



# California Arts Advocacy Field Survey

2024



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Established 1996: A comprehensive lobbying organization for the arts, culture and creative industries, working to influence equitable and just systems change through public policy and public investment. [www.caartsadvocates.org](http://www.caartsadvocates.org)



Established 2007: Champions arts and culture as essential to vibrant CA communities through statewide programming, services, and advocacy networks that foster public awareness and generate resources to cultivate a thriving cultural sector and creative industries. [www.caforthearts.org](http://www.caforthearts.org)

**On Front Page:**

Advocates at the 2024 Advocacy Day Rally.  
Photographed by Alan Scheckter

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# Executive Summary

CA for the Arts' last field-wide survey was conducted in 2020 during the early stages of the global crises caused by COVID-19. The 2024 California Arts Advocacy Survey report finds that while most of the acute impacts of the pandemic have receded, there is the sense that the arts ecosystem has been reshaped by corresponding economic and social forces as well as by the awakenings to inequity and injustice provoked by recent social movements.

Through the 2024 survey, we sought to understand how members of California's creative community are experiencing and defining this emergent world, what conditions they are working within and what solutions they have created or are seeking. The report that follows reflects what has been learned from the insights, challenges, adaptations and aspirations shared by the arts workers and representatives of cultural organizations and creative businesses that participated in the survey. This data offers facets of their collective experience and point to directions in which the field is headed. They also reveal patterns of opportunities and challenges that delineate the systems of support needed for the field to thrive in this changed landscape.



# Key Findings

California's creative community is in a "new normal," facing tremendous pressures and meeting these challenges with creativity - leaning into collaboration, adaptation and reinvention. But they are overwhelmingly ready to advocate for a new social contract that embeds the arts in civic priorities, that provides needed infrastructure and produces the necessary conditions to sustain their work and ensure a just distribution of resources in their field.



California arts workers and organizations are facing precarity, putting the state's creative economy and cultural identity at risk. **Both organizations and individuals report they are affected by long term underinvestment and impacted by external pressures from rising property, employment and operational costs that aren't matched with comparable increases in wages or revenues.** These pressures are destabilizing organizations and threatening to displace artists from their communities and even the state.



**There is a "new normal" – an emergence from the pandemic to a state of fluid responses to pressure points and opportunities in the arts ecosystem.** While 8% of respondents report that COVID continues to have a direct impact on their operations or livelihoods, almost all participants report their world has been remade in some way by both long term and emerging challenges and by the opportunities they created or accessed in response to the pandemic.



Creativity, innovation and resourcefulness are the hallmarks of how the cultural community responded to the impacts of the pandemic on their operations and livelihoods. **85% of organizations and 67% of individuals report they've developed new ways of working the past three years, with many of their pivots becoming permanent practices.** And they want to build upon the innovations spurred by COVID relief programs and cross-sector funding opportunities.



Social justice and equity movements continue to reshape the values and practices of the field. Members of the field are committed to advancing equity, representing the diversity in their communities and employing inclusive and accessible practices. **Equitable outcomes still need to be championed and realized through action and allyship.** The field is requesting knowledge-sharing and resources as well as support in self-defining practices and outcomes based on more localized conditions.



Respondents express an urgency to create change. California's creative community has identified insufficient funding for the arts and culture sector as their top challenge. While less than 20% of participants self-identify as advocates, 82% say they are likely to advocate for increased funding to California Arts Council, the state arts agency, with 55% being "very likely." And the field is ready to advocate for cross-sector programs that provide jobs that position arts workers as solutions partners in addressing civic issues.



The emerging future features collaboration and support infrastructure. As they reflect on their challenges and opportunities, California creatives are building and reaching for new systems. **They are seeking support for collaboration in the field and for cross-sector partnerships that support arts jobs while demonstrating the value of arts and culture.** And they are seeking material support systems – or creative economy infrastructure.

## On Opposite Page:

Program Director NeFesha Yisra'el with CA for the Arts Board Member Lyz Luke at 2024 Advocacy Day rally. Photographed by Alan Scheckter.





Sharmi Basu, Executive Director of Vital Arts, speaking on the Arts and Housing/Work Space panel at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid

# Top Challenges Impacting the Creative Community



Sacramento-based artist Janine Mapurunga at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid

## Individual Perspective

- #1 Insufficient public funding
- #2 Challenges in engaging patrons
- #3 Access to affordable housing or work space
- #4 Lack of support systems for the self employed

## Organization Perspective

- #1 Insufficient public funding
- #2 Rising Operational Costs
- #3 Existing grant opportunities not applicable
- #4 Engaging or increasing patrons



Panelist Tiara Amar with attendees at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid.

# Key Recommendations

## 1

### **Build critical infrastructure.**

Arts workers and cultural organizations identified the need to build critical infrastructure – the physical, material and social systems that they need to sustain or grow their practices. They seek affordable housing and space, access to capital, business development resources, self-employment social safety net support systems and arts services organizations to provide critical programs and services.

## 2

### **Increase investment in collaborations.**

This year's survey found that California's creative community views collaboration and cross-sector partnerships as critical opportunities.

They define it in three distinct ways:

- 1) Collaboration within the field
- 2) Cross-sector collaborations
- 3) Coalition-building within the creative economy sector

Increasing public and private investments in any of these collaboration modalities, such as providing technical support, facilitating partnerships or direct funding, would leverage the creativity of the field, reinforcing its sustainability and accelerating its innovation.





# 3

## Increase funding for arts jobs.

The California creative community identified the pressing need to increase funding to the California Arts Council (CAC) and to diversify sources of funding for arts jobs through policies or programs that develop the creative workforce or produce cross-sector initiatives. Increased funding to the CAC would allow the agency to expand its grant programs to meet the needs and accelerate the potential of the field. Increasing and diversifying sources of funding for cross-sector programs supports arts jobs while positioning artists and cultural organizations as go-to partners in state and local priorities.

# 4

## Maximize field building potential.

Survey respondents want to maximize building the field of arts advocacy by focusing on building trust through racial and cultural equity, removing barriers to participation, building networks through affinity groups and coalitions, and developing resources to support local advocacy. Resources for unifying and mobilizing members of the field will increase their capacity to affect change on the state and local levels while continuing to educate both established and emerging policymakers on the issues impacting the arts.

The 2024 California Arts Advocacy Survey Report offered us an opportunity to listen and understand the field. We learned from survey participants about their **current conditions** and how they are defining this new era by building upon the **pivots** they made during the pandemic and responding to the **pressure points** they are currently experiencing.

The challenges and solutions shared by the respondents help define a set of support systems – **creative economy infrastructure** – that need to be built or strengthened to ensure the future of the field. Arts workers and organizations are laying the foundation for that future most effectively through collaboration.

The forms of collaboration they are seeking to expand include **working together** to meet needs within the field, developing **cross-sector partnerships** to **diversify revenue streams** and **coalition-building** to **build collective power**. And we learned that individuals and organizations have an appetite to advocate and affect change and are seeking resources in order to do so.



## About the Survey

As a comprehensive statewide advocacy organization, CA for the Arts conducts surveys, polls and focus groups and hosts “Regional Conversations” and convenings throughout the state. This ongoing feedback and listening are instrumental to helping us understand the conditions and needs impacting the field and forms the basis for the programs and resources that CA for the Arts offers. This exchange also guides the state policy strategies developed and championed by our sister lobbying organization, CA Arts Advocates. The 2024 California Arts Advocacy Report is based on a field survey that was conducted in early 2024. Along with offering guidance to our two organizations, this report is intended for all who are seeking to understand and strengthen California’s arts and culture ecosystem.

CA for the Arts’ last field-wide survey was conducted in 2020 and formed the basis of advocacy for reopening guidelines and relief programs during the height of the global crises caused by COVID-19. For the 2024 California Arts Advocacy Survey, we started with two questions: “If the most acute and disruptive aspects of the pandemic have receded, what is the ‘new normal’ in which our field is functioning?” and “what is the future they are building and what is needed to get there?” Our goals were to understand how members of the creative community are experiencing and defining this new normal, what conditions they are working within and what solutions they have created or are seeking.

Most importantly, we wanted to learn from them in their own words. To this end, the survey was structured to elicit insights through a qualitative approach, primarily using ranked multiple choice and open ended questions. In order to surface what we didn’t know, almost all of the questions had an “Other” option or asked for a narrative response. This helped us to collect a diverse range of perspectives and arrive at a multifaceted understanding of the conditions, pressures, challenges and solutions discussed in the survey (read more about the methodology in the appendix).

We received over **1,680** responses from members of the arts and cultural community across California, including **1,076 individual arts workers** from **54 counties** and **607 people representing organizations or businesses** from all **58 counties**.

The 2024 California Arts Advocacy Survey Report that follows reflects what we’ve learned about the current conditions of the field – the pressures members are facing and the pivots they are making. In synthesizing the insights, challenges and solutions shared, the report offers an articulation of the emergent future that the field is both building and calling for: support for collaboration and creative economy infrastructure. The report then offers recommendations. These include seven State policy priorities for CA Arts Advocates to champion as our sister organization and the comprehensive lobbying group for arts, culture and the creative economy. There are five additional recommendations for how CA for the Arts could advance building the field of arts advocacy in the state through its programs and resources and its communications.

Additionally, the findings and recommendations contained in the report will be valuable to funders, policymakers and arts service organizations who are looking to meet the needs and advance the potential of California’s arts workers, cultural organizations and creative entrepreneurs. The survey also provides casemaking data and stories that members of the field can use to advocate for change in their communities.

# Current Conditions

## New Normal

**Just 8%**  
of California arts  
workers report  
that COVID is still  
impacting their  
operations or  
livelihoods

Our findings mark a significant change from our 2020 field survey (CA for the Arts 2020). Currently, just **8% of California arts workers report that COVID is still directly impacting their operations or livelihoods**. There are other tremendous pressures threatening California’s cultural ecosystem. The state’s arts workers are meeting these challenges with creativity - leaning into collaboration, adaptation and reinvention. The field has also been reshaped by the wider awakening to inequity, racism, sexism and prejudice prompted by social movements such as Black Lives Matter, Me Too and advocacy for the dignity and rights of indigenous, Hispanic, AAPI<sup>1</sup>, LGBTQIA+<sup>2</sup> and disabled communities.

According to survey respondents, we appear to be in a new era – a more fluid time where earlier pivots are becoming permanent and where unique pressures are requiring new solutions. In the following section we detail the responses of California creatives to questions about how they are working now, in 2024, and the emerging trends and adaptations that define their current operations. These include technology adoptions, advanced DEIA initiatives, and an increased appetite for collaboration and collective action.

This section also details the acute pressure points of our community. California creatives report they are overwhelmingly ready to advocate for a new social contract that embeds the arts in civic priorities, that provides needed support infrastructure and produces the necessary conditions to sustain their work and ensure a just distribution of resources in their field.

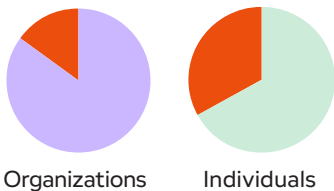
## Pivots Made Permanent

### Creative Adaption

Creativity, innovation and resourcefulness are the hallmarks of how the cultural community responded to the impacts of the pandemic on their practices and livelihoods.

*“I’ve encouraged my organization not to be beholden by what has been “historically” the way, as that history is rife with inequity and/or doesn’t apply anymore.”*

For many, how they responded to COVID led them down the path to developing new partnerships, new business models or even new roles for the arts in their local communities.



**85% of organizations and 67% of individuals report they’ve encountered new ways of working the past three years.**

<sup>1</sup> AAPI stands for Asian American and Pacific Islander, and is an umbrella term used to describe people of Asian or Pacific Island descent or ancestry.

<sup>2</sup> LGBTQIA+ is an acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual. The plus sign (+) represents the many other identity terms that are not explicitly included in the acronym, but are still part of the LGBTQIA+ community

*"Our organization went from "performing arts festival" to "artist and venue advocates" as we worked with our venues and artists to knowledge share on COVID-19 grants and program [which] then led our organization to help building advocacy ... Having these open conversations with our entire ecosystem was a shift, and one that has opened doors for our organization we couldn't have imagined as a purely creative organization before."*



## Technology adoption

The creative community has leveraged new and old technologies – from digital tools to social cooperation – to sustain or grow their practices or businesses. Many remarked that adopting virtual tools removed spatial barriers, helping them to connect with new patrons, build new regional collaborations or access national and international networks. These tools included but are not limited to virtual platforms and incorporating AI into creative practices.

