



**CIVIC ARTS COMMISSION
Grants Subcommittee
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

**Tuesday, June 23, 2026
2:00 PM**

Subcommittee Members:

Commissioner Blecher (Chair), Commissioner Bullwinkel, Commissioner Woo

This meeting will be conducted virtually Attend this meeting remotely using **Zoom** <https://cityofberkeley-info.zoomgov.com/j/1659382468> To request to speak, use the “raise hand” function in Zoom. To join by phone: Dial **1-669-254-5252** or **1-833-568-8864 (Toll Free)** and enter **Meeting ID: 165 938 2468**. To provide public comment, Press *9 and wait to be recognized by the Chair. To submit a written communication for the public record, email civicarts@berkeleyca.gov.

This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the Brown Act, Government Code Section 54953. Any member of the public may attend this meeting.

Roll Call

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.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters

Chairperson's Report

Presentation, Discussion, and Action Items

- 1. DISCUSSION: Council Memo Regarding Grants Budget Reduction (Attachment 1)**
From: Dana Blecher, Grants Subcommittee Chair

- 2. DISCUSSION: FY27 Grants Budget and Grant Funding Strategy**
From: Grants Subcommittee

Adjournment

Notices

Notice of Public Record

Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. Please note: E-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required but, if included in any communication to a City board, commission, or committee, will become part of the public record. If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission, or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission, or committee for further information.

Staff Contact:

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CONSENT Calendar
June 30, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Civic Arts Commission

Submitted by: Peter Montgomery, Chairperson, Civic Arts Commission

Subject: Civic Arts Commission Budget Cut Recommendations for FY27-28

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City's Budget Process to only decrease the entire Civic Arts budget by 10% as opposed to the current budget that recommends a cut of more than 20%.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The fiscal impact of the current budget recommendation is that the Civic Arts budget would be cut at a high rate of 20% which will significantly impact staffing capacity and grant funding for Berkeley-based arts organizations, festivals and individual artists.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

All City of Berkeley Departments were asked to cut their budgets by 10% for FY27-28. Current budget cuts to Civic Arts include eliminating a vacant staff senior leadership position, and reassignment of the remaining staff responsibilities limiting the scope of arts programming. This totals a loss of \$288,000. We believe this should be more than adequate to cover the 10% required of all departments.

Additionally, we request that instead of eliminating the senior staff leadership position (Economic Development Project Coordinator) that the position stay on the "vacant" but frozen list to be filled at a later date.

Civic Arts is being asked to cut our budget even further by reducing our Grants Program by 10%. This amount is roughly \$83,000. This means when staff cuts (\$288,000) and grant cuts (\$83,000) are added together (\$371,000) that is more than 20% of the Civic Arts budget. Further complicating the matter, general operating grants for Berkeley-based arts organizations are in the second year of a two-year cycle. This is a challenging time to inform grantees they will not receive their full grant award in mid-cycle, especially for those organizations who are reliant on the City of Berkeley's support. Additionally, Festival grants have already

taken a hit of more than a \$40,000 reduction during the FY26 cycle from their prior level of \$200,000. This cut will also limit how many individual artists project grants can be awarded. It is apparent the cuts will negatively impact the City of Berkeley's arts organizations and festivals, which are revenue generating for the City of Berkeley.

As a solution-focused Commission, if Civic Arts needs to take any additional funding cuts, we are recommending a cut to the inequitable and non-transparent 'pass-through' funding that is disbursed by Civic Arts staff (although not approved by the Civic Arts Commission) at a 50% level (roughly \$83,000). These are funds the council has issued without any oversight by the Civic Arts Commission. In the future, all "pass-through" funds should be allotted to the Civic Arts Grants Program to be distributed equitably. This would give "pass-through" grant recipient organizations time to adjust their budgets until the funds are correctly distributed through the Grants Program.

BACKGROUND

Due to a \$30M budget deficit all City of Berkeley Departments have been asked to cut their budgets by 10%.