, and digitize the archival collections at La Peña Cultural Center. In 2023 she joined La Peña professionally and since then has overseen all aspects of grassroots fundraising, institutional partnerships, and grant-related projects, and also supports regularly with communications and storytelling.
Elaine Fong (she/her)	San Francisco	N/A	Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Visual Arts	Elaine Fong is an arts and culture administrator with a strong desire to cultivate environments that fosters connectivity and facilitates dialogue surrounding disruptions of known narratives. Holding a degree in Art History and East Asian Studies from UC Davis, Elaine is passionate about highlighting the present and thriving art scene in the Bay Area. This motivation informs her, having worked at various arts administrative positions in San Francisco, such as Dolby Chadwick Gallery and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. In her most recent position program planning at the Chinatown non-profit Edge on the Square, Elaine developed and coordinated community centered exhibitions and programming, including the most recent outdoor contemporary art festival, “SUPER FLEX: Powered by Alter Ego and Shadow Selves.”Driven by her belief of the regenerative and restorative power of art and creativity, Elaine is dedicated to creating programming that further enriches the surrounding community and its residents. In her free time, Elaine enjoys going to museums and is always on the lookout for interesting things to read.

Name	City	Organization	Artistic Discipline(s)	Biography
Hailey Lindsay (she/her/hers)	San Francisco	N/A	Visual Arts Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary	Hailey Lindsay is a contemporary abstract artist based in San Francisco, California, specializing in the impasto style with an emphasis in color theory. From textured acrylic paintings to surreal collages made from scrap magazines, from stretched canvas to glass mirrors, from architectural photography to watercolor portraits, Lindsay's original artworks and practices hold no boundaries. While she finishes her studies in Humanities and Museum Studies at San Francisco State University, Lindsay spends time creating in her shipyard studio and is working towards a career in the museum and gallery sectors of the art industry. She has experience judging exhibition proposals for apexart's International Open Call, volunteering at San Francisco's Asian Art Museum, participating in Open Studios in Hunter's Point, and art handling and exhibition installation at SFSU's Fine Arts Gallery. Her nuanced approach to art and vast experience across multiple artistic mediums provides Lindsay with an inclusive outlook on art, inviting originality, creativity, and talent to shine.
Jay Lotus Allen (she/her/they/them)	Berkeley	N/A	Visual Arts Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Literary Arts	Jay Lotus Allen (pronouns: she/her/they/them) is a multidisciplinary artist who works in writing, poetry, photography, video, sculpture, drawing, painting and printmaking. They especially enjoy mixed media for its endless creative possibilities, the interplay of media, form, and color, and the opportunity to experiment with combining different media. Their work is a complicated mix of cultural expressions and emergent realities, personal story, landscape, and our human and non-human relations. Jay Lotus received degrees summa cum laude in Art Practice from Berkeley City College (2021) and the University of California-Berkeley (2024). The Berkeley Civic Arts Commission awarded Jay Lotus Individual Artist Grants in 2021 ("Resilient Love Bundle" public art project) and 2024 ("Senior Shine: The Golden Years" public art project. Jay Lotus has extensive experience in grant research, writing and reporting as well as program administration. They worked for many years with non-profit organizations to promote sustainable cultural development, equity and diversity, including the Fellowship for Intentional Community, Network for a New Culture, Plenty International, Kids to the Country, and Northern California Land Trust. Jay Lotus lives and works in Berkeley. They have a small studio space in their apartment for their art and spiritual practices.
Jennifer Andrea Porras (They/Sir/She)	Oakland	Weaving Spirits 2 Spirit Festival of Performance	Dance Film / Media Arts Folk / Traditional Arts Literary Arts Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Music Social Practice Theater Visual Arts Other	yAyA (j. andrea porras) is a 2S/ Coahuiltecan descendant/ Xicana, curator, producer, multidisciplinary creative and philanthropist. For over 30 years, they have cultivated & performed in duet, collective and solo theatre, dance and multimedia art installations & storytelling rituals across California, Texas, NY, Mexico, Cuba and Ghana. yAyA has 20 years lived experience as an arts administrator, grant maker & cultural strategist with an emphasis in capacity building & producing. Porras currently serves as a creative consultant with Bay Area American Indian Two Spirits & as a Co producer, for Weaving Spirits 2 Spirit Performance Festival and are founder of Movimientoyaya/ StudioAmaru52 located in Hutchinson/ Oakland.
Jessica Punzalan (she/her)	San Jose	Local Color	Visual Arts Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary	As Creative Service and Public Art Program Manager at Local Color, Jessica Punzalan is passionate about changing the traditional landscape and infrastructure of the art world to better serve artists and the community. Jessica received her BA in Art History from San Francisco State University with a focus in exhibition development. In previous roles as Community Engagement Manager at the Children's Creativity Museum and Programs Fellow at the Palo Alto Art Center, Jess cultivated an understanding of the importance of accessible arts in everyday life. Jessica was previously Exhibitions Fellow at Root Division, and part of the 14th Multicultural Arts Leadership Institute. Currently, she is pursuing a Masters in Urban Planning at San Jose State University to further develop skills and an understanding of how municipal policies can shape and benefit arts and culture in the Bay Area.

Name	City	Organization	Artistic Discipline(s)	Biography
Karina (She/They)	Oakland	N/A	Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Visual Arts Dance	Karina is a multi-disciplinary artist with a passion for a variety of mediums. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art from Loyola Marymount University with a concentration in Printmaking and Illustration. They create artworks in their free time and show support to fellow artists in the community through social media and at shows and festivals. Karina has a deep and personal appreciation for all art forms, taking special note of stylistic choice and technique equally. She has organized and curated multiple art shows including the LMU Latine/x Student Art Show and her senior showcase, A Series of Shambles, while attending school. While at LMU, Karina also participated on many student film sets for her peers as a production designer. Additionally, Karina has years of experience in different styles of dance, including contemporary, hip-hop, and folklórico Mexicano from clubs, elective classes and programs. They also worked as a community philanthropist for Youth Funding Youth Ideas at Bay Area Community Resources in 2015-2016. Youth Funding Youth Ideas's mission was to provide city funding for community-based art and service programs led by youth of the Bay Area.
Laurel M Hermes (she/her)	Berkeley	N/A	Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Visual Arts Folk / Traditional Arts Film / Media Arts Literary Arts	Laurel M Hermes has a background in interdisciplinary arts & craft, project management, and education. She has lived in Berkeley for over 20 years and raised her family here. Metal, stone, wood, light, media, and the written word infuse her imagination's machinations. She has formal education and mentorship in design and arts, has apprenticed in trade, and holds a graduate degree. An inveterate volunteer, she relishes the meaning-making of civic duty and recognizes the impact of civic art on our holistic engagement with our whole communities.
Lisa Cralle (she/her)	Vallejo	Professor of Art, Berkeley City College, and Founding Director of Personal Space (501c3 art space in Vallejo)	Visual Arts	Lisa Rybovich Crallé (she/her) is an interdisciplinary artist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to her studio practice, Lisa is the founding director of Personal Space, a 501(c)3 art space in Vallejo, CA and she is co-founder of Heavy Breathing, series of experimental movement seminars designed by artists combining physical activity with group discussion on ideas related to their creative practice. Lisa is also Associate Professor of Sculpture and Drawing at Berkeley City College, and she is excited to be joining the board of NIAD Art Center in Richmond, CA.
Mathias Lemos Castillo (HE/HIM/EL)	Berkeley	Mobilize, Listen & Connect (MLC) Consulting, LLC	Theater Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Folk / Traditional Arts Film / Media Arts Social Practice	Mathias Lemos Castillo brings extensive experience in arts administration and cultural project management to the grant review panel. His background includes collaborating with diverse artists, curating exhibitions that highlight underrepresented voices, and implementing community engagement programs that bridge cultural divides. With formal training in arts management and practical experience in both grassroots and established cultural institutions, Mathias offers a balanced perspective that values both innovative approaches and sustainable practices. Through MLC Consulting, LLC, Mathias has emphasizes equitable resource distribution within the cultural sector, particularly supporting emerging artists and organizations serving marginalized communities. This professional experience enables him to evaluate grant applications with attention to both artistic merit and community impact, while considering the unique challenges faced by diverse applicants in accessing institutional support.
Melika Sebihi (she/her)	San Francisco	N/A	Visual Arts	Melika Sebihi (she/her) is an arts writer and educator with a BA in Art History from Mills College. She is currently pursuing an MA in Museum Studies at San Francisco State University. She also serves as an Interpretations and Outreach Associate at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, where she collaborates with fellow arts educators to develop and lead inclusive public programming for Bay Area residents visiting the museum. Her art writing and criticism has been featured in Variable West and Roborant Review. Born in Berkeley and raised in Alameda, she is now based in San Francisco on unceded Ramaytush land.
Michal 'MJ' Jones (he/him, they/them)	Oakland	Northeastern University	Literary Arts	Michal ‘MJ’ Jones (they/he) is a poet, parent, and editor. Their poetry has appeared in the American Academy of Poets, Obsidian, Split This Rock, Muzzle Magazine, TriQuarterly Review, ANMLY, & elsewhere. Their debut collection of poetry, HOOD VACATIONS, won the 2024 Lambda Literary Award for Transgender Poetry. They are also the author of a chapbook, SOFT ARMOR (2023), from Black Lawrence Press. Often addressing the troubling and haunting aspects of life, violence, and identity, MJ’s poetry blends lyrical, documentary, and confessional modes.