Several artists reported investing in new technology – from adopting digital producing methods to building home-based media studios to embracing new mixed-media practices – that helped them reinvent their artistic practices or their business models. For some, these adaptations were made to address constraints like material costs and or space limitations.

*"We in far Northern California are spread very far out, the new familiarity with Zoom has been wonderful for connecting our community and revolutionized the way I work."*

*"I've started working in different media to adapt to a smaller workspace which has led them to think a lot about how to make my art accessible to different levels of income."*

## Advancing diversity, equity inclusion and accessibility

Work for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) is being woven into the fabric of many organizations. Several respondents commented that adopting DEIA principles helped them pivot and reinvent. Some that had been doing this work before the pandemic reported that their existing practices made them especially ready to effectively adapt and serve.

*"[Because of our] understanding technology and disability justice & accessibility... we could easily develop COVID safety protocols ... which came from who our organization serves and our commitment to removing barriers so that EVERYONE can participate."*

The wider awakening to racism and inequity that arose in response to the murder of George Floyd initiated a period of internal focus, with many organizations examining their hiring, hierarchy and culture. Organizations are expanding their DEIA practices to focus externally on how they can more holistically serve communities. Some are deepening long-held practices, some are expanding their programs or business lines and some are meeting community needs beyond culture to provide social services or serve as community organizers. Others are reimagining leadership and power structures, serving as laboratories and models for the field.

*"Adapting indigenous first values into our praxis allows us to not perpetuate colonial dynamics at gatherings, positively impacting our organizational culture and programming toward equity and harmony. Our ED is developing frameworks to share with other orgs"*

Others shared that they need more resources and support in defining their goals and developing their practices related to DEIA. And several expressed that the field as a whole must continue to prioritize defining and achieving tangible outcomes.

*"I have seen progress in these areas in my community, but I think keeping it at the forefront of any decision-making can only develop deeper meaning in our arts."*

## Collaboration as the new normal

From space-sharing to forming local mutual aid responses to joining forces to advocate for funding, artists and organizations found new ways of working together and new methods of sharing resources that are enduring.

*"Native-led orgs and artists are working more together, collaborating and aligning toward the greater good."*

*"There has been a renewed sense of collaboration between organizations that would have otherwise tried to segregate resources."*



## Collective action got results

Many remarked on the successes they found in putting competition aside and coming together to advocate for resources and policies to address the impacts of COVID. In forming alliances and building relationships with elected officials, our field found new lines of funding and new cross sector partnerships on both the local and state levels.

*"Each of the five members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors earmarked a portion of discretionary funds to the arts during the pandemic. Hopefully, this practice will continue in the future."*



**While less than 20% of participants self-identify as advocates, 82% say they are likely to advocate for increased funding to the California Arts Council, with 55% being "very likely."**

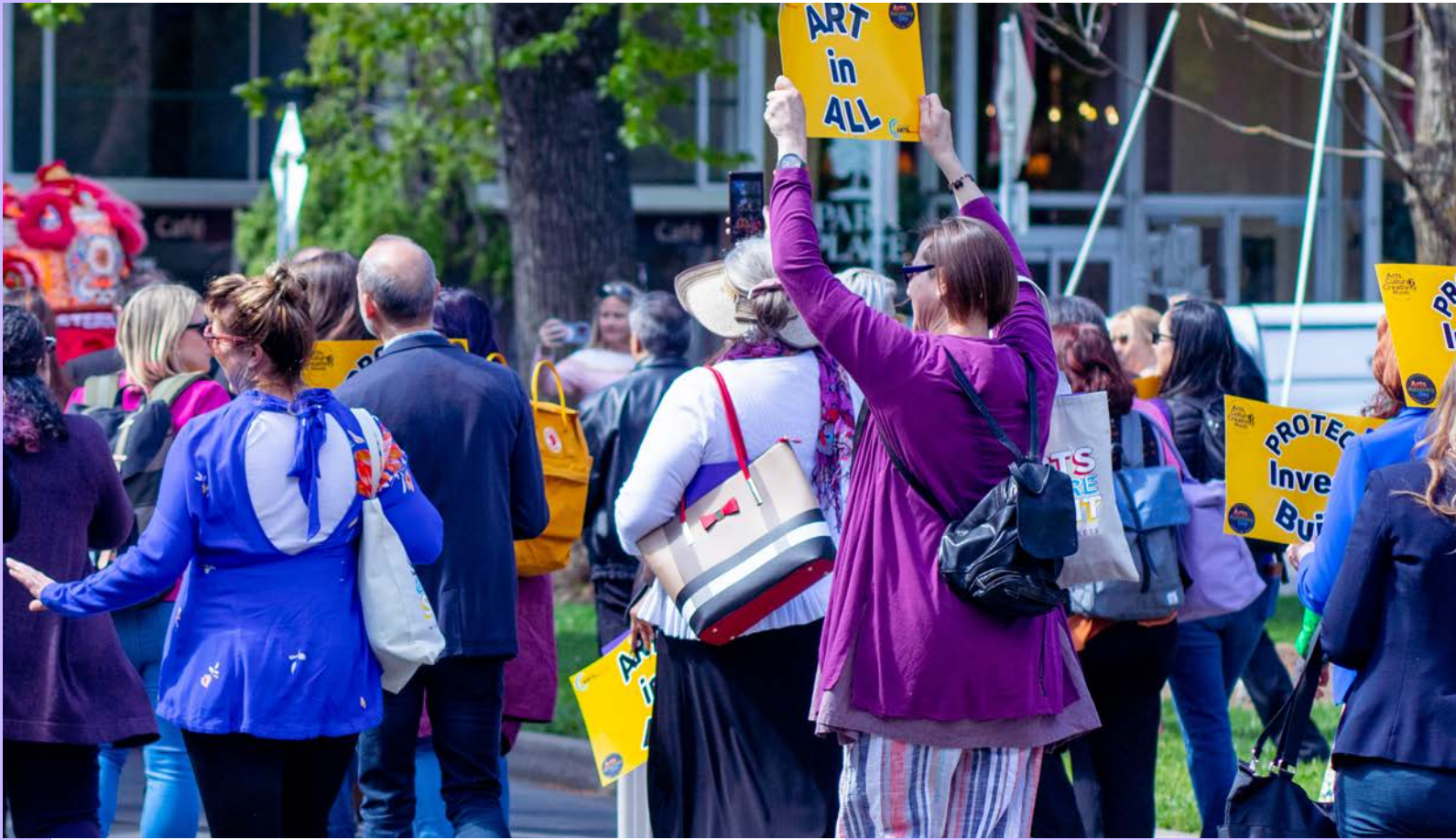
CEO Julie Baker with advocates at the 2024 Arts Advocacy Rally. Photographed by Alan Scheckter

## Appetite to Advocate

Respondents express an urgency to create change. Their choices for the top four policy priorities reflect why. They see a need to increase and diversify funding for the arts and a drive to address foundational economic problems associated with the high costs of living and lack of safety nets for the self-employed. And some see advocacy as a way to support the arts as a whole.

*"I'm mad and struggling. I've seen what other countries and cities do for their arts. ...We deserve to make more than we are. We deserve space to create. We deserve to be a part of society because we are instrumental in improving it."*

*"I don't personally have the means to provide a large financial contribution to artists so my advocacy means that much more to me. It's another way I can contribute."*



Advocates at the 2023 Arts Advocacy Day Rally

## Pressure Points

California arts workers and organizations are facing precarity, putting the state's creative economy and cultural identity at risk. Survey responses tell the story of a field under tremendous pressures with insufficient public funding for the arts and culture sector as the top community challenge for California artists and cultural organizations. Long term funding scarcity and mounting external pressures from high costs are destabilizing the viability of creative practices and cultural organizations. These pressures also cause issues that may impede efforts to unify the field to address these challenges.

### Funding Scarcity

Survey participants perceive a scarcity in the funding options available to them. Both individuals and organizations identified insufficient public funding on the local, state and federal levels as the number one challenge currently facing the creative community.

*"Zero funding sources for most arts orgs - foundations only funding new projects, community foundation does not fund arts at all, county has no arts council, government requirements are too difficult... We need a reliable funding opportunity that rewards orgs who pay a living wage plus health benefits to artists and administrators."*

There are historic dynamics in the funding ecosystem that contribute to this perception. On the state level, California invests much less than other states with comparably-sized arts and culture economies. In the 2024-25 budget, California apportioned \$21 million to the California Arts Council (CAC) to distribute to the field as local assistance grants, investing just 56¢ per California resident. In contrast, New York ranks just below California in arts and culture production's share of

the state's economy but invested almost \$102 million, or roughly \$5.21 per capita in 2024 (US BEA 2024).<sup>3</sup> In the budget crisis of 2002, funding to the CAC was decimated to just \$1 million annually and remained at that level for ten budget cycles (Carnwarth 2022). In its 2023-24 grant cycle, the CAC was only able to support 4.3% of the state's arts and culture organizations (CAC 2024).

Funding for the arts in general relies heavily on US tax policy. Rather than establishing consensus on the public value of the arts through direct investment, the US tax code incentivizes indirect private investment through tax deductions. This system has historically led to public dollars (what would have been tax revenue) being channeled into privately preferred cultural nonprofits concentrated in urban areas, leaving out direct funding to individual artists, for profit enterprises and informal community groups (Feld 1983)<sup>4</sup>. A 2022 field study conducted by the CAC found that private funding is not equitably distributed to BIPOC-centered and rural organizations.

**Only 11% of the total dollar amount awarded by private foundations to arts nonprofits in California go to BIPOC-centered organizations while they represent 18% of all arts nonprofits. Similarly, rural organizations receive 3.5% of foundation grant dollars while comprising 9% of the arts nonprofits in the state (Carnwarth 2022).**

This reliance on private funding is proving to be destabilizing. A report on the history of arts funding published in 2018 found that "support for arts and culture appears to represent a diminishing priority among foundations and an uncertain priority among corporations," while government support was also declining (Lawrence 2018). Survey responses reflect these points. Numerous respondents also shared that they are losing funding due to donor fatigue or shifts in the priorities of private funders away from arts and culture.

Additionally, earned revenue options are limited for those working to create access to the arts through free and low-cost programs. This is especially true for those serving marginalized communities. For many California organizations, the enduring lack of funds and the barriers to accessing them lead to working with unsustainable business models. This can mean overly relying on volunteer or underpaid staff, or not having the capacity to invest in leadership transitions or organizational growth.

*"We need a paid staff. For 22 years we have operated with an all volunteer team. Our growth is tremendous and the [community] need is great but without a paid staff, it is very challenging to accomplish certain goals"*

## Rising Costs

Rising costs is one of the top challenges facing the field. Arts and culture organizations are particularly vulnerable to this issue, due to the aforementioned inequities and long standing issues with undercapitalization<sup>5</sup>— or not having the needed financial assets to weather change. Organizational responses in the survey indicate that inflation, rising rents, and other pressures are increasing operating costs and are affecting their ability to sustain programs or even remain viable.

Wildfires, flooding and other disasters caused by climate change are also impacting organizations who are experiencing closures and damages or being subjected to drastic increases in insurance costs.

*"There have been dramatic increases in the cost of doing business: rent has gone up almost 20% in the last 2 years...the cost of goods remains often double or triple what it was pre-pandemic, and employment costs have skyrocketed... Our audiences cannot absorb the cost of these*

<sup>3</sup> According to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2022 arts & culture production contributed 8% of California's economy, the highest percentage in the nation. The second highest share in New York, where arts and culture contributes 7.4% of the state's economy (US BEA 2024).

<sup>4</sup> The authors of the seminal 1983 book, *Patrons Despite Themselves: Taxpayers and Arts Policy*, found that government tax deduction policy essentially, "permits private donors to decide which arts activities merit government support." (Feld 1983)

<sup>5</sup> Grantmakers in the Arts defines capitalization as "the accumulation of the resources an organization needs to fulfill its mission over time." To address issues of capitalization in the nonprofit arts sector, GIA initiated the National Capitalization Project (NCP) in 2010. To learn more, visit <https://www.giarts.org/arts-funding/capitalization>.

*increases in our ticket prices -- and we wouldn't want them to. But trying to find private donors and foundations to cover these costs is very difficult."*

Performing arts organizations report they feel especially endangered by a combination of the rising costs associated with inflation and complying with changes in employment law, matched with the continued costs of COVID safety protocols and even closures due to infection. These are in addition to challenges that existed prior to COVID in which organizations faced "declines in subscribers, corporate donations, and grants—coupled with ever-increasing costs to produce shows," as reported in a recent study by the National Endowment for the Arts (Spingler et al, 2024).

*"Performing Arts are suffering, costs are escalating, and audiences are not coming back in the same pre-covid numbers. Our live theater venue is losing significant amounts of money."*

Individuals report they are profoundly impacted too, in their case by the compounding issues of rising costs of living and the lack of access to affordable housing. These issues exacerbate the challenges arts workers already face in accessing living wages and benefits and intensify the economic uncertainty of self-employed artists. Artists are fearing or facing displacement from their communities, which can sever them from essential personal and professional networks, jobs and opportunities. Several respondents shared that they left the state or that they feared this was their only option.

*"Cost of living, access to affordable housing and healthcare, lack of foundational support force artists to leave the industry +/- or move out of the area."*

These issues also threaten to decrease the diversity of the field, as workers who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC) are already underrepresented in California's arts sector (Yang et al. 2021), and BIPOC-led organizations often have lower revenues and less assets (Skinner 2020). Accessing jobs, career-making opportunities and prestige in the sector often require costly investments in education and training that are likely to be met with unpaid internships, lower wages or the instability of self-employment. Rising costs and stagnating revenue heighten these barriers, increasing the risk that arts workers with low economic means or those that face bias and prejudice will be pushed out of the field due to competition for roles with low and moderate wages.

*"More diversity, equity and inclusion practices [are needed in the field]. A lot of those who are financially secure seem to thrive without much resistance with artistic businesses. Members of underrepresented communities will always have to work harder."*


## **Disruptions in Business Methods**

Changes in technology have had profound impacts on the creative sector. Survey responses indicate that evolutions in digital production tools and in the marketing of cultural products continue to disrupt their methods of creating and their revenue streams. Some participants express feeling threatened or left behind by advances in 3-D printing or digital design as well as by changes in digital media marketing or by the tectonic changes in distribution brought by music and movie streaming.

Many noted they want protections from the potential threats that artificial intelligence poses to their livelihoods or intellectual property rights.

*Top Challenge response: "Companies purposely downsizing their creative teams while replacing us with technology like AI and overseas workers, all while the cost of living is incredibly high."*





Changes in state policy have had unintended consequences that are forcing rapid transformation as well. The 2020 employee classification law AB5 (Mele 2021) has drastically increased payroll and operations costs for mid to small sized performing arts organizations. Arts advocates in California continue to work for solutions to address this, including the passage of the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (SB 1116, Portantino)<sup>6</sup> and other measures. In 2022, voters in California passed Proposition 28, the 2022 ballot measure that established permanent funding for arts instruction in public schools. While this is injecting much-needed substantial funding into arts education, the statute stipulates that 80% of those funds should go to hiring certified arts teachers (CDE 2024). This has the potential to disrupt the business lines of arts nonprofits that have been traditionally providing those services to California schools.

*"We are working on developing possible shifts in programming if schools cannot or will not hire us for arts education programs."*

The decline in attendance of live events—from sports to concerts to ballet—was evident before the pandemic, but seems to have accelerated because of it (Zara 2024). And these issues are further exacerbated by the dismantling of arts journalism and the atomizing of media and news sources in general (Jaakkola 2023, Jang 2023, Abelman 2024). Survey participants express that they can't reach their audiences – or find new ones – in this media atmosphere.

*"The lockdown damaged live music culture into the future, and social media has now become so commonplace that would-be supporters and audience members are disincentivized to go out in public to arts and music venues."*

And California arts workers are finding that moving to more affordable communities in the state is disrupting their professional networks and income streams, especially as they move to more rural areas that are severely lacking funding and other needed infrastructure.

*"Migration patterns within the state have displaced artists from cities into suburban/rural counties surrounding the cities. These counties offer little public funding to artists who are often no longer eligible to apply for city funding, even if they are producing work in the cities."*

## Fissures in the road to Diversity, Equity Inclusion and Accessibility

As articulated in our *"Vision 2030 Strategic Plan,"* CA for the Arts sees itself as a bridge between public policy and the arts and culture sector as we advocate for equitable public funding with racial and cultural equity<sup>7</sup> being foundational to our work in the field. We are interested in understanding and addressing issues that might impede our efforts to engage and unify the field in this work. While survey responses indicate evidence of collective growth in expanding and deepening DEIA practices, there are some notable fissures in how members of the field are perceiving their place in this ecosystem.

Comments by survey participants that identify as BIPOC or that serve BIPOC communities indicate they feel they are continuing to carry a disproportionate share of the burden of advancing this work. They are seeking allyship and substantive changes in access to resources and power.

*"Teach allyship to the well established and well funded groups. It's really unfair for those representing BIPOC communities to bear the brunt of advocacy efforts (the energy and resources to organize, deal with blowbacks) over and over again."*

6 The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (SB 1116, Portantino) was passed into law in 2022 and funded in the 2024-25 California budget at \$12.5 million. SB1116 is an example of a promising and innovative policy solution that California Arts Advocates along with many coalition partners and grassroots advocates worked to see implemented. See Appendix C for more information.

7 CA for the Arts pursues "racial equity," as defined by Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), as a state when race can no longer be used to predict life and define outcomes as outcomes for all groups are improved. As per CA for the Arts' strategic plan, "we advocate for cultural equity as the redistribution of power and resources so all of California's diverse communities have the autonomy to thrive, hold and share joy, exist in physical spaces, guide public policies and secure investments to contribute to the state's civic and cultural life." (Vision 2030, 2024)

Others shared that they would like to see a more explicit inclusion of disabled and trans/nonbinary arts workers in targeted efforts which would “address a greater swath of historically excluded people,” as stated by a respondent.

There were also comments from practitioners of art forms rooted in classical European traditions who feel that their work is assumed to be serving only a narrow privileged audience, or that their cultural form itself is elitist or “upholding white supremacy values,” as one participant shared.

*“It sometimes feels like we aren’t valued or wanted in collective action efforts or as advocacy partners or seen as worthy recipients of public funds.”*

Several people who are doing equity-focused cultural work in conservative regions in the state report that they are being targeted publicly and, in some instances, vilified for their efforts. This is creating difficult circumstances for individuals and organizations, threatening livelihoods and local funding. One survey comment thoughtfully captures the complexity of these issues in a state as vast as California:

*“It’s important that we understand the divisions within the A&C field, so that we can discover policies that address all our needs. Diversity and inclusion mean that all are welcomed, but we may need different approaches to ensure fairness, equity, and prosperity for differently-situated people and institutions.”*

## Obstacles to Building The Field

Survey responses indicate there are three significant obstacles to unifying the field:

1. Competition for limited resources
2. Lack of time in strained lives
3. The lack of funding for advocacy



Scarcity of funding is impeding coalition building. There is a perception shared across a spectrum of survey participants that the limited grant funds that are available go to a narrow sector within the arts. Commenters shared that they perceive bias in funding patterns in preferences for certain art forms, in racial or regional priorities, or in too-narrowly defined types of eligible organizations. It’s hard to advocate for others in the sector when individual artists and organizations feel they are in a competitive environment fighting for limited resources.

*“I’m thrilled there are people out there doing [advocacy] but it is hard for me to see the impact in my community, in my organization, on me. Every day is a challenge to survive with us. It is hard to parse out energy to something that isn’t very real to me.”*

**The greatest barrier to participation – time.** The struggle to survive, the juggling of work, family and creative practices have left people strapped, with many noting that their most precious and finite resource is time.



### On Opposite Page:

Economic Justice & Power Building panelists at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid

Advocacy requires resources. The work that it takes to bring people together and organize efforts - the time, planning, relationship building, coordinating and other activities required to deliver and sustain true collective impact - is not adequately valued or resourced in the state. There are many California communities lack a coordinating entity that has the purview or capacity to bring people together to advocate. Survey responses indicate people feel like they are on their own. Others mentioned they would consider leading efforts in their communities if they could be compensated - this is especially important for artists or those who are economically disadvantaged.

*"Honestly, I usually feel pretty exhausted and demoralized and it keeps me from doing things like [advocacy]."*

*"My willingness [to advocate] mostly has to do with time: the time it takes to participate in campaigns, but also the time it takes just to educate myself on issues to feel like I have a decent grasp to talk to other folks about issues."*

***"Compensating neighborhood advocacy organizers or anyone participating in advocacy as consultants could be transformative."***



# The Emerging Future

What emerges from the survey responses, as they reflect challenges and pressures or opportunities and adaptations, is a composite picture of systems that the field is building or is reaching for. These systems can be grouped into two categories: **relational systems** - or collaboration, and **support systems** - or infrastructure.

## Collaboration Systems:

- Shared Business Models
- Shared Marketing Platforms
- Cross-Sector Economic Solutions
- Coalition Building
- Collective Advocacy

## Support Systems:

- Access to Capital
- Business Development Resources
- Affordable Housing and Space
- Self-Employment Safety Net
- Art Services Organization

Survey participants provided significant insights into the dimensions of these two systems. What follows is a breakdown of specific forms of collaboration that the field is leaning into as well as the components of creative economy infrastructure that they are calling for.

## Laying the Foundation: Collaboration

Survey responses indicate that members of the field are increasingly turning to collaboration to meet needs and build new systems, in some cases involving arts service organizations and in others developing new more informal networks where this type of infrastructure does not exist. This is the horizon that California's creative community is pointing to and they are seeking to build that future in three distinct ways: collaboration within the field, cross-sector collaborations and coalition-building. Survey respondents are calling for financial and technical support to more fully realize these possibilities.

### Individuals

Financial and technical support for local collaborations (art and public health, tourism, climate activism, community revitalization, etc.)

### Organizations

Shared marketing platform that promotes all arts and cultural activities in my region

## Collaborations Within the Field

Collaborations that developed in response to COVID have taken many forms and members of the field are seeking resources to initiate or expand ways to share knowledge and pool resources. As one respondent said, they want help building “anything shared, anything where each individual tiny organization does not have to invent its own interpretation of The Wheel for every single thing it needs.” By looking at the survey responses on this topic collectively, we see a base of options that could be implemented more holistically throughout the sector.

There is a call to build networks that foster information sharing on both the local and state level. Participants are asking for centralized clearing houses for finding resources, grant opportunities and support services. One of the highest priorities mentioned is creating shared communications and marketing platforms, and increasing funding for arts media.

*“Traditional media is dying out, so artists are finding and creating new ways to publicize their efforts and reach out to the community. If there was more support for this, artists could commit more of their own resources to their art.”*

Other survey participants are advancing the field by seeking to develop what one described as, “Solidarity Economics principles for the creative sector.” Survey participants are asking for support for cooperative property buying, collaborative funding, collective impact networks or developing land trusts.

*“I have seen in neighboring states... multiple mutual aid and collaborative funding groups that are successful in pooling efforts to share funding. Smaller organizations can benefit from this and it would be great to see the synergy of this supporting cultural arts groups.”*

The field is also seeking resources for developing shared business models or space sharing agreements. A report by Grantmakers in the Arts finds that some California-based BIPOC creatives are already leading in this solidarity economy<sup>8</sup> work and recommends making strategic investments in incubation and start-up capital (Linares 2021).



From L-R: Megan Van Voorhis, Dir. of Convention & Cultural Services; Carissa Gutiérrez, Dir. of Public Affairs, California Arts Council; Ron Muriera, Dir., Arts Industry Support, Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs, City of San José; Jason Jong, Cultural & Creative Economy Manager, City of Sacramento; Shaun Burner, Sacramento-based artist and advocate. Photo by Doug Cupid

## Cross-Sector Programs Diversify Resources

Respondents believed the following cross-sector programs support arts jobs while demonstrating the value of arts and culture: **Arts on Prescription, Creative Corps, Creative Youth Development, and Cultural Districts.**

Cross-sector collaboration is another key theme that emerged from the data. Arts workers are calling for “a new WPA,” as one response stated, and organizations and artists are seeking resources to develop these partnerships. 70% of organizations said that diversifying and increasing sources of state funding for the arts through cross-sector initiatives is a top policy priority.

*“These [cross-sector] initiatives focus on community and collaboration, workforce development and create a sense of pride.”*

Cross-sector programs support arts jobs while positioning artists and cultural organizations as go-to partners in their local communities, helping them to forge new relationships and leverage other types of funding. Many groups in the state have been doing cross-sector work for a long time, proactively responding to the needs of the community and adapting entrepreneurially.