Name	City	Organization	Artistic Discipline(s)	Biography
Nyjah Tauheed (He)	Berkeley	N/A	Music Dance Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Folk / Traditional Arts	My name is Nyjah Tauheed, and my work sits at the intersection of community development, storytelling, and social impact. I started out as a housing navigator, supporting unhoused people and individuals with developmental disabilities in finding housing and services. Those early experiences taught me how powerful it is when people feel seen, supported, and able to express themselves. As I moved into development and fundraising, I carried that same commitment with me — but from another angle. I've written and managed grants that fund programs for affordable housing, wellness, and creative expression. One of the things I'm most proud of is helping bring arts into housing communities, whether through murals, collaborations with local artists, or cultural programming that gives residents a sense of belonging. For me, the arts are not "extra," but a vital way people connect, heal, and imagine new futures. I bring to a grant review panel the perspective of someone who has been on both sides of the process: writing and managing competitive grants, and also working directly with artists and grassroots organizations to lift up their voices. I value creativity, equity, and cultural inclusion and support engaging with the community through art.
Phoebe Wu (she/her/hers)	Berkeley	N/A	Visual Arts Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Music	Phoebe Wu is an interdisciplinary artist and UC Berkeley student studying Economics and Music. As a passionate performer and chef, she is the creator of Savoring the Score, an interdisciplinary event that pairs live classical music with a seasonal tasting menu and a self-produced zine, altogether celebrating sensory and emotional storytelling. Each course is thematically designed to mirror key musical moments, creating an immersive experience that invites deep listening, tasting, and reflection. Phoebe leads every aspect of production—from culinary development and food styling to program writing, event logistics, and design. The pilot event at the Women's Faculty Club was described by attendees as "one-of-a-kind" and "emotionally transformative." As a violinist, Phoebe has performed as a soloist with the UC Berkeley Symphony Orchestra and served as concertmaster for several major productions. She is also the co-founder of Saplings of Music, an educational initiative providing free music instruction to underserved youth in Taiwan. Phoebe also founded Herban Omnivore, a platform for sustainable culinary innovation and narrative-based dining experiences. She frequently host cooking workshops on campus and interactive dining experiences. Ultimately, Phoebe's work aims to craft multisensory experiences that linger, where music, food, and storytelling as a shared ritual of connection and reflection.
Raquelle Turner (She/Her/Hers)	Berkeley	N/A	Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Visual Arts Film / Media Arts	Raquelle Turner is an Oakland-raised, Berkeley-based artist and cultural worker who uses art and media as tools for storytelling, education, and community building. Her work spans painting, animation, and digital media, and has been shared in Bay Area galleries, and cultural showcases. She has also created commissioned pieces for organizations such as NBC Universal and the Oakland Athletics. Her art focuses on Black history and lived experience, inviting people to learn, and connect through visual storytelling. Beyond her studio practice, Raquelle has collaborated with a wide range of organizations to bring cultural projects to life. She also has experience in social media strategy, event curation, and creative direction, always with a focus on building community and making cultural work accessible. Raquelle earned her B.A. in African American Studies from UC Berkeley, where she explored the intersections of Race, media, culture, and social justice alongside training in multimedia arts and animation. Her perspective is grounded in both lived experience and critical study, and she sees art as a powerful way to challenge narratives, uplift marginalized voices. As a grant review panelist, Raquelle brings a commitment to equity, cultural awareness, and the belief that creative work has the power to transform communities.
Rena Tom (she/her)	Berkeley	N/A	Folk / Traditional Arts Visual Arts Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary	Rena Tom is a fifth-generation Chinese-Californian artist, curator, and researcher whose work lies at the confluence of tactile craft and visual culture. Over the last twenty years, she has been a maker, designer, writer, shopkeeper, gallerist, publisher, instructor, consultant, and cultural producer in the San Francisco Bay Area and Brooklyn, NY. Rena holds degrees in English, mechanical engineering, and craft history and theory. This unusual trifecta results in a love for process, product, and documentation that feeds her research-based art practice. In addition to her art practice, she has curated exhibitions at 120710 Gallery (Berkeley) and Root Division (SF), and leads art and zine-making workshops. She is currently involved with the Bay Area's radical publishing/education scenes, volunteering with Bathers Library and Reprographixxx Print Room, and operates Not Great, Not Terrible, a micropublishing project. She has previously served on the board of SF Cinematheque and has been both artist and volunteer at Gray Area (SF).
Rochelle Vaughn (she/her)	Berkeley	Individual	Dance Film / Media Arts Literary Arts Theater	Experienced grant reviewer. Trained grant professional with years of experience working with grant management from pre-award to post award with both scientific and arts projects.

Name	City	Organization	Artistic Discipline(s)	Biography
Sandra Lawson-Ndu (She/Her)	Oakland	N/A	Music Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary	Sandra Lawson-Ndu works as a composer, vocalist, music supervisor and producer for podcasts, visual art, film, and dance. Her work and the work that she's aligned with over the last few years consider how misrepresentation and exclusion in social storytelling contribute to cultural erasure, the myth of monsters, and an overall disconnection with ourselves and our communities. As a musician, her commitment to movement-building has taken the form of storytelling and creating spaces for others to do the same. She believes that by archiving new stories and possibilities onto our timelines, we contribute to building empathy and collectively reinforcing our ability to shape a more liberated world. Last year she worked as the music supervisor for Mind Your Own, a new podcast produced by Lemonade Media that brings together a deeply textured tapestry of African stories. Her focus has deepened at the intersection of creative expression, mental health, and collective wellness, particularly in how shared practices of sound and storytelling can reconnect us to land, place, and one another.
Sarah Fetterman (she/her)	Berkeley	N/A	Visual Arts	Sarah Fetterman (b. 1991, San Francisco) is an Oakland-based artist working in sculpture, installation, and public art. Trained in blacksmithing, woodworking, and choreography, Sarah's practice integrates traditional craft with movement-based performance to explore how bodies hold and express memory. She received her BA from Bennington College and studied at the San Francisco Art Institute. Her work has been exhibited nationally in museums, sculpture parks, and public art contexts, with recent exhibitions at the Kentucky Museum, KY, Russell Day Gallery, WA, and the Urban Dreams Art Project, CA. Sarah has over a decade of professional experience in metal fabrication and project management, collaborating with architects, engineers, and non-profit organizations on large-scale projects. Sarah brings to a grant review panel a perspective rooted in both the lived realities of a practicing artist and the logistical expertise of a fabricator who understands durability, community impact, and public engagement. Her commitment to cultural equity is informed by years of collaborative work and community-based projects. As both an exhibiting artist and arts worker, she is deeply invested in the sustainability of the arts ecosystem in the Bay Area and beyond.
Sarah Travis (she/her/hers)	Oakland	Ashkenaz Music & Dance Community Center	Dance Folk / Traditional Arts Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary Music	As the Executive Director of Ashkenaz, current member of the City of Berkeley's Night Life Subcommittee, former President of the Board of The SONA Foundation, and a Founder of The Songwriter Fund, Sarah Travis has an extensive background managing arts organizations. Even more, enjoys leveraging that history to ensure valued/aspiring artists attain the recognition they deserve while propelling community initiatives forward. Starting with learning the fiddle at age 4 and later playing professionally by age 16, Sarah's passion for both music and societal reform became the catalyst for her musical career, leading to her current role as Executive Director of Ashkenaz, a historic non-profit music venue located in Berkeley, CA. Sarah also collaborated to establish The SONA Foundation, an international non-profit aimed at educating music creators, offering funding opportunities, and providing financial programming/mental health resources to empower music artists. This foundation was initially born out of The Songwriter Fund formed in May of 2020, which was heavily recognized for dispersing half a million dollars to music creators suffering from closures in the music industry due to COVID.
Sarah Winski (she/her)	Oakland	City of Napa	Social Practice Visual Arts	I am currently the Public Art Coordinator for the City of Napa and have previously worked as a curator and public programmer for public institutions including the Missouri Botanical Garden (US), Symbols of Jiangsu (China), Camden Art Centre (UK), and University of the Arts London (UK). In my role, I organize the Napa Lighted Art Festival and manage all temporary and permanent public art projects in the City of Napa. I share Civic Arts' conviction that civic engagement through the arts can drive social change, and I believe art plays an essential role in developing sustainable social, cultural, environmental, and financial ecologies. As a young public art professional and East Bay resident, I take seriously the task of selecting artists who explore the inquiries and values present in broader cultural narratives. Professionally, I have extensive experience commissioning and managing projects involving new media, light art, pavement art, murals, performance, and sculpture. I have previously served on selection panels and enjoy the process of rigorous and thoughtful assessment of art and its proposed contexts.
Sharon E. Bliss (she/her/hers)	San Francisco	San Francisco State University's Fine Arts Gallery	Visual Arts Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary	Sharon E. Bliss is an experienced arts administrator and curator who has worked with organizations including the Fine Arts Gallery at San Francisco State University (SFSU), the Ansel Adams Center/Friends of Photography, and the Mission Cultural Center. She has served on nonprofit Boards for SF Camerawork, the SF Arts Commission Gallery and ATA. Her curatorial practice is collaborative and often includes mentoring emerging arts professionals. For the last 24 years her focus at SFSU has been to bring local emerging and mid-career artists in dialogue with regional and global artists and issues.