*“Creative Youth Development organizations are constantly evolving their arts and wellbeing work. Since Covid they've added mental health supports, academic supports, food security and housing, and youth led movement building.”*

Recent cross-sector policy innovations are proving to be transformative.<sup>9</sup> There were a multitude of comments requesting the continuation of programs such as the Caltrans’ Clean California Local Grant Program and the Arts in California Parks program offered in partnership with the California Arts Council (CAC) and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Survey participants involved in the California Creative Corps (CCC) program had a lot to say about the positive impact the program is having on the livelihoods of artists and the sustainability of organizations. Recently launched by the CAC as a one year pilot program, CCC distributed a total of \$60 million across every region in the state, funding arts nonprofits to partner with social service organizations and employ local artists to produce civic projects that advance public health, civic engagement and climate resilience. People also mentioned wanting more direct linkages between providers of arts activities that promote health and wellbeing with the healthcare system, like “arts on prescriptions” programs (Golden 2024) in the state.

*“Creative Corps pilot is working! [Civic organizations]are recognizing the value and innovation that comes when working with an artist. Artists are learning new ways of partnering and promoting their work. Worthy of continued funding!”*

There is also widespread demand for the funding and expansion of the CAC’s California Cultural Districts. The program launched as a five year pilot in 2017 with fourteen designated districts that stretch across the state. Legislator engagement with the districts led to the passage of AB 812 (Boerner)<sup>10</sup>, California’s first and only affordable housing policy for artists that intends to address artist displacement. The survey response below best sums up the power of the program.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the programs mentioned in the following paragraphs please see Appendix C.

<sup>10</sup> Passed in 2022, AB 812 (Boerner) grants local governments the authority to set aside affordable housing units for artists in cultural districts. See Appendix C for more information.

*“Cultural districts started as a way to promote tourism but they have become grass-roots community planning organizations that go beyond attracting tourists and transactional relationships to more deep engagement and long-term planning and advocating for affordable housing and other urgent needs for their respective communities.”*

The survey finds that the field wants more of these programs, recognizing their potential to provide new sources of funding while also transforming relationships with policy makers. They also want support in developing their own cross-sector partnerships. They are seeking tools and resources to better understand the sectors they see themselves working with and they want to be able to speak about what they do in the languages of those sectors, whether in terms of economic impact or positive health outcomes or climate resilience. Creatives are producing these impacts and need the bridging support to make their case, form partnerships and tap new funding sources.



The Center for Cultural Power President and Founder Favianna Rodriguez at the 2023 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid

## Coalition-Building to Raise and Share Power

Coalition-building is another form of collaboration that the creative community is actively engaged in and is seeking to expand. Survey participants view coalition-building as an effective way to raise visibility and increase support. There is a desire to unify voices and call for the coordination of efforts.

*“We have advocated on our own in the past, and it always felt like our efforts were not heard. It would be wonderful if art organizations could partner to advocate for the arts together at the same time. Our voices would be louder.”*

Members of the field commented on building regional coalitions across counties to address the lack of funding in rural communities or building solidarity amongst groups that share identities or affinities. Or they are building alliances between practitioners of specific disciplines to help meet gaps in the field.

*"[We should be] identifying those fields (e.g. jazz) that don't have service organizations and convene practitioners and adjacent arts leaders to encourage the formation of coalitions to promote their interests. There are unaffiliated artists all over the state."*

Coalition-building requires sustained coordination and communication and this relational, systems-building work is rarely funded. Investments are needed in this effort and in growing the leadership capacity of advocates who wish to serve as coordinators and facilitators. Compensation is also needed in order to ensure equitable participation in advocacy leadership so that skill-building and network formation is accessible to all of California's creative communities.

*"[We are] putting competition behind us to acknowledge the power of organizational alliance. Now we need funding resources to staff and initiate an organized campaign!"*

What is needed for sector-wide coalition-building is a vision for establishing solidarity across the various disciplines and differences in the field. Allyship, or exercising one's power to lift others who may have less, could provide the foundation for that solidarity. Developing a theory of how to exchange forms of power and practices of collective allyship in arts advocacy could be an evolutionary step in both advancing equity and building influence as a sector.

## The Power of Collaboration

Collaborations leverage the creativity and resourcefulness of members of the field, they reinforce sustainability by increasing or more efficiently using resources, and they can accelerate innovation by bringing people together to solve problems. Investing resources into any of these collaboration modalities, whether through funding or the development of supportive programs and tools, has the potential to catalyze significant positive change.

## Building Blocks : Creative Economy Infrastructure

What also emerges from the survey results is an articulation of what constitutes creative economy infrastructure - the physical, material and social systems that arts workers and cultural organizations need in order to sustain or grow their practices. A contemporary definition of the economics term has expanded to include both hard infrastructure and soft infrastructure considerations. Members of the creative community are seeking affordable housing and space, access to capital, business development resources and self-employment support systems. Additionally, arts services organizations should be seen as critical infrastructure by providing much needed programs and services for artists and cultural groups.

## Access to Capital

Survey participants provided valuable insights into the barriers they face in accessing capital, which, in the context of the arts, can include grants, donations, investment pools, loans or other financial resources. They highlighted critical gaps and issues in the grant funding landscape, as well as ideas for grant making processes and improving funding options.

Numerous respondents, particularly individual artists and smaller community organizations, noted that they are ineligible for or too small to compete for existing grant opportunities. This tracks with the 2022 California Arts Council field study which found that 67% of California arts nonprofits have budgets of \$50,000 or less, and 92% of those have never received a public or



private grant (Carnwath 2022). Arts funding is very rarely offered to individual artists, for-profit entrepreneurs or community based organizations (CBOs). That same report also notes that, prior to the 2020 COVID emergency relief program and the reinstatement of the Individual Artists Fellowship program in 2021, California artists have not had direct support from the state arts agency since 2002.

*“Our CBO has never been able to qualify for Arts grants. A prejudice against Native American culture as art?”*

Those who are eligible commented that the complexity and labor demanded by grant applications are too burdensome to undertake, especially for artists, smaller organizations or creatives from under-resourced communities. These processes privilege “people who know how to navigate the system” as one respondent observed, *“and this disadvantages artists who didn’t have the same exposure or life experiences in know-how to navigate the system to obtain support.”*

*“Unrestricted funding for artists should be made available regularly for more stability.”*

*“The shift to unrestricted funding (general operating support) has been very helpful. Organizations should also be able to take fallow times to rest from constant programming and have time to reflect, plan, and strategize new ways of moving forward.”*

*“Funders are demanding insane reporting and applications, but not willing to pay for any administrative work, only program work.”*

Some potential solutions mentioned by survey respondents include getting support for developing service contracts with local governments, or using “first step” grant processes where applicants submit an initial inquiry and only those that are really eligible are asked to submit full applications. Others suggest demanding that funders turn the grant support process inside out to learn about accessibility from the field.

*“Without public funding, theatre in LA County is an absolute abject disaster. I managed to make a LIVING doing live performance for six years straight before Covid.”*

*“We recently signed with CalPayArt for payroll services. This was a very practical resource for us as a small arts organization that suddenly needed to comply with AB 5 requirements. More practical resources like this are helpful.”*

*“DEIA is about more than granting money and resources to historically underfunded and underrepresented groups, it’s about making applications accessible to these groups. Rather than making zoom meetings to share with artists how to apply for grants, make them for granters on how to make their application criteria, questions, and selection processes more DEIA.”*

Organizations in the survey are requesting multi-year grants which would lessen administrative labor and help stabilize budget planning. They are also seeking funding that covers operational costs or offers flexibility like the small business grants offered in response to COVID.

*“The CAC [California Arts Council] Operating Support grant has been a massive game-changer – allowing our organization to do the critical planning we need to secure a new venue and reach more schools in marginalized communities.”*

Survey respondents commented that the freedom to use COVID relief funding at their discretion, whether as individuals or organizations, allowed them to make strategic investments in technology, in expanding programming or updating their business models. A small number of organizations reported that they are in their strongest financial position ever. Others commented that they

would like to see the California Arts Council prioritize the Individual Artist Fellowships program or see the return of other forms of direct funding for artists.

Performing arts organizations and workers report that their sector needs support to innovate and they are seeking policy solutions and funding to adapt to their new normal. An example is the recently launched CalPayArt program, the performing arts nonprofit paymaster service enacted to help cut down on administrative costs incurred in complying with employment law. Several expressed that their number one policy priority is to expand and extend investment in the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (SB 1116), which is only funded for a pilot year that will launch in 2025<sup>11</sup>.

## Business Development Resources

Like members of most industries, artists, cultural non profits and arts entrepreneurs are seeking resources to help them strengthen or innovate their business practices. Both individuals and organizations who participated in the survey point to needing technical support in business development strategies, entrepreneurship training or board development resources. Unlike other industries, these types of services are not often readily available to members of the creative community.

*“There is inadequate advisory and organizational support in the community – a feeling that one is on one’s own in terms of figuring it all out.”*


Small business centers don’t have programs designed with our sector’s specific needs, markets or funding mechanisms in mind or they don’t serve nonprofits or the self-employed. One participant commented that there is a “lack of straightforward pathways for artists to start a small business (licensing, taxes, permits, etc).” And access to training is limited.

*“My company is run by someone with a PhD in theater and someone with an MA in performance,” says one respondent, “at no point in our collective training did either one of us learn how to create a business plan or read a P&L spreadsheet.”*

Another key business support service needed is the monitoring of legislation and regulations that impact the creative community and lobbying for regulatory fixes. The California legislature considers roughly 2,500 bills a year and while California Arts Advocates does monitor and lobby—as do a few other California arts service organizations—the effort is costly and complex. There were many respondents who shared that they want help protecting their intellectual property or revenue streams against advancements in artificial intelligence. Others noted that they’ve experienced barriers to participating or succeeding in cross-sector partnerships due to regulatory requirements that are meant for other industries and don’t fit what arts providers produce or how they work.

The creative field is also seeking support for technology adoption. Our field has been highly impacted by changes in technology which have disrupted the means of creative production (digitization, AI) or altered our markets (music and entertainment streaming). For many survey respondents, the low cost and ease of use that allowed them to embrace virtual tools during the pandemic produced positive outcomes and permanent changes. Others remarked that they need support and training in adopting new technologies or staying up to speed with advancements in social media and digital marketing.

*“Our film festival went online but discovered that lack of broadband in our community made it difficult for locals to watch.”*



Access to high speed internet is also an important issue, as our field increasingly relies on computer and internet technology. Several survey participants remarked that poor internet in their neighborhood made it hard for them to leverage tech opportunities. Others expressed concerns over increasing high speed internet access in their community to help bridge the digital divide and increase media literacy.

## Access to Affordable Housing & Space

When asked which policy development area would have the biggest impact on supporting arts workers, individuals' top response was access to affordable housing and/or workspace. The housing affordability crisis is affecting arts workers in unique ways. Some who have been pushed out of expensive urban markets are finding their funding streams have been disrupted or the networks they depend on dissolved. Many mentioned facing displacement and some have had to leave the state.

*"Artists will leave if there's no sustainable way to live here"*

Stable housing is foundational to personal security and wellbeing. Access to adequate and appropriate workspace is essential to supporting artistic production and creative careers. Survey participants highlighted their challenges in accessing space to develop and produce work, such as studio and rehearsal spaces, as well as spaces to present work, such as galleries, music venues and performing arts facilities. There were comments that galleries and brick and mortar spaces for arts programs are "disappearing" in their communities.

*"My number one challenge as an artist is having to limit my creativity due to the amount of space available to me and many artists like myself who live in housing that doesn't allow for much creative expression"*

And while several people commented on their success in utilizing alternative spaces like pop-up venues, the creative community is calling out for long term space solutions to stabilize costs, invest in their practices and cultivate the networks and patrons needed to sustain their operations. Respondents are seeking resources for developing space sharing or cooperative buying agreements, for developing cultural trusts or advancing policy tools that local governments can use to incentivize long term leases at affordable rates for cultural organizations and arts businesses.

## Self-Employment Safety Net

As we know from lived experience and recent studies, arts workers are more than three times as likely to be self-employed than other workers and that status leaves them particularly susceptible to economic insecurity (Yang et al. 2021). *"Our work is piecemeal and we don't live from paycheck to paycheck because there's no such thing, it's gig to gig economy, a very different way of thinking and being,"* described one survey taker. Additionally, much of the time and labor that goes into developing art works or cultural experiences, such as rehearsing, creating models and sketches, experimenting with processes, curating, marketing or networking, goes uncompensated. The lack of safety nets for the self-employed deeply affects artists as well as administrators of small organizations that cannot offer benefits.

*"I have a BA in English Education, and MA in Interdisciplinary Arts and an MFA in creative writing... I have been a devoted arts educator (poet teacher) in SFUSD schools for over 35 years. Because I have worked as an independent contractor in SF since 1984, I receive no pension... I am 70 but cannot afford to retire."*

These issues are compounded for artists from economically or racially marginalized communities. *"Without financial security, artists will not be able to thrive in the extreme financial inequality that exists in America today,"* asserts a survey taker, *"we need to level the playing field so that*

*artists that come from economic strife can compete with artists who are of means.”* Collectively, individuals who took the survey identified that the lack of social safety nets for the self-employed is one of their biggest challenges. There was overwhelming consensus that they are seeking policy solutions to address housing or child care costs or programs like Guaranteed Basic Income, unemployment insurance, retirement options and portable benefits.

Respondents also want to lean into community organizing to build on the mutual aid and sharing economy resources that were developed in response to COVID. As one survey participant described, arts workers want to see, *“mutual aid to support emergency funds for health and transition related expenses in self-employed/gig communities —such as having children, care leave, transitioning jobs, major health issues, etc.”*

*“Advocating for the arts is important to me. Advocating for affordable or subsidized health care and affordable or subsidized day care for working families are my priority at this time.”*

## Arts Service Organizations

Arts workers and cultural organizations are also calling for entities in their communities that can serve as centralized hubs for information sharing, resource development and advocacy coordination. One survey taker envisions “a robust, centralized, and energetic arts coalition that reduces organizational redundancies in the metropolitan area while establishing and analyzing the diverse funding needs of active artisans in the area.” California Arts Council programs such as **State and Local Partners** and **Statewide & Regional Networks**, as well as other local arts councils, discipline-specific support organizations or artist networks serve as critical creative economy infrastructure by providing funding and technical support, communicating opportunities to their constituents or coordinating collective action or impact.

*“The support of arts service organizations should be recognized as essential to a healthy arts and culture ecosystem, but it is not prioritized by funders or valued.”*

Service organizations can play a critical role in helping their constituents access capital. Some act as fiscal sponsors for artists or other small nonprofits. One individual shared, *“If I didn’t have a fiscal sponsor I would not have the ability to survive as an artist.”* These groups can also stimulate resource development through coordinating local advocacy. Or they can take the lead on fostering cross-sector partnerships, answering the call from the field for *“support in terms of employment, training, funding, placement for arts workers across sectors,”* as one survey respondent described. Arts service organizations have also provided COVID relief programs or are leading disaster response or in their communities.

*“In an effort to support our artist member base, we used a portion of our budget, typically allocated for in-person events, and offered 12 one-time micro grants for artist members to continue creative projects in their newly restricted settings.”*

Service organizations can also be key drivers and supporters of cross-sector collaborations. They can play the bridging role of bringing different partners and funders together and in linking members of the field to those opportunities. The **California Creative Corps** pilot program leveraged arts service organizations to do just this. The fourteen administering organizations fostered and funded regional collaborations between artists and civic organizations working in public health, social justice, climate change and more.

The presence of these service organizations is uneven across the state and funding to support their operations is scarce. These groups are especially needed to help underserved groups or marginalized communities access resources. One participant explained that while larger organizations have the capacity to compete for grants, *“smaller arts groups (formal or informal) either bootstrap their cultural productions through personal or crowdfunding, relying on all-volunteer workers,”*

leaving them ultimately on their own in a local ecosystem that has, *"many silos, very little cross-communication; no centralized resources hub for events, opportunities, or skills training."* Arts service organizations can convene and connect members of the field, locate and leverage resources and provide services that reduce costs and barriers for the networks they serve.



Our 2024 Field Survey findings illustrate two entwined systems of support, one **collaborative** and **relational**, and the other the **infrastructure** or **scaffolding** upon which to grow a stronger field. In examining survey respondents' feedback, and their reported needs, challenges and opportunities in both of these areas, several main policy areas of focus began to emerge. In order for the artists and arts organizations of California to thrive in this "new normal", there are steps we can take to ensure their chances for success. The following section lays out seven main policy areas as priorities at the State level, and outlines steps to increase participation in field building and advocacy efforts to help accomplish these goals.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

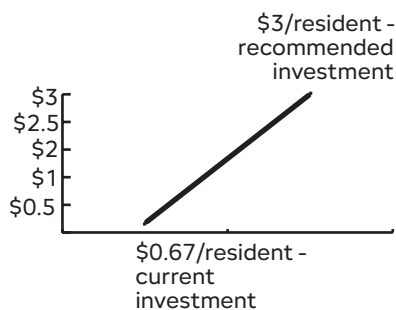
## CA Arts Advocates: Recommended State Policy Priorities

As a comprehensive lobbying organization for arts, culture, and the creative economy, **CA Arts Advocates** is working to influence equitable and just system change through public policy and public investments. The following constitutes recommended priorities, based on the survey results, for state-level policy change that **CA Arts Advocates** and its partners and other groups could advance through its lobbying work, policy writing and grassroots advocacy campaigns.

### 1 Increase funding to the California Arts Council (CAC)

Increasing and sustaining adequate investment in artists and organizations through the state arts agency is essential to undoing the impacts of the chronic funding scarcity that plague our sector and threaten California's creative identity and economy.

California needs a robust and comprehensive state arts agency that has the capacity and resources to address its diverse needs, to provide equitable access to funding to more parts of the ecosystem and to meet the demand for arts and culture throughout the state. The current funding levels represent a profound underinvestment in the field. In its 2023-24 grant cycle, the CAC was only able to support 4.3% of the state's arts and culture organizations (CAC 2024).



**An increase in the CAC budget to \$120 million, or \$3 per resident, would move California from 27th to 9th in the nation in per capita spending on the arts.** Being home to 25% of the nation's creative workforce, California should rank among the top ten states investing in their creative communities.

With sufficient funding levels, more of the state's cultural organizations could stabilize and innovate to sustain jobs, leverage other resources, and make catalytic investments in their growth or programs. Additionally, this would provide arts workers access to thriving wages, helping artists sustain their creative practices while making creative careers accessible to a more diverse pool of Californians. Increased funding will also help ensure that more of California's residents have equitable access to creative expression and cultural participation in their communities.

# 2

## Diversify and increase funding for arts jobs

Developing and expanding cross-sector initiatives, via policies or programs that employ the creative workforce and embed artists or organizations in projects advancing civic goals, will diversify sources of funding, build strategic partnerships and position the creative sector as a solutions-partner

- Secure state policies and funding sources that include other state agencies. Successful efforts will integrate the arts into a wider range of state priorities, strategically positioning artists and cultural groups as partners in the state's success. Diversifying the portfolio of state funding sources also has the potential to help the field better weather budget deficit years and changing political landscapes.
- Secure ongoing funding to continue the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (SB 1116) beyond its pilot year, sustaining jobs in smaller organizations while investing in the cultural infrastructure of California communities
- Secure ongoing funding for proven cross-sector programs and support the development of new initiatives. Policy innovations such as CA Creative Corps, Clean CA, Creative Youth Development Grants and California Cultural Districts provide jobs for arts workers and help to sustain cultural organizations. These programs also increase the visibility and value proposition of their work in their communities and stimulate partnerships that increase the likelihood of local investment and future collaborations.
- Advance "Arts on Prescription" as a state priority by initiating pilot programs or developing state policies to support the intersection of arts in health as a means to address epidemics of mental health, isolation and loneliness. On the federal level, work with partners to establish access to arts and culture as a social determinant of health, and access to arts to be covered as a 1115 demonstration amendment waiver for Medicaid and MediCal.
- Expand state legislation monitoring and lobbying to identify and advance cross-sector possibilities for the field.
- Track state legislative efforts to mitigate or address climate change that have public education or public will building components and either lobby for artists or cultural organizations to be eligible for funding or continue to educate lawmakers on the role that the arts can play in advancing these issues.

# 3

## Increase access to affordable housing and/or work spaces

- Develop or sponsor state level policies that have the potential to protect creatives from displacement, preserve existing or produce affordable housing for arts workers. This could mean passing legislation like AB 812 that gives local governments tools or authority to include eligible artists in preferential access to affordable units.
- Identify and promote to state and local policymakers potential financing tools for investments in cultural districts such as special assessment districts, tax increment financing or Transient Occupancy Tax options (Arroyo 2020).
- Research and develop a well-outlined method for how cities or developers might arrive at an inclusive and locally-informed definition for determining "artist" eligibility.
- Continue convening the Artists Housing Working Group, a CA for the Arts task force established in 2023 that brings together leading organizations and affordable housing experts in the field.

# 4

- The group is helping to build a knowledge base of the issues, advising on advocacy resources and potential policy solutions and will help mobilize the field during advocacy efforts.
- Build coalitions with other housing groups to advocate for state or federal level policy solutions, including increasing federal funding for affordable housing and expanding Section 8 provisions.

## Develop social safety net programs and business development resources

- Support or sponsor state policies that advance protections and support systems for self-employed workers, including Guaranteed Basic Income, unemployment insurance, portable benefits, child care programs, etc.
- Build coalitions with the larger network of organizations and unions working on anti poverty policies and programs.
- Advocate for the addition of creative economy experts or creative entrepreneurship training offered through the network of California's Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs).
- Advance state-level programs that provide entrepreneurship training specifically to creative entrepreneurs.
- Monitor licensing, permitting and other state regulations that may impact arts workers.
- Increase access to high speed internet, especially in rural and marginalized communities.
- Partner with marketing agencies such as Visit CA or tourism boards to feature arts and culture in their materials.

# 5

## Advocate to funding agencies for programs that will increase access to capital

- Advocate for flexible funding programs for artists and organizations that allow them to self-determine where to direct investments, such as grants for operations, small business grants, micro-loans or low-cost loans.
- Build support for direct funding to artists through fellowships or professional development grants.
- Advocate for improvements to grant-making processes such as simplified applications, multi-year funding cycles or reporting tools that recipients can repurpose for fundraising and advocacy.
- Advocate for funding for arts service organizations or networks that focus on capacity building for their constituents through technical support, information sharing, collective marketing or advocacy coordination.
- Advocate to funders to invest in solidarity economy practices (Linares 2021), especially those being developed in under-resourced and BIPOC communities, by providing incubation and start-up capital or ways to support cooperative business models.





# 6

## Continue to educate policymakers on the issues arts workers and organizations are facing and improve regulatory conditions.

- Continue to track and act on legislation that negatively impacts our field, including AI, ticketing bills and other regulations.
- Advocate for the continued function of a state-level **Creative Economy Advisory Group** that could sustain cross-agency dialogue and further integrate arts and culture into state priorities and problem solving. Advocate for hearings in the legislature to advance these issues with policy makers and identify partners and funders to assist in statewide or regional public with building campaigns.

# 7

## Advance racial and cultural equity in all of these activities

To operationalize the organizational values associated with racial and cultural equity expressed in our strategic plan, **CA Arts Advocates** should enact the following practices:

- Analyze policies to ensure that they do not perpetuate harm and support those that advance the redistribution of power and resources to artists and organizations who are from or serve marginalized communities.
- Ensure that decision-making on where to focus power and advocacy efforts have included voices that reflect the diversity of California.
- Encourage the development of locally-informed definitions of equity goals and outcomes that are arrived at through inclusive and self-determined processes.

Advancements in these policy areas would be accelerated by engaging and mobilizing the field through the programs, toolkits, services and communication resources offered by CA for the Arts.



2024 Art & Culture Summit attendees had the opportunity to participate in a poster-making workshop to create posters for the Arts Advocacy Rally the following day. Photographed by Doug Cupid.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## CA for the Arts: Recommendations for Field Building

CA for the Arts works to build the field by responsively and authentically representing its interests, increasing participation in advocacy, growing a network of networks and developing a shared knowledge base. Findings from the survey indicate that CA for the Arts could advance its field building goals by focusing on trust, removing barriers to participation, building networks through affinity groups and coalitions, developing resources to support local advocacy and activating partnerships with private philanthropy.

### Top Motivations to Participate in Advocacy

# #1

**The policy change directly affects by work or livelihood**

# #2

**When a trusted colleague / friend asks me to advocate**

#### **Trust is the essential ingredient to participation.**

Survey respondents report that their top motivation for participating in advocacy is when a policy change is relevant to their work or livelihood. We can expect folks to take action when something is directly impacting them. But their second highest motivation is when a trusted colleague or friend asks them. This points to the social dimension of advocacy, where trust creates assurance that the action will advance shared values. People need to see their interests are being addressed in the advocacy – relationships and representation matter. Increasing trust also addresses the greatest barrier to participation - the lack of time people have - by collapsing the need for someone to do all the background research themselves. Trust is built through reciprocity, transparency and effectiveness.