Name	City	Organization	Artistic Discipline(s)	Biography
Shirin Khalatbari (they/them/theirs)	Oakland	N/A	Visual Arts	Shirin Khalatbari is a dedicated cultural worker and arts advocate with a deep commitment to fostering innovative and accessible artistic practices. Their career has centered on supporting artists at critical junctures, bringing a comprehensive understanding of both creative development and institutional rigor. This background is significantly complemented by direct experience in critical assessment and curatorial decision-making. In 2023, Khalatbari served as a jury member for the Murphy Cadogan award. Prior to this, their commitment to emerging and experimental voices was formalized by their service on the jury for A Between at Root Division in 2022, a role that required careful navigation of artistic vision, logistical feasibility, and community relevance. These experiences have honed a sharp ability to discern value across varied disciplines and stages of an artist's career. The perspective Khalatbari brings to a grant review panel is grounded in a belief in equity and operational viability. They prioritize proposals that not only present compelling artistic ideas but also articulate a clear and responsible plan for execution. Khalatbari advocates for rigorous processes that champion diverse perspectives and sustainable artistic ecosystems, ensuring resources flow to those who can effect meaningful cultural change.
Sun Park (they/them)	San Francisco	N/A	Visual Arts	Sun Park is a visual artist based in San Francisco. Their interdisciplinary practice spans installation, interactive ritual, sculpture, ceramics, drawing, writing, and video. They have exhibited at /room/ (slash), Root Division, Edge on the Square, Aggregate Space, and Alternative Space LOOP, among others. As a 2024 San Francisco Arts Commission Mentorship and Exhibition Program fellow, they exhibited in a two-person show at SFAC Main Gallery. Also a writer and stand-up comedian, Park has performed at the Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center's USAAF Festival, Southern Exposure, 500 Capp Street, and Kearny Street Workshop. A 2022 Interdisciplinary Writer's Lab fellow, Park is currently a resident at The Ruby, a creative workspace and community for women, transfemme, and non-binary artists. An educator and arts administrator, Park worked as Gallery Manager at Berkeley Art Center from 2023—2024, has taught art at San Francisco State University and Union College, and has co-lead art and writing workshops around the Bay Area. With Dongji, a collective of Korean diaspora artists, Park has performed at ICA SF and Mills College. Park was part of the inaugural Hanji + Spirit cohort—Korean diaspora artists deepening their creative and spiritual practice—and is currently studying saju (Korean astrology).
Taylor Stoneman (she/her/hers)	Berkeley	N/A	Visual Arts	Taylor Stoneman is a Berkeley-based environmental painter and poet. She is currently a studio artist at Root Division in San Francisco. Through colorful oil paintings probing human dependence on and complicity in wounding and dominating the Earth, her work examines the meaning of wilderness and the dualities of harm found in the extraction of earth's resources. Her work has been juried into exhibitions throughout California and across the country, and her debut solo show, Earthbody, opened at MADSEN Gallery in Los Altos this fall. She also completed a residency at Vermont Studio Center in February 2025. Prior to focusing on her art practice full-time, Taylor worked as a lawyer—most recently at a nonprofit using public records requests to promote accountability in government. She received her JD from Cornell Law School and BSBA in Business Economics from the University of Arizona.
Valerie Imus (she/her/hers)	Oakland	Southern Exposure	Visual Arts Film / Media Arts Multidisciplinary / Interdisciplinary	Valerie Imus is the Artistic Director at Southern Exposure. In her tenure with the organization since 2011, she has overseen numerous exhibitions, projects, performances, and events for Southern Exposure. Her curatorial projects at SoEx include Hallucinations of Remembrance & Imminence, Metropolis, When and where I enter, Steam Work, You Make a Better Wall Than A Window, How to Move a Mountain, and Hopeless and Otherwise. Formerly, she was the Exhibitions Manager at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the Curatorial Associate at the CCA Wattis Institute of Contemporary Art. She has also curated projects at the Oakland Museum of California and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. She first became involved at Southern Exposure as an exhibiting artist in 2001. She has collaborated with the collectives The Citizens Laboratory and OPENrestaurant and received an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.





Cube Space January - March 2026
Artist Ahn Lee | Curator Kevin B. Chen

Ahn Lee is a queer Cantonese artist, self-taught ceramicist, and researcher. Their interdisciplinary ceramics practice is a combined methodology of autobiographical re-making and archival research on the Cantonese diaspora. Ahn is a person of Sunwui (Xinhui) descent, one of the few counties in Southern China where most of the first wave of Chinese immigrants were from. Ahn explores their ancestral roots to this contested site of capitalism and imperialism through leveraging archival research and historiography, critical race and gender theory; with a focus on the Bay Area. Though trained as an academic researcher, Ahn aims to create with intuition, using critical history and personal narratives to imagine a current queer Cantonese futurity.

Previously, Ahn studied at UCLA as a Eugene V. Cota Robles Graduate Fellow. Ahn is a 2022 MFA graduate of the UC Berkeley Art Practice Department. They are the 2021 Jack K. and Gertrude Murphy Award Winner, a 2022 Watershed Ceramics Zenobia Fellow, and a 2022-23 Headlands Center for the Arts Graduate Fellow. In 2024, Ahn was a resident at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, and an artist in California Clay at Bedford Gallery. Ahn was a 2024 finalist for the SFMOMA SECA Award.

Previous Works







智福 (Ze Fook) Fu Dog of Good Fortune, 2025
Stoneware, glaze, gold
16 × 10 x 11 in.



智善 (Ze Seen) Fu Dog of Compassion, 2025
Stoneware, glaze, gold
15 × 11 x 11 in.



Chrysocolla Crystalline Silkworm, 2025
Stoneware, crystalline glaze by Ahn Lee
15 × 9 x 20 in.



Jade Crystalline Silkworm, 2025
Stoneware, crystalline glaze by Ahn Lee
9 x 15 x 19 in.



Lizard Guardian, 2025
Stoneware
7.5 x 10 x 9 in.



Lizard Guardian, 2025
Stoneware
7.5 x 10 x 9 in.



Dragon Turtle Guardian, 2025
Stoneware
6 x 12 x 8 in.



Wild Boar Guardian, 2025
Stoneware
6 x 8 x 12 in.



Cat Guardian, 2025
Stoneware
13 x 5 x 16 in.



Pangolin Guardian, 2025
Stoneware
9 x 11 x 16 in.



蚕王 (silkworm deity), 2023
Ceramic, glaze
28” L x 7” W x 30” H.
Photo Credit: Aidan Jung



Ahn Lee, ***These I shall not lose***, 2023, ceramic, glaze, cold finish, dimensions variable. Photograph by Aidan Jung. Courtesy of the artist.