*“When I receive letters to take action, I want to know who that request is coming from, what do they do, and do they have the interests of my community at heart. If I can’t establish those things (preferably quickly), I am less likely to act.”*

*“Policy and advocacy efforts need to move beyond including some BIPOC voices that are treated as ‘minorities’ so that members of these communities can help to re-shape and build a much richer arts environment”*

Trust building as an organizational focus will lead to more authentic representation and overall effectiveness. CA for the Arts can further establish these conditions by:

- Continuing to provide programs and resources that reflect the needs and aspirations of the field and that respond to emerging needs.
- Ensuring diverse voices and perspectives are involved in developing programs, communications and resources.
- Partnering with networks serving communities not adequately reached or represented, convening them to identify opportunities for reciprocal engagement.
- Identifying opportunities to demonstrate and model allyship with those who are marginalized and most impacted by resource scarcity.
- Developing a web-based central statewide clearing house of field opportunities such as grant programs, job postings, requests for proposals, artist fellowships and residencies.
- Sharing internal decision-making processes and providing timely reporting on the results of programs and advocacy campaigns.

#### **Accessibility is the key to capacity.**

Providing tools that are easy to use and engagement opportunities that are accessible to people at different experience levels would greatly increase the capacity for the field to participate in advocacy. Increasing accessibility - and inclusion - also means extending resources to meet those who are underrepresented where they are at. Economically disadvantaged groups, advocates in rural communities and artists are asking for tools to help them participate.

*"Just show me where/how through clear emails with short instructions. Clear Subject lines like 'Please help Advocate for XYZ' will help, and click through links are effective. In person activities should have as much lead time as possible - I will go out of my way to prioritize."*

*"I sometimes feel that the language used to reach out to artists seems more directed at administrators. People who understand the complex language of navigating these programs. I end up feeling a bit alienated by my ignorance in regards to this language."*

*"We need more immediate and accessible ways to engage cultural workers and practitioners in advocacy who have not participated in the past. Rural and suburban communities need more voice. We need more foot soldiers in those communities which means more trained advocates outside urban communities."*

*"Compensating neighborhood advocacy organizers or anyone participating in advocacy as consultants could also be transformative."*



CA for the Arts can make advocacy participation more accessible by:

- Making complex issues digestible through clear language and graphics, including an advocacy dictionary of technical terms to arrive at accessible shared terminology that is reflective of the communities the policies are intended to serve.
- Sustaining relationships with constituents by scaffolding engagement – providing points of entry for beginners and supportive touch points for continued participation that increase confidence and competency.
- Promoting campaigns that offer simplified communications and easy-to-use actions that can be accomplished on the participant’s own time.
- Developing funding strategies or compensation models for arts advocacy.
- Leveraging member support to keep programs free and accessible to all.



Sacramento-based advocates Adam Foster, Roshawn Davis, and Can Foster at the 2023 CA Arts & Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid

### Building a network of networks

CA for the Arts should continue to build the field by expanding and connecting the community of organizations and individuals working together to create systems change. Field building should include a focus on addressing regional and socioeconomic gaps in advocacy participation, developing knowledge exchanges with underrepresented groups and leveraging the bonding and bridging principles of social capital<sup>12</sup> to ensure reciprocal engagement and to build a diverse and inclusive coalition.

*"I am willing to advocate and would be more motivated if others in my sphere were to do the same. It's a long way to victory and without full participation it can get lonely."*

*"We have found racial affinity groups to be very beneficial both within our organization and with partner groups we work with. Regional racial affinity groups could be a powerful way to advance DEIA work across the sector."*

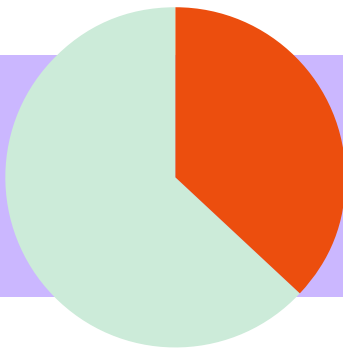
*"[Increase] local communication, conversations and feedback that filter into statewide efforts. Folks in the rural areas do NOT feel represented in state efforts and strategies."*

12

As Robert Putnam puts it, "bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD-40" in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Putnam 2020).

It is recommended that CA for the Arts work with funders and regional partners to:

- Stimulate network creation in areas that lack advocacy coordination - building on the Regional Advocacy Infrastructure Network (RAIN) and the Grassroots Artists Advocacy Program (GAAP) pilot programs<sup>13</sup>.
- Offer programs that catalyze connectivity on regional levels, whether virtually or in-person.
- Establish a network of outreach partners and provide easy-to-use tools for leaders to engage their communities.
- Support affinity groups in order to both deepen their bonds and uplift their shared experiences.
- Work to build field solidarity by promoting allyship as a value and create opportunities to increase individual stakes in collective successes.
- Conduct further research to understand what is needed to bridge differences and build solidarity and allyship within the field.
- Advocate for continued funding for arts service organizations and state/local networks, who are often overlooked in their essential roles as connectors between artists and advocacy efforts and the organizations which hire artists.



Over 37% of organizations named **“advocacy training and coordination to increase local funding”** as one of their top service needs.

### **Building a knowledge base for local advocacy**

There were a number of requests for specific resources that, if offered, would put tools in the hands of advocates that empower them to pursue policy change in their communities and on their terms. Over 37% of organizations named **“advocacy training and coordination to increase local funding”** as one of their top service needs. There is a call for localized data and casemaking tools and for resources to help them build relationships with elected officials and form cross-sector partnerships. And many of the policy issues affecting the creative community, such as housing, land use planning, economic development or accessing small business support, are addressed at the local level.

*“There is more funding opportunity at the local level than at state and national levels. I'd like to see more support for advocacy at the local level.”*

*“I find direct relationships with government representatives to be the most effective form of advocacy. Building those relationships throughout the year seems an essential part of the work.”*

*“Bringing together arts advocacy with other advocacy efforts for purposes of winning campaigns and legislative goals. This requires expanding the tent and being knowledgeable on the intersections that exist.”*

It is recommended that CA for the Arts adapt or expand its programs to include the following resources to help unlock local partnerships and funding:

- Offer an annual advocacy calendar with monthly tips on sustaining year-round engagement with policymakers on the state and local levels.
- Produce local advocacy toolkits that include guidance on activations like press conferences, public comment, proclamations and local elected official engagement.
- Help develop a cost-effective way for advocates to access local economic and social impact data to make their cases more relevant to decision makers in their communities.
- Develop tools that assist local advocates in embedding arts and culture priorities in local planning such as affordable housing/workspace and cultural districts in local land use and economic development planning.
- Create a toolkit that compiles and shares information on different forms of regional marketing and communications platforms - what they offer, how they are funded and what partnerships made them happen.
- Provide resources that advance affordable housing access such as toolkits that address particular opportunities or by sharing information on models such as land banking, cooperative buying or space sharing agreements.
- Offer trainings on how to access capital beyond grants through programs offered by lenders or state and federal agencies in addition to arts agencies.
- Advance the development of solidarity economy models within the cultural community by uplifting research and case studies and facilitating information-sharing.

### **Activating Public-Partner Partnerships to Accelerate Change**

- As a bridge builder, CA for the Arts could play a role in stimulating partnerships between funders and arts service organizations. The following activities could accelerate change and meet the needs of the field:
- Uplift the work and impact of arts service organizations in communications to the field.
- Continue to share research findings and information on best practices published by funders.
- Promote to funders and government agencies the field's demand for support in developing cross-sector partnerships and continue to educate on the field's ability to advance the goals of funders and civic leaders.
- Promote to funders the need for lower cost methods for gathering localized data on economic and social impacts that could help members of the field to measure and tell the story of their work.
- Explore opportunities for how the arts ecosystem could develop financial models that allow for greater use of self-funding to increase resilience and self reliance.

**These recommendations offer guidance to CA for the Arts and its arts advocacy partners across the state as they seek to increase advocacy capacity in members of the arts community and to build connectivity and effectiveness across the field.**

# Conclusion

The **2024 California Arts Advocacy Survey Report** reflects the insights, aspirations and challenges reflected in the contributions of over 1,000 members of the state's creative community to a field wide survey conducted by CA for the Arts in January and February of that year.

The report finds that while the acute impacts of COVID-19 have receded, the conditions in which the field is functioning continue to be shaped by the social and economic forces set in motion by the pandemic as well as by the movements for social and racial justice. Funding scarcity and rising costs are creating tremendous pressures and precarity for many arts workers and organizations, especially those from marginalized communities. At the same time, the resourcefulness and creativity with which the field met the challenges of COVID and the innovations spurred by various relief programs have led to new ways of working and pathways of collaboration that the field wants to expand upon. The insights that survey respondents shared outline the systems of support that they need to meet these challenges and build on the possibilities they are fostering. To sustain their practices and create a thriving future, they are seeking access to capital, affordable housing and space, business development resources, social safety net programs for the self-employed and the support of arts service organizations. And to build strength and resilience, they are seeking resources to support collaboration within the field, cross-sector partnerships and coalition-building.

Members of California's creative community are poised to advocate for increased public investment in the arts, for programs that support the creative workforce and for a new social contract that creates economic security while embedding them as partners in achieving the civic goals of the state and their local communities. CA for the Arts can build on these possibilities by developing a knowledge base and removing barriers to increase participation in advocacy on the state and local levels, by cultivating regional and statewide networks and by spurring partnerships with private philanthropy. And its sister lobbying organization, CA Arts Advocates (CAA), can work to advance the field by continuing to champion increased investment in the California Arts Council and in other programs that support arts jobs. To help stabilize and sustain the field, CAA can advocate for policies and programs that increase access to capital and business development support, that provide affordable housing or space and that advance the development of social safety net programs.

**We hope that the findings in this report express both the urgency and potency of this new normal and that arts advocates galvanize around achievable goals that they can realize through partnerships and policy changes in their local communities and at the state level.**



**The future  
of California  
is CREATIVE**





# Appendix A: Methodology

## "In Their Own Words"

Our goals for this year's survey were to gain an understanding of how members of the creative community are experiencing and defining this post-pandemic "new normal", what conditions they are working within, and what solutions they have created or are seeking. And we wanted to learn from them in their own words.

To this end, the survey was structured to elicit insights through a qualitative approach, using ranking multiple choice and open ended questions. In order to surface what we didn't know, roughly 80% of the questions had an "Other" option or asked for a narrative response, helping us collect a diverse set of perspectives. This approach did lengthen the time it took to take the survey and we received some feedback that it was too long. We recognize that having time to devote to taking a long survey is itself a privilege and sacrifice. We thank everyone who took the time to participate.

We chose not to rely on a statistical weighing of the responses because we anticipated that our sample will likely not represent the full breadth of the creative community. While CA for the Arts has a database of 25,000 contacts, we know our most active constituents tend to be mid-sized to large organizations concentrated in urban areas. To ensure we were able to include diverse voices, we conducted targeted outreach with the help of partners to reach individual artists, communities of color, and rural regions. Additionally we convened three Regional Conversations and six meetings with members of the field representing diverse voices.

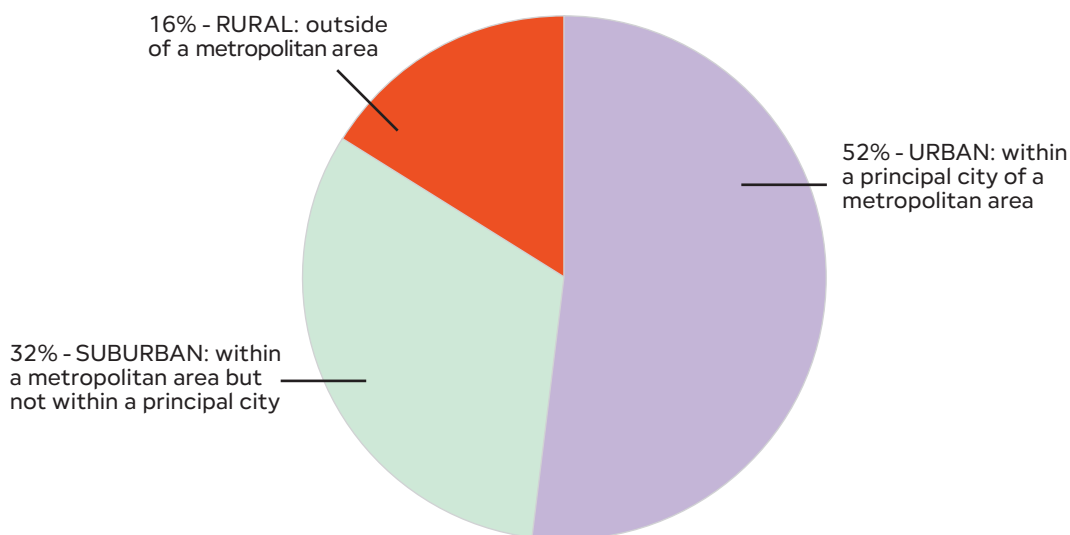
All quantitative data was tabulated in the survey instrument and confirmed through spreadsheet calculations. The qualitative data captured in the open ended questions were coded in Microsoft Excel under common themes through an inductive process where we reviewed the text and identified emerging themes (Braun et al., 2006). Frequently mentioned topics then started to emerge more clearly with this clustering method as a way to find commonalities within the participant responses (Lex, et al., 2010). Clustering allowed us to identify the main themes across the survey as they arose in the data. We then scanned the narrative responses to identify insights and voices that expressed sentiment behind the themes or added dimension and perspective to the findings.

The report is a synthesis of these patterns and themes, offering multiple perspectives on how members of the arts community have adapted over the past few years, what challenges and opportunities they see, what practices, policies or programs they would like to see expanded or initiated and what support they need to participate in advocacy.

# Appendix B: Who We Reached

The **2024 California for the Arts Field Survey** was open for responses from January 15 to February 22nd. We received over 1,680 responses from members of the arts and cultural community across California. 1076 individual arts workers representing 54 counties and 607 people representing organizations from all 58 counties took part in the survey.

## Community Type



In comparison, 94% of Californians live in an urban area (Cox 2023) and less than 6% live in a rural area (Johnson 2024).

We had individual responses from 54 of the 58 counties and organizational responses from all counties. The table compares these responses to California County data found on the World Population Review website (WPR n.d.).

Top Counties by Percentage of California Population					
Individual Responses		Organization Responses		California Counties <sup>14</sup>	
Los Angeles County	32.13%	Los Angeles County	29.44%	Los Angeles County	24.70%
Alameda County	12.07%	San Francisco County	11.51%	San Diego County	8.39%
San Francisco County	10.12%	Alameda County	9.54%	Orange County	8.03%
Sacramento County	8.64%	San Diego County	9.54%	Riverside County	6.46%
San Diego County	7.80%	Santa Clara County	4.93%	San Bernardino County	5.65%
Santa Clara County	5.57%	Orange County	4.77%	Santa Clara County	4.83%
Orange County	5.11%	Sacramento County	4.28%	Alameda County	4.16%
Contra Costa County	4.64%	Riverside County	2.80%	Sacramento County	4.07%
Marin County	4.55%	Nevada County	2.47%	Contra Costa County	2.96%
Nevada County	3.81%	Ventura County	2.47%	Fresno County	2.62%

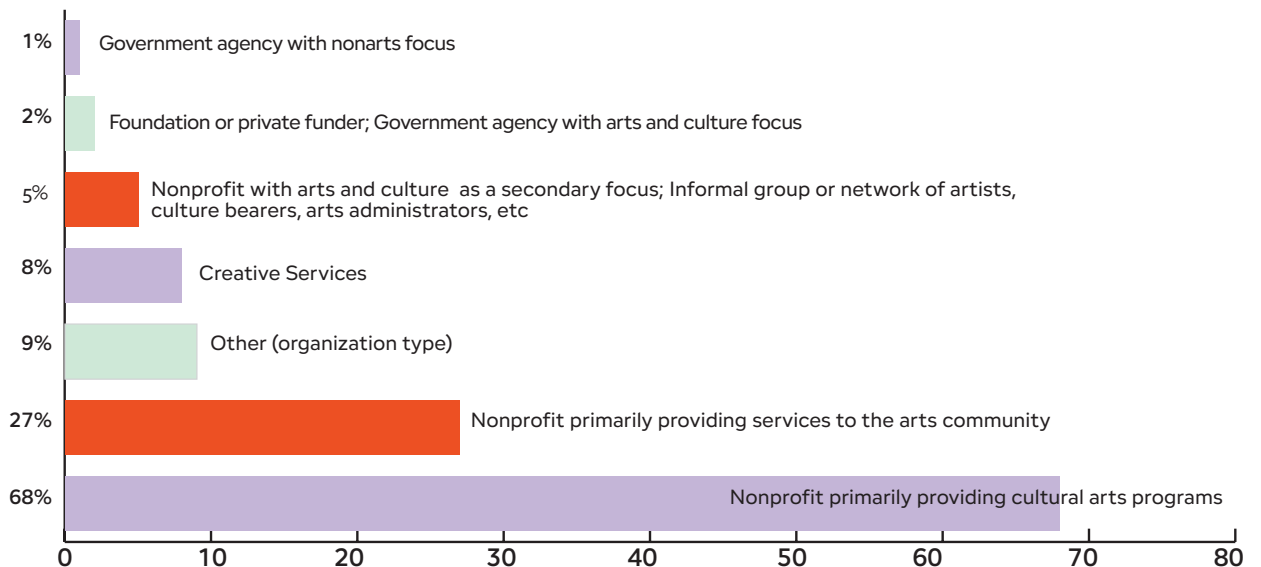
<sup>14</sup> From: World Population Review. (n.d.) California counties by population. worldpopulationreview.com <https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/california/counties>

# Organizations - Types & Areas of Practice

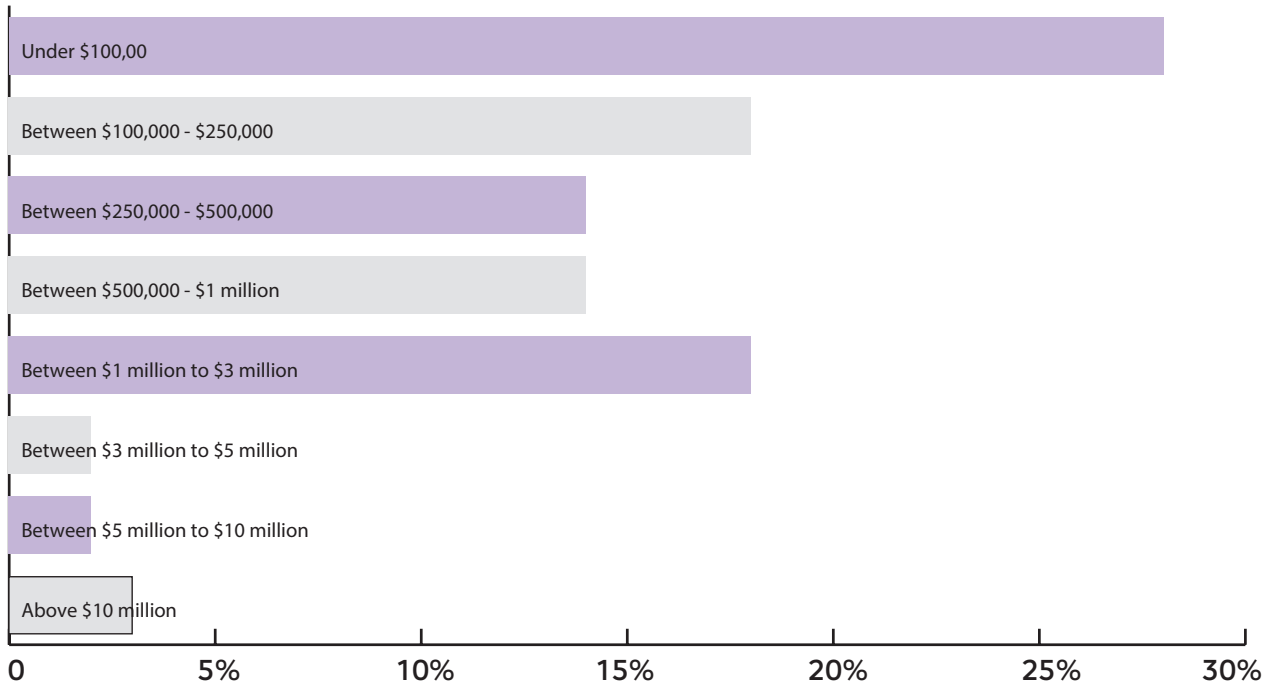


Arts for LA team at the 2024 Arts Advocacy Day rally. Photographed by Alan Shekter.

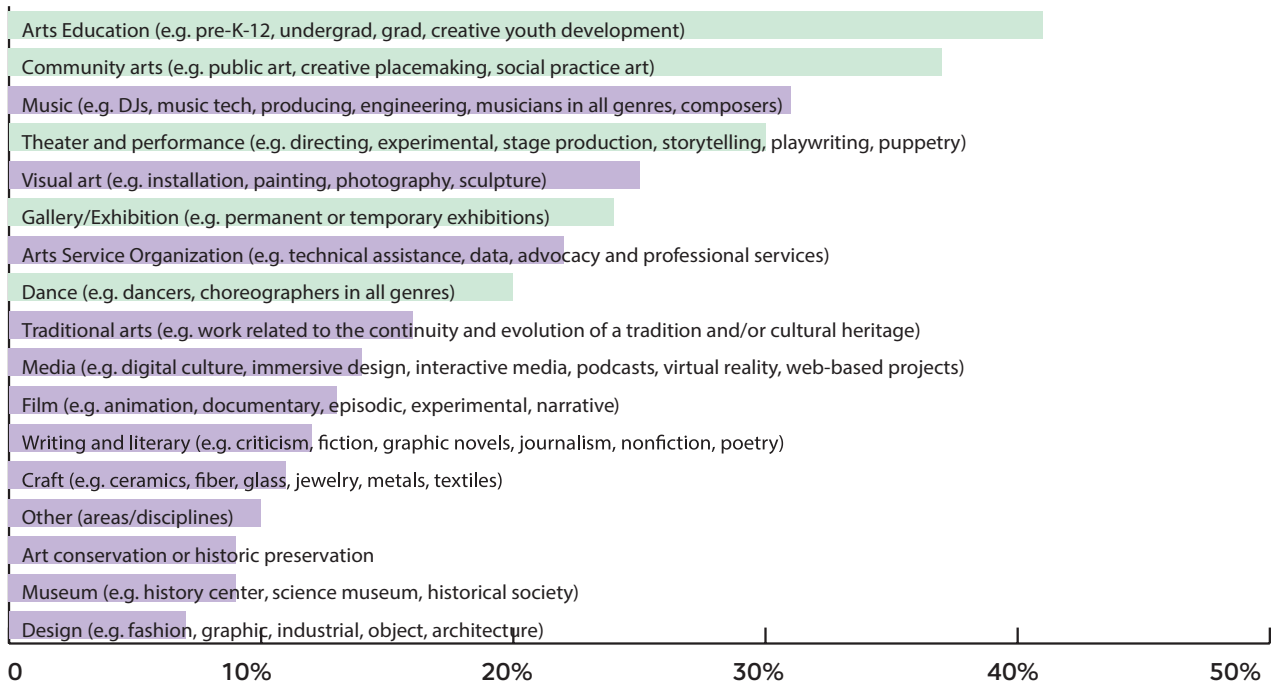
## Types of Organizations Represented



## Operating Budget Size



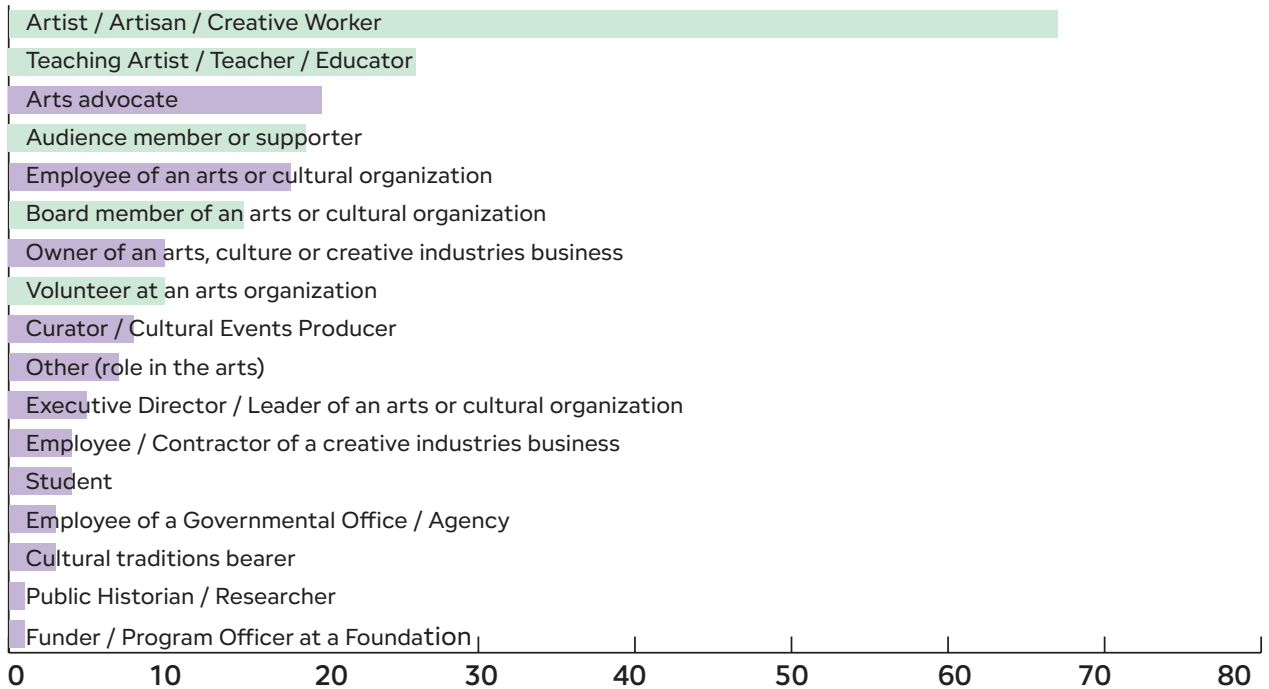
## Areas / disciplines that best describes your organization or business' field of practice - could select multiple



# Individuals - Roles & Areas of Practice

Understanding that individuals often have multiple roles in the arts ecosystem, as well as different business lines, we asked participants to identify their top 3 roles. 67% of individuals identify as an artist/artisan/creative worker, 26% as a teaching artist /teacher /educator and 20% identify as an arts advocate. 23% are employed by a nonprofit, 24% volunteer in a non-profit and 14% own or are employed by a creative business, with 17% reporting a blend of those roles.