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大吉大利
生意興隆


五方五土
前後地主財

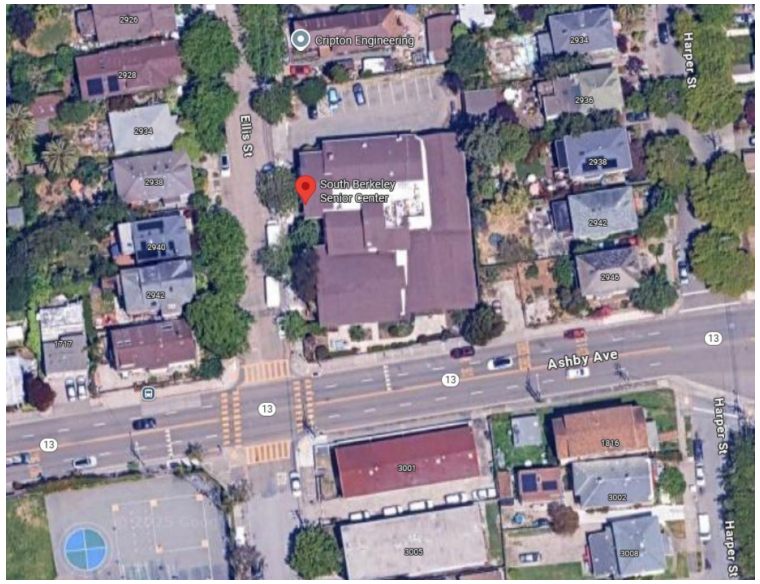






SOUTH BERKELEY SENIOR CENTER PROJECT PLAN








NEW HOUSING WAITING LIST APPLICATIONS
Housing Resources
211
Housing Resources
Senior Homeowners Resources
If you need copies, please see the front desk.
FIND AN APARTMENT
LOVE
Gratitude
PEACE





CONGRATULATIONS on the successful opening of the SOUTH BERKELEY SENIOR CENTER FACILITY!

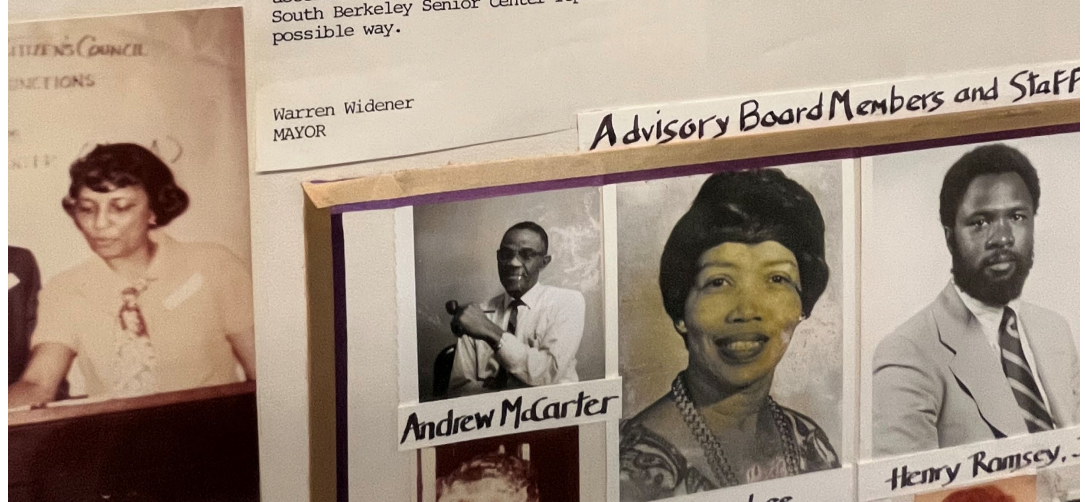
The City of Berkeley's commitment to its aging population had its official beginnings in 1952. As early as 1960, the idea for expanded programs to meet the needs of our seniors was taken to the California Governor's Conference on Aging under a Committee on Aging, appointed by former Mayor Claude Hutchinson.

The South Berkeley Model Cities Neighborhood Council became aware of it and committed to the need for increased health, educational, recreational, and social services to senior residents of the South Berkeley area in 1970. That Council "agreed that a dream for South Berkeley would be a multi-purpose senior center, and that such a center would be a keystone of planning for seniors in the South Berkeley neighborhood.

In April 1972, a senior citizens council was established to locate a suitable senior center site within the Model Cities neighborhood. The Senior Citizens Council and the McGee Avenue Church became the instruments for bringing reality to a dream which represents this community's commitment to its senior citizens.

People who have built our city deserve to be remembered and have access to the best of recreational and social services. This new South Berkeley Senior Center represents that commitment in the best possible way.

Warren Widener
MAYOR



A History of the South Berkeley Senior Center

In the beginning the City of Berkeley was granted funds by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a Model Cities Program. The City administration and the South Berkeley Model Cities Board of Directors chose Alfred Parham as the Director of the Model Cities, City of Demonstration Agency (CDA) in March 1970.

The first large task of the CDA was to inform the South Berkeley community that a Model Cities program existed so on April 18, 1972 a Senior Citizens Council was organized at the Rainbow Sign Club in Berkeley. People from all ten Model Cities Neighborhood Districts attended the luncheon and program. Two persons were elected from each district plus one at-large person, making a total of 21 persons to serve on the Council. Mrs. Susie P. Gaines was elected from District 7.The South Berkeley Model Cities Senior Citizens Task Force became a reality. Other members were Frances Albrier, Fred Tillman, Kemper Holland, D.G. Gibson, Maimie Adele Thompson, Mildred McNeal, E.D. Brooke McKinnon, Jerry Duhearst, Mazie Ford, Edna Millar, Christina Sophie Kates, and Matilda Hamilton.

The first meeting was held the following week at which time the following officers were elected: Mrs. Gaines, President; Willie Sanders, Vice-President; Mabel Woolridge, Secretary; Effie Brown, Chaplain; and W. Lacey, Chairperson of Housing. The council had no permanent place to meet, so they had several council meetings at 1890 Alcatraz Avenue, Berkeley.

The Senior Citizens Task Force worked diligently with CDA staff throughout the planning year. After the first five months this task force, along with the South Berkeley Model Cities Board of Directors, determined that the establishment of a multi-purpose senior center facility was a top priority objective. By the end of the planning year the writing of the project was completed with plans for the election of a Senior Citizens Council and the beginning of a South Berkeley Senior Center.

On May 22, 1972 Mrs. Gaines was called to the City Hall and asked by the City Manager to organize a center in South Berkeley and was hired by Davis Helms from the Berkeley Community Development Council Office. She signed a contract on that date and went to work on May 27 for one month. Her duties were to locate a site, find 10 persons who needed portable meals, make a register of 200 Model Cities Neighborhood seniors, 65 or older and begin a meal program.

When Mrs. Gaines' time was up 16 seniors went to the City Manager and other city officials and asked that she be retained as their Director. She filled out an application and was hired on June 27th by the City of Berkeley.

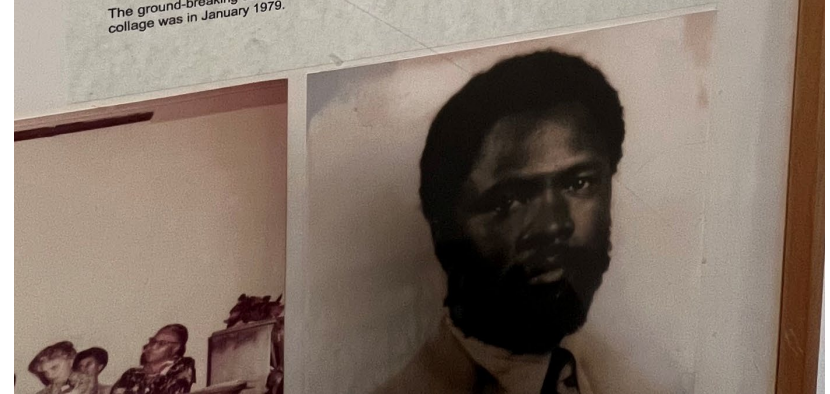
On July 1st, 1972 the Committee moved into the McGee Avenue Baptist Church recreation hall, and on July 3rd a formal opening of the interim location of the South Berkeley Senior Center was held there. Because of the new position, Mrs. Gaines had to step down as president of the Council and Mr. Willie Sanders took over. They worked together in unity to build a center that everyone would enjoy. Since no other persons had been hired at the outset, Mrs. Gaines was not only director of the center, but also secretary, janitor, cook and program planner.

At the time, Mrs. Gaines was President of the Commission on Aging for the City of Berkeley and learned about the Title VII Nutrition Program. She presented it to the City. They scoffed at it and said that they didn't want to be bothered with it. She attended each meeting to learn all she could about the nutrition program.

With the help of Willie Sanders, Vivian Gales and others, they wrote a proposal that the State of California accepted. The state gave them 60 meals; the City of Berkeley gave them money enough in their budget for 40 meals, which made a total of 100 meals a day available for the Nutrition Program.

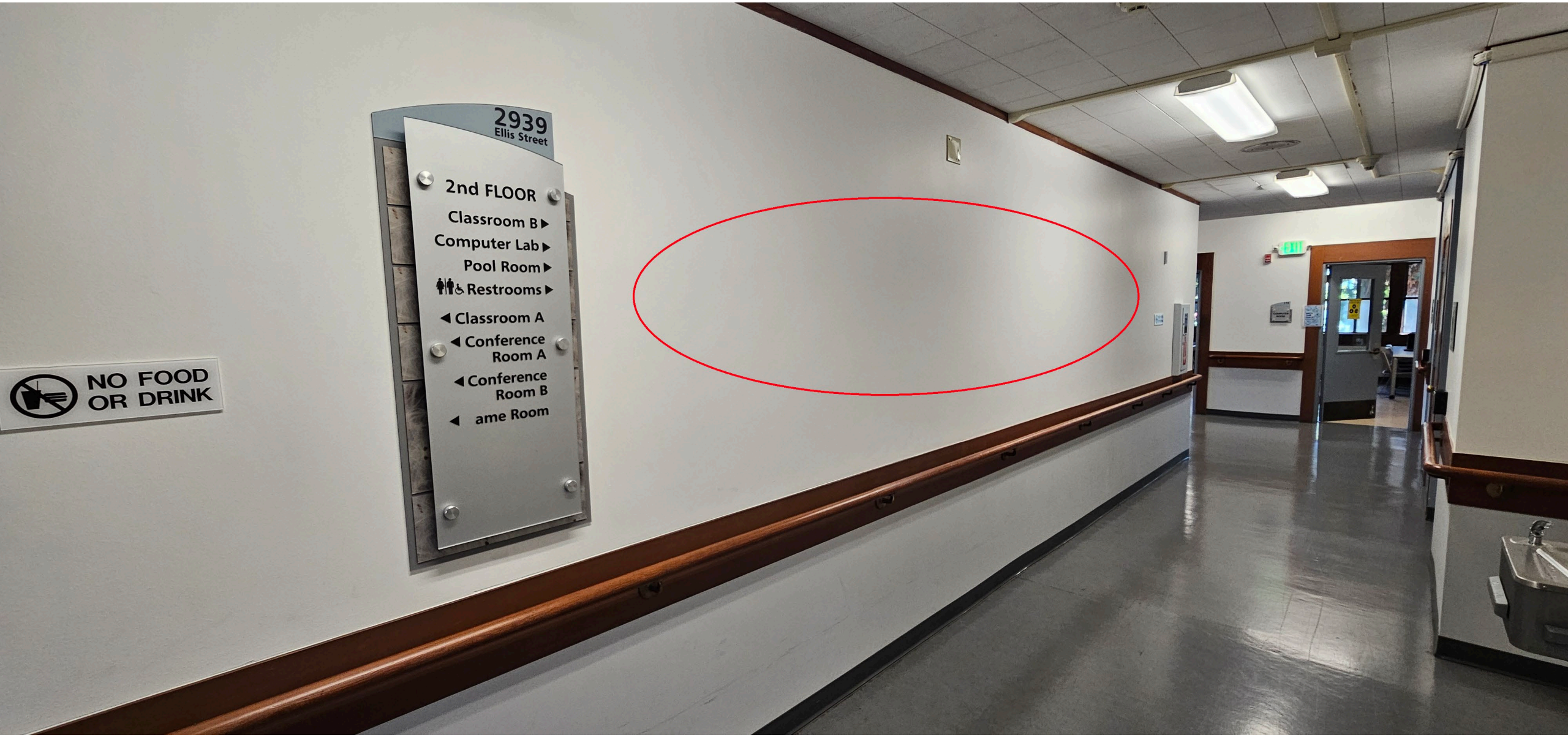
The program grew. Mrs. Gaines began the Center with a budget of $59,000 with 4 employees- the director, one program assistant, and two outreach workers. Their funding moved up to $93,000 plus their $25,000 Nutrition fund. Their goal was to make the elderly feel as if the program was theirs regardless of race, creed or color.

The ground-breaking ceremony was on December 16, 1977 and the Opening Day Ceremony commemorated in this collage was in January 1979.




JUDGE HENRY RAMSEY JR.
SOUTH BERKELEY
SENIOR CENTER
USA




2939
Ellis Street
2nd FLOOR
Classroom B
Computer Lab
Pool Room
Restrooms
Classroom A
Conference Room A
Conference Room B
ame Room
NO FOOD OR DRINK
EXIT

Civic Arts Program

PUBLIC ART PROJECT PLAN: Judge Henry Ramsey Jr. South Berkeley Senior Center

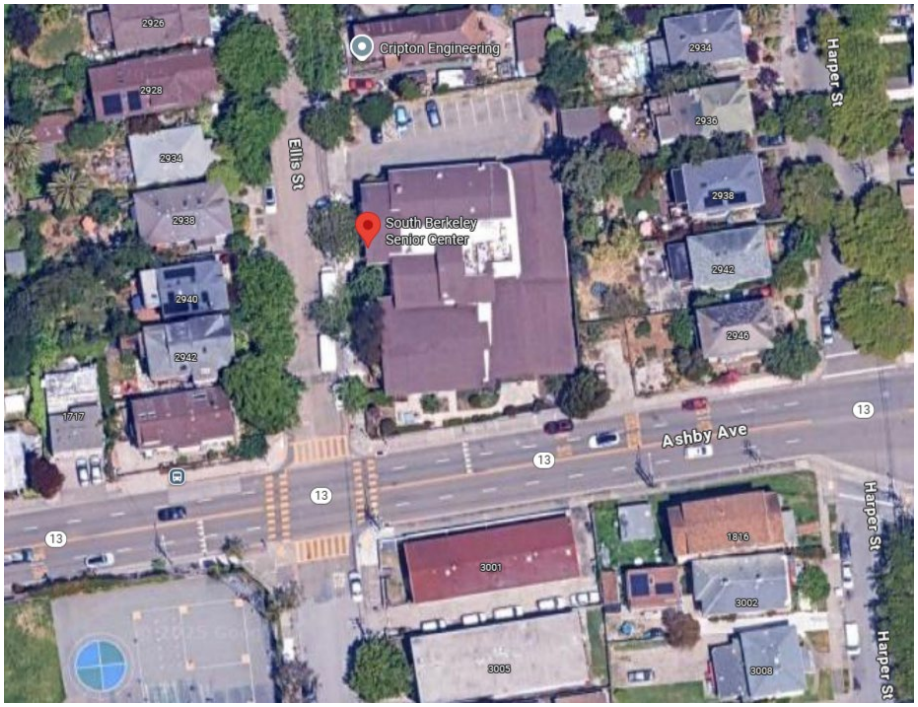


SITE DESCRIPTION

The Judge Henry Ramsey Jr. South Berkeley Senior Center, located at 2939 Ellis Street, has been a vital community hub since opening in 1979 as Berkeley's first senior center. Established through the leadership of Judge Henry Ramsey Jr. - a lawyer, educator, veteran, civil rights leader, and City Councilmember - the center reflects his vision of creating spaces where older adults could connect, engage, and access essential services. Situated in South Berkeley, a neighborhood long recognized for its African American cultural heritage and civic activism, the center continues to uphold Judge Ramsey's legacy of equity, inclusion, and community service.

Today, the South Berkeley Senior Center remains a vital hub for social, recreational, and supportive programs that foster wellbeing and connection among older adults. Services include daily congregate lunches, exercise and arts classes, cultural events, and educational workshops. The center's social services staff also provide case management and referrals to help seniors access housing, health care, and transportation resources. Beyond senior-focused programs, the facility serves as an important community gathering space, hosting neighborhood meetings, nonprofit activities, and special events. Its multipurpose rooms, classrooms, and dining hall are used by a wide range of community groups, reinforcing the center's welcoming, intergenerational character.

In 2023, the City of Berkeley selected Noll & Tam Architects to design the South Berkeley Senior Center Improvements Project. The renovation will provide seismic, electrical, and accessibility upgrades, new windows, staff space reconfiguration, and sustainability features such as solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations. Expected to be completed in spring 2027, the project will create a safer, more energy-efficient, and inclusive facility.



PUBLIC ART BUDGET

The total project amount is **$225,000** and includes all associated costs including, but not limited to, artist design fee, research, fabrication, transportation, and installation. The selected individual, or creative team, will observe and comply with all applicable laws, ordinances, codes, and regulations of governmental agencies, including federal, state, municipal and local governing bodies having jurisdiction over any or all of the scope of artwork services.

PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITY

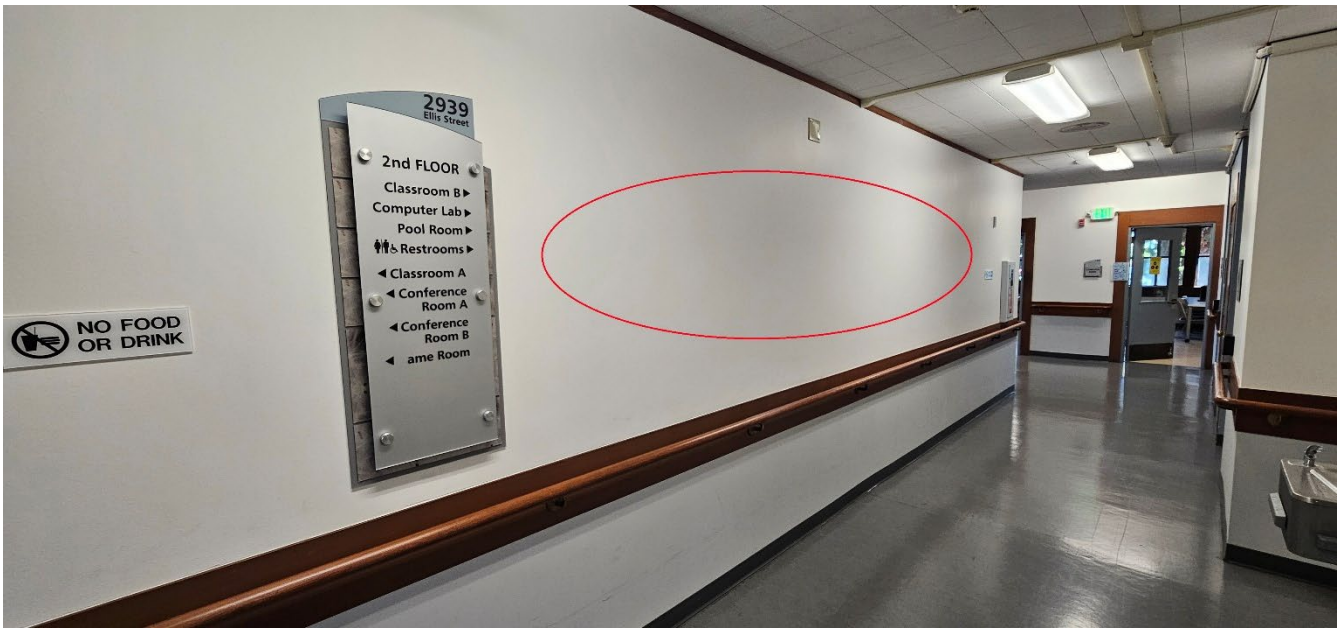
The City of Berkeley has identified a public art opportunity for an artist, or creative team, to design, fabricate, and install a cohesive **series of (5) wall mounted three-dimensional artworks** in the following locations at the **South Berkeley Senior Center**.

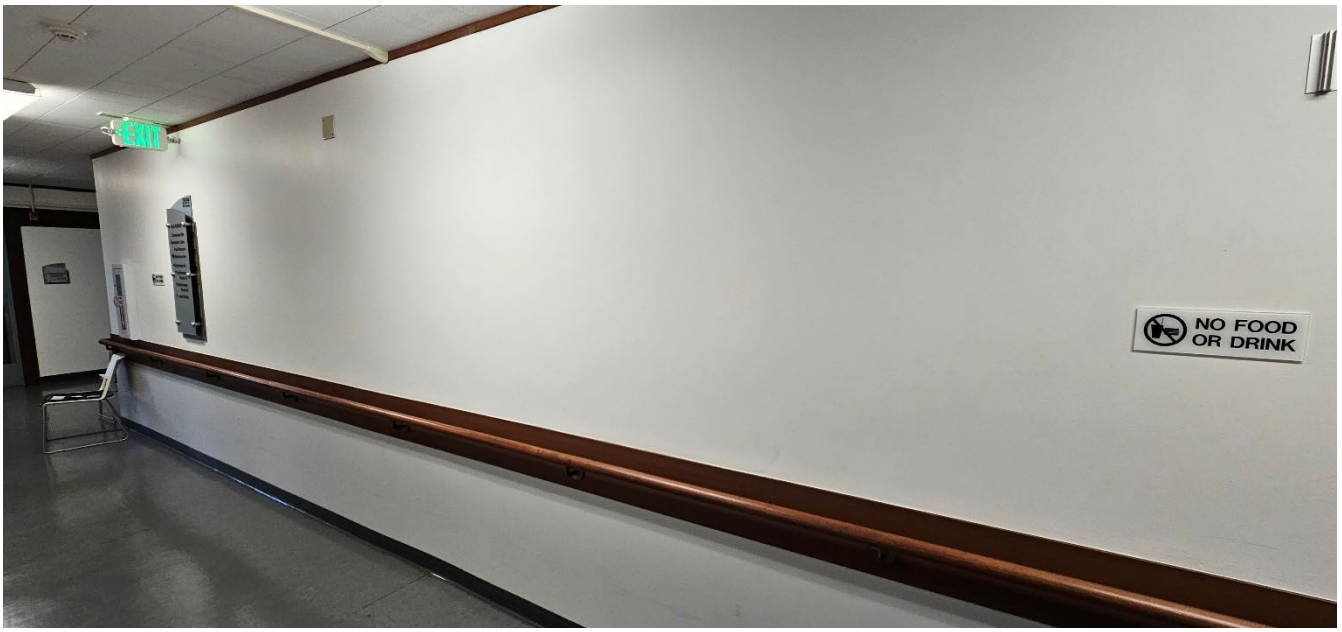
- **Exterior Wall (Ellis Street): (1) large wall mounted artwork near the entrance to the Senior Center.**
- **Interior Wall: (4) small wall mounted artworks on the 2nd floor of the Senior Center.**




NO PARKING
BUSES ONLY




2939
Ellis Street
2nd FLOOR
Classroom B
Computer Lab
Pool Room
Restrooms
Classroom A
Conference Room A
Conference Room B
ame Room
NO FOOD OR DRINK



PUBLIC ART GOALS

- The artwork should **be welcoming and engaging for a diverse, multigenerational audience.**
- The artwork should feature a **strong, integrated design** that enhances the **visitor experience** of the South Berkeley Senior Center.
- The artwork should **complement the site's identity**—including its usage, culture, history, architecture, or other site-specific themes.

ARTIST ELIGIBILITY

This opportunity is open to individuals, or teams, residing in the 21 Northern California Megaregion Counties. Such counties include Alameda; Contra Costa; El Dorado; Marin; Merced; Monterey; Napa; Placer; Sacramento; San Benito; San Francisco; San Joaquin; San Mateo; Santa Clara; Santa Cruz; Solano; Sonoma; Stanislaus; Sutter; Yolo; Yuba.

ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS

Qualification Panel

A panel of Bay Area arts professionals will serve as the Qualification Panel, reviewing all RFQ submissions and advancing up to 20% of the total applications received.

Project Panel

The Qualification Panel will be joined by representatives from key stakeholder groups — including the Civic Arts Commission, the Commission on Aging, the architect team, and the neighborhood — to form the Project Panel. This panel will select up to three finalists.

The finalists will be required to visit the project site and meet with key project stakeholders to support the development of site-specific proposals. Each finalist will receive:

- An honorarium of $1,750.
- Pre-approved travel reimbursement

Finalist proposals will be presented to the Project Panel, which will recommend one artist to advance.

Civic Art Commission

The artist recommended by the Project Panel will be presented to the Civic Arts Commission for final consideration. The City of Berkeley reserves the right to reject any or all submissions.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- The City of Berkeley and the Civic Arts Program issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), shared via community newsletters, departmental newsletters, and social media platforms.
- A public survey is distributed through the same channels to gather community input.
- Neighborhood stakeholders are included in the Project Panel and Finalist Site Visit.
- Meetings of the Public Art Subcommittee, Civic Arts Commission, and Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission are open to the public.

TIMELINE (Subject to change)

RFQ Posts	February 20, 2026
Questions Due	March 13, 2026 (by 5:00pm PT)
Responses Posted	March 20, 2026
RFQ Closes	April 27, 2026 (by 5:00pm PT)
Finalists Selected	July 2026
Finalists Site Visit	August 2026
Finalists Proposals Due + Community Survey	October 2026
Finalists Presentations	November 2026
Civic Arts Commission Decision	December 2026
Artist Under Contract	January 2027
Design Development + Construction Review	February 2027 – April 2027
Fabrication	May 2027 – March 2028
Installation	April 2028
Unveiling	May 2028

FURTHER INFORMATION

Mark Salinas, Public Art Program Lead / MSalinas@berkeleyca.gov / 510.981.7538

	A	B	C	D	E
1	**ESTIMATED PROJECT BUDGET**				
2		Total Budget per RFQ:	225,000		
3	ARTIST/TEAM NAME:				
4	ARTWORK TITLE:				
5					
6	INSTRUCTIONS:	*Provide item description and amount, adding lines if needed.*			
7					
8	**Item**	**Description**	**Budgeted Amount**		
9	**Design**				
10	Artist Fee		49,000		
11	Digital/rendering services				
12	Engineering		5,000		
13					
14	**Fabrication**			Large x 1	Small x 4
15	Labor		130,000	110,000	5,000
16	Materials				
17	Rentals				
18					
19	**Delivery**				
20	Packing/crating		3,000		
21	Artwork transportation		3,500		
22	Parking				
23					
24	**Installation**				
25	Labor		13,000		
26	Materials		1,000		
27	Rentals		3,500		
28	Staff travel		1,000		
29	Artist travel		1,250		
30	Storage				
31					
32	**Administration**				
33	Communication				
34	Documentation				
35	Insurance		500		
36	Legal				
37	Permits				
38	Contingency		12,250		
39	Site Management		2,000		
40					
41	**TOTAL**		225,000		
42					

2026 Commission Meeting Schedule

Please complete this form and email it to the
commission@berkeleyca.gov by:

Name of Commission: ___Civic Arts Commission_____

Commission Secretary:___Jennifer Lovvorn_____

Month	Meeting Day	Meeting Date	Time
January 2026	Wednesday	1/28/26	**6:00 PM**
February 2026	Wednesday	2/25/26	**6:00 PM**
March 2026	Wednesday	3/25/26	**6:00 PM**
April 2026	Wednesday	4/22/26	**6:00 PM**
May 2026*	Wednesday	5/20/26	**6:00 PM**
June 2026	Wednesday	6/24/26	**6:00 PM**
July 2026	Wednesday	7/22/26	**6:00 PM**
August 2026	*No Meeting*		
September 2026	Wednesday	9/23/26	**6:00 PM**
October 2026	Wednesday	10/28/26	**6:00 PM**
November 2026	*No Meeting*		
December 2026*	Wednesday	12/2/26	**6:00 PM**

PUBLIC ART ON PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT **Date: 11/24/2025**

Fiscal Year	Project Address	Project Street	Type	On-Site Art Value	On-Site Art Admin 5% Fee	In-Lieu Fee Payment Amount	Date Paid	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession Amount	On-Site Art	In-Lieu Fee	Fee Waived	Cumulative Totals: Number of On-site Art Projects	Cumulative Totals: Value of On-site Art Projects	Cumulative Totals: Number In-Lieu Fees	Cumulative Totals: Total In-Lieu Fees	Cumulative Totals: Number Fee Waived	Cumulative Totals: Total Amount Fees Waived
FY19																	
	1717	University	On-Site Art - Final Art Plan Approved						1								
	1950	Addison	On-Site Art - Final Art Plan Approved	$252,682.00					1								
	2120	Berkeley	On-Site Art - Final Art Plan Approved	$60,000.00					1								
	2124	BANCROFT	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$60,186.58	8/4/2017			1							
	2029	BLAKE	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$126,400.00	8/7/2017			1							
				$312,682.00	$0.00	$186,586.58			3	2		3	$312,682.00	2	$0.00		
FY20																	
	2503	HASTE	On-Site Art Plan approved & Admin Fee Paid	$328,460.28	$16,423.01		3/1/2019		1								
	2510	CHANNING	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$106,664.00	4/17/2019			1							
	2621	TENTH	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$84,000.00	5/17/2019			1							
	739	CHANNING	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$20,388.00	5/23/2019			1							
	2580	Bancroft	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$235,569.89	6/27/2019 for FY20			1							
				$328,460.28	$16,423.01	$446,621.89			1	4		4	$641,142.28	6	$463,044.90		
FY21																	
	2628	SHATTUCK	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$88,879.00	9/3/2019			1							
	999	ANTHONY	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$25,200.00	12/18/2019			1							
	2100	SAN PABLO	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$144,000.00	2/21/2020			1							
	2072	Addison	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$74,936.00	2/24/2020			1							
	2452	Durant	On-Site Art - Final Art Plan Approved	$42,185.00					1								
	2556	TELEGRAPH	On-Site Art Plan approved & Admin Fee Paid	$103,722.50	$5,186.13		5/20/2020		1								
	2028	BANCROFT	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$48,000.00	8/27/2020			1							
				$145,907.50	$5,186.13	$381,015.00			2	5		6	$787,049.78	11	$849,246.03		
FY22																	
	2229	FOURTH/2222 5th Street	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$17,360.21	5/26/2021			1							
				$0.00	$0.00	$17,360.21			0	1		6	$787,049.78	12	$866,606.24		
FY23																	
	Bayer Annual Payment FY23		Community Benefit Agreeement			$60,000.00	6/30/2023										
	3000	SAN PABLO	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$72,329.13	9/22/2021			1							
	2176	Kittredge (Same Project)	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$236,792.00	11/3/2021			1							
	2176	Kittredge (Same Project)	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$49,748.00	12/23/2021										
	2025	Kala Bagai Way	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$31,002.00	11/19/2021			1							
	600	Addison	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$1,414,578.00	12/21/2021			1							
	2352	Shattuck (Combo Art and Fee)	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$230,166.07	1/25/2022			1							
	2352	Shattuck (Combo Art and Fee)	On-Site Art Plan approved & Admin Fee Paid	$425,250.00	$21,262.50		1/25/2022		1								
	2902	ADELINE	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$80,000.00	4/11/2022			1							
	2000	Dwight	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$115,625.00	4/13/2022			1							
	2701	SHATTUCK	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$37,352.90	6/21/2022			1							
	2099	MLK	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$103,304.58	6/23/2022			1							
				$425,250.00	$21,262.50	$2,430,897.68			1	9		7	$1,212,299.78	21	$3,318,766.42		
FY24																	
	Bayer Annual Payment FY24		Community Benefit Agreeement			$62,424.00	9/30/2023										
	1951	SHATTUCK	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$480,000.00	7/19/2022			1							
	2000	University	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$41,388.52	7/20/2022			1							
	1331	ASHBY	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$7,040.00	7/21/2022			1							
	787	BANCROFT	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$164,905.22	9/20/2022			1							
	2213	Fourth	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$96,000.00	9/20/2022			1							
	2650	TELEGRAPH	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$46,278.00	9/22/2022			1							
				$0.00	$0.00	$898,035.74		$0.00	0	6	0	7	$1,212,299.78	27	$4,216,802.16	0	$0.00
FY25																	
	Bayer Annual Payment FY25		Community Benefit Agreeement			$63,672.00	not yet paid										
	2067	University	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$36,711.74	7/13/2023			1							
	2434	SAN PABLO	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$9,600.00	9/28/2023			1							
	1773	Oxford	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$30,548.77	10/2/2023			1							
	2590	BANCROFT	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$110,964.00	10/24/2023			1							
	2317	Channing	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$23,274.81	11/7/2023			1							
	2403	SAN PABLO	On-Site Art Plan approved & Admin Fee Paid	$134,714.00	$6,735.70		5/1/2024		1								
	2555	College	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$13,115.15	5/9/2024			1							
	2480	Bancroft	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession				5/1/2023	$61,443.11			1						
	1950	Shattuck	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession				3/12/2024	$896,273.24			1						
	2109	Milvia	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession				3/12/2024	$116,289.58			1						
	2037	Durant	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession				5/21/2024				1						
	2680	BANCROFT (2660 - 2680 Bancroft)	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession				6/25/2024	$42,567.00			1						
	2036	BANCROFT	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession				6/25/2024				1						
	2276	Shattuck	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession				6/3/2024	$214,031.16			1						
				$134,714.00	$6,735.70	$287,886.47		$1,330,604.09	1	6	7	8	$1,347,013.78	33	$4,511,424.33	7	$1,330,604.09
FY26																	
	Bayer Annual Payment FY26		Community Benefit Agreeement			$64,946.00	not yet paid										
	2127	Dwight (2127-2159)	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$125,476.26	7/1/2024			1							
	3030	TELEGRAPH	In-Lieu Fee Paid			$156,056.16	7/1/2024			1							
	2128	Oxford (2132-2154 Center)	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession				8/13/2024	$917,163.00			1						
	2425	Durant	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus				12/11/2024	$287,787.81			1						
	2300	Ellsworth	In-Lieu Fee			$263,324.00	6/9/2025			1							
				$0.00	$0.00	$609,802.42		$1,204,950.81	0	3	2	8	$1,347,013.78	36	$5,121,226.75	9	$2,535,554.90
FY27																	
	805	Jones	In-Lieu Fee			$4,440.00	10/16/2025			1							
	2538	Durant	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession				11/24/2025	$132,000.00			1						
	2587	Telegraph	Fee Waived: State Density Bonus Concession				11/24/2025	$139,044.00			1						
				$0.00	$0.00	$4,440.00		$271,044.00	0	1	2	8	$1,347,013.78	37	$5,125,666.75	11	$2,806,598.90
In Progress																	
	600 - 626	Bancroft	TBD														
	742	Grayson	In-Lieu Fee			$314,637.06				1							
	1110	University	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$175,000.00					1								
	1155 (-1173)	Hearst	In-Lieu Fee				No Declaration Yet										
	1200 (-1214)	SAN PABLO	In-Lieu Fee			$66,166.54	Not yet paid/This FY or next			1							
	1201	SAN PABLO	In-Lieu Fee			$65,789.48				1							
	1207	TENTH	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$56,039.00					1								
	1367	University	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$7,651.19				1							
	1598	University	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$106,658.34				1							
	1650	Alcatraz				not compliant											
	1650	SHATTUCK				$32,000.00				1							
	1652	University	In-Lieu Fee			$29,939.27				1							
	1740	SAN PABLO				not compliant											
	1750	Sacreamento (NB BART TOD)	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$ 1,578,938.09	$ 78,946.90				1								
	1752	Shattuck	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$73,218.48				1							
	1773	Oxford	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$30,548.77				1							
	1790	University	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$39,286.00				1							
	1822	San Pablo				not compliant											
	1835	SAN PABLO	In-Lieu Fee			$94,198.00	Not yet paid			1							
	1899	Oxford (at Hearst)	Concession?								1						
	1900	FOURTH	In-Lieu Fee			$560,000.00	Not yet paid			1							
	1914	Fifth	In-Lieu Fee			$224,385.86				1							
	2001	ASHBY				no applic- not complaint											
	2015	Blake	In-Lieu Fee			$246,317.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2018	Blake	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$32,000.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2023	SHATTUCK aka 2025 Kala Bagai Way	In-Lieu Fee			$30,822.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2029	University	In-Lieu Fee			$378,620.00	Estimated			1							
	2037	Kala Bagai Way	Concession?								1						
	2065	KITTREDGE															
	2115	KITTREDGE	In-Lieu Fee			$237,979.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2127	Dwight (2127-2159)	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$125,476.26	Not yet paid			1							
	2136	SAN PABLO	In-Lieu Fee			$104,878.65	Not yet paid			1							
	2138	Kittredge	Concession?								1						
	2190	SHATTUCK	In-Lieu Fee			$680,000.00				1							
	2198	SAN PABLO	In-Lieu Fee			$46,400.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2210	Harold	In-Lieu Fee			$122,500.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2221	Fourth/2216 5th St	In-Lieu Fee			$87,200.00				1							
	2229	FOURTH/2222 5th Street															
	2274	Shattuck	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$394,551.00				1							
	2298	Durant Avenue (& 2360 Ellsworth St)	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$142,732.14				1							
	2317	Channing	In-Lieu Fee			$23,274.81	Not yet paid			1							
	2325	MCGEE Ave	In-Lieu Fee			$8,000.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2420	Shattuck	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$314,864.00	$15,743.20		received dec on 5/31/2023		1								
	2427	SAN PABLO (2427-2433)	In-Lieu Fee			$72,106.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2434	SAN PABLO				$9,600.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2435	SAN PABLO	In-Lieu Fee			$24,671.14	Not yet paid			1							
	2440	SHATTUCK				$120,000.00	received declaration 11/18/21										
	2441	Le Conte	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$31,994.00	received declaration 2/21/24			1							
	2442	Haste	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$70,657.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2449	Dwight	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$70,880.00	received declaration 11/9/22			1							
	2462	BANCROFT	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$75,228.00				1							
	2527	SAN PABLO	In-Lieu Fee			$59,200.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2538	Durant	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$132,000.00	Not yet paid			1							
	2550	Shattuck	TBD														
	2601	San Pablo	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$496,920.00	$24,846.00				1								
	2614	TELEGRAPH	Concession?								1						
	2655	Shattuck	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$152,565.00				1							
	2700	Ninth	On-Site Art and Fee		$ 105,000.00		Combo amounts TBD		1								
	2712	TELEGRAPH	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$58,118.00	Not yet paid										
	2720	SAN PABLO	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$ 191,501.00	$ 9,575.05				1								
	2733	San Pablo	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$ 383,583.00	$ 19,179.15				1								
	2795	SAN PABLO															
	2800	TELEGRAPH	In-Lieu Fee			$24,573.85	not yet paid			1							
	2820	San Pablo	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$35,380.00	not yet paid			1							
	2847	Shattuck	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$247,415.72	$12,370.79				1								
	2920	Shattuck	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$449,914.00	$22,495.70				1								
	2942	College	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			8636.05				1							
	2955	Shattuck	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$142,096.00	Dec form rec'd 9-4-24			1							
	3000	SHATTUCK	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$325,329.98	$16,266.50				1								
	3030	TELEGRAPH	In-Lieu Fee (20% for Admin)			$156,056.16				1							
	3031	Adeline	On-Site Art (5% Admin Fee)	$105,000.00	$ 5,250.00				1								
	3031	TELEGRAPH	In-Lieu Fee			$312,000.00				1							
	TOTAL			$4,324,504.79	$309,673.29	$5,860,991.05		$0.00	12	44	4	20	$5,671,518.57	80	$11,291,891.09	13	$2,535,554.90

Quarterly Grant-Funded Festivals Report

Festival Title	Applicant Organization	Festival Summary	Website	District	Start Date
Black Women's Roots Festival	School of The Getdown	The fifth annual Black Women's Roots Festival celebrates powerful, pioneering Black women of blues, jazz, gospel, country, and roots music.	www.fayecarol.com/schoolofthegetdown	District 4	11/9/2025
Community & Culture Day	Ashkenaz Music & Dance Community Center	A multicultural, family-friendly festival featuring live music and dance to celebrate the power of music to unite and uplift communities.	www.ashkenaz.com	District 1	11/30/2025
San Lázaro-Babalúayé Festival	Herencia Guantanamera (HG)	The San Lázaro-Babalúayé celebration is a community offering of interactive workshops, performances and reconnecting with ancestral roots through ceremony.	https://herenciaguantanamera.com/	District 1	12/13/2025

Civic Arts Commission

Draft Minutes
Civic Arts Commission
Wednesday, September 17, 2025
6:00 PM
Meeting Location: Tarea Hall Pittman South Branch Library
1901 Russell St, Berkeley, CA 94703

1. **CALL TO ORDER: 6:06 PM**

2. **ROLL CALL**
   Commissioners Present: Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Dutta-Choudhury, Kramer, Woo
   Commissioners Absent: Montgomery, Pineda, Scott
   Staff Present: Hilary Amnah, Grants Program Lead; Jennifer Lovvorn, Commission Secretary/Chief Cultural Affairs Officer; Mark Salinas, Public Art Program Lead
   Members of the public present: 9

3. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

4. **PUBLIC COMMENT** (for items not on the agenda): 8

5. **COMMUNICATIONS**:
   a) Letter regarding South Berkeley Senior Center Ceramics Studio

6. **CHAIR'S REPORT**
   a) Welcome back from summer; reconnecting with the slate of Civic Arts Commission initiatives

7. **PRESENTATIONS, DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**
   a) **Discussion:** Scott Parsons discussion on development of an alternate project idea for the four bronze turtles and eight stone medallions
   Public Comment: 1

   b) **Discussion Item:** Questions from New Commissioners and Orientation Discussion
   Public Comment: 1

8. STAFF REPORT

a) Civic Arts Program Updates, Jen Lovvorn
b) Grants Program Updates, Hilary Amnah
c) Public Art Program Updates, Mark Salinas

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a) Grants – Next meeting is October 10, 11 AM.
b) Public Art – Met with Scot Parsons about possibilities for artwork elements.
c) Policy Subcommittee – Next meeting is October 3, 11 AM .
d) Representative on Design Review Committee – Next meeting is September 18.

10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) **Action Item:** Draft August 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes
M/S/C (Bullwinkel/Bachrach) to approve final August 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes.
Vote: Ayes — Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Dutta-Choudhury, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — Kramer; Absent — Montgomery, Pineda, Scott.
Public Comment: None

11. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

12. ADJOURNMENT: 7:50 PM

M/S/C (Blecher/Bullwinkel) to adjourn.
Vote: Ayes — Bachrach, Blecher, Bullwinkel, Dutta-Choudhury, Kramer, Woo; Nays — None; Abstain — None; Absent — Montgomery, Pineda, Scott.

Staff Contact:



Jennifer Lovvorn
Secretary to the Civic Arts Commission
Berkeley, CA 94704
Telephone (510) 981-7533
jlovvorn@berkeleyca.gov

DRAFT