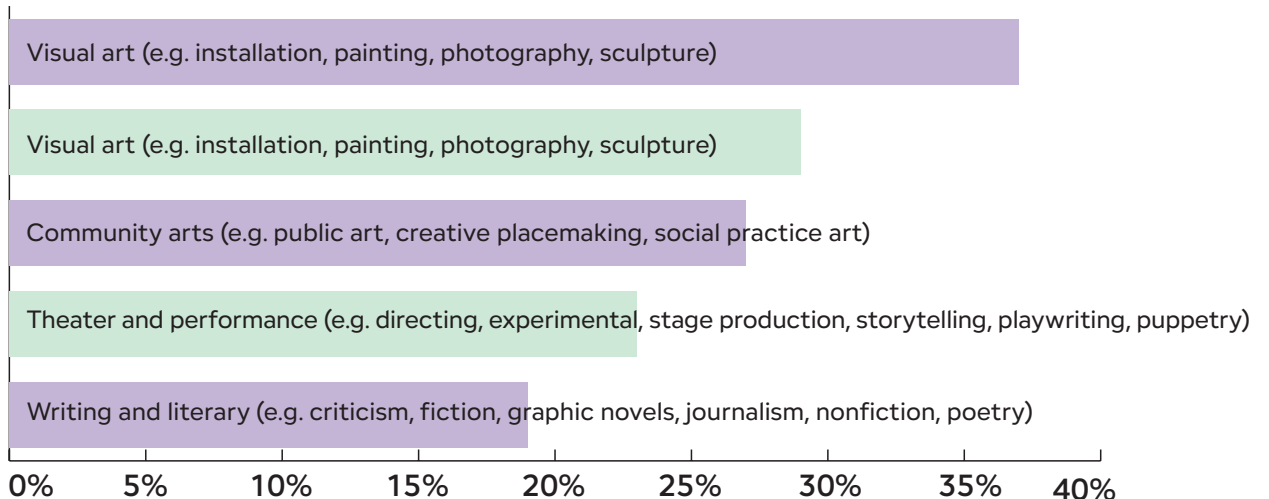
## What is/are Your Role(s) in the arts and cultural ecosystem? (please select up to 3)



## Area of Practice

Individuals reported participating in 58 areas of practice, either creative disciplines or services to the field.

### The top five:



# Demographics

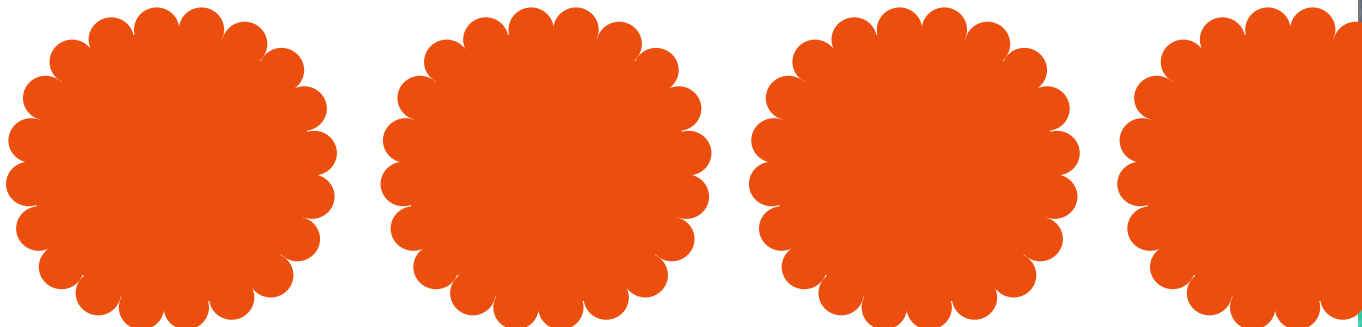
While this study was intended to focus on the perspectives and experiences shared by survey respondents, we included demographic questions to assess who we were able to reach. 53% of survey respondents opted to answer the demographics questions. While we received feedback in the comments that the survey itself was long, we are pleased that this many chose to answer demographics questions which were positioned at the end of the survey<sup>15</sup>. Both the demographic data and the responses by county give CA for the Arts valuable insights into who the organization is reaching and where it needs to direct efforts for more inclusive and representative engagement.

The survey respondents' selections for Race/Ethnicity and Age are presented in comparison with the demographic data provided in the "Arts Workers in California" report which studied the characteristics of both California arts workers and the full California workforce found in American Community Survey (ACS) data estimates between 2014-18 (Yang et al. 2021). These are not direct comparisons, as the demographics questions asked in our survey do not exactly match the ACS questions.

## Race/Ethnicity

Racial Identities that respondents selected (they could select all that applied):

Race/Ethnicity	Survey Participants	CA Arts Worker	CA Full Workforce
Multiracial	11.2%	3.7%	2.8%
White Only	66.1%	60.5%	40.3%
Black or African American	4.9%	4.6%	5.4%
Latino/a/x or Chicano/a/x	13.3%	17.7%	36.1%
Asian American or Pacific Islander	9.4%	13.3%	15.1%
Native American or Indigenous	4.2%	0.2%	.3%



<sup>15</sup> A study conducted on rates of responses to demographic questions found that overall, 33.4% of people responded. (Zeigenfuss 2021).

## Age

Age	Survey Participants	CA Arts Worker
65 or above	31.3%	9.2%
45-64	42.9%	31.5%
25-44	25.0%	48.3%
Under 25	.9%	11%

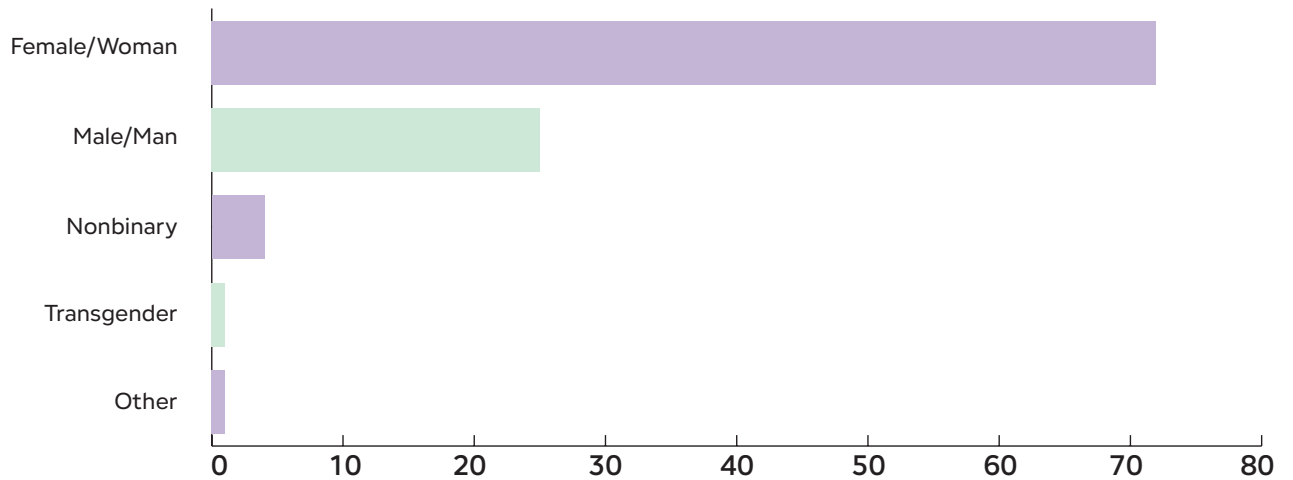
While the ages of our survey participants trends higher than the CA arts workers studied in that report, they are in line with the findings of a 2017 Americans for the Arts Baseline Demographic Survey. This alignment likely reflects the reach and similarity of the networks of the surveying agencies; Americans for the Arts and CA for the Arts both being advocacy organizations whose members trend older. The gender and education levels are also comparable. That report found that the median age of respondents was 12 years older than the US median age, that women participants outnumbered men 3-to-1 and that 54% of participants had earned an advanced degree (Lord 2017).



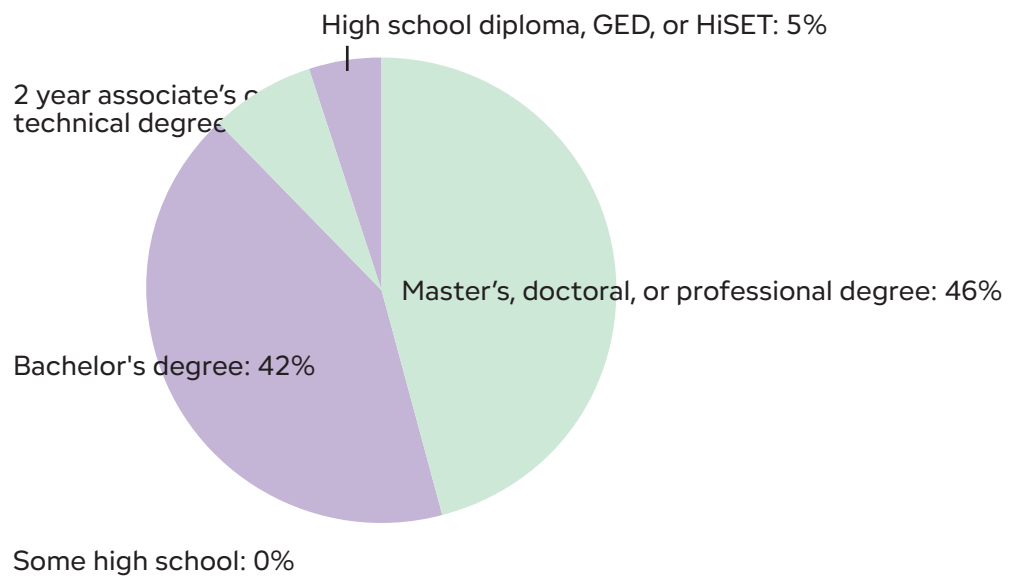
David Mack, Managing Director of The African American Art & Culture Complex and Bernard Brown, Artistic Director of Bernard Brown/bbmoves in Los Angeles at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Photographed by Doug Cupid.



## Gender



## Education Level



### On Opposite Page:

Jennifer Andrea Porras at the 2024 Arts and Culture Summit. Phtographed by Doug Cupid.



Art work  
real world



# Appendix C: California Programs & Legislation

Below are short descriptions of the various California programs and legislation referenced throughout the report, accompanied by links for more information.

## **Arts in California Parks program**

California State Parks, the California Arts Council, and Parks California launched a new Arts in California Parks grants program – the Local Parks Grant Program. A total of \$8 million in grants was available to local non-profit and community organizations to support art and cultural programs in local communities across the state. Awardees were to be announced in September 2024.

The Local Parks Grant Program, managed by Parks California, intended to create local community connections to California’s rich and diverse cultural history and natural areas outside of California’s state park boundaries.

[Link to Source](#)

## **AB 5 – California Assembly Bill 5**

California adopted a new law aimed at combating the misclassification of workers. The legislation, Assembly Bill (AB) 5, took effect on January 1, 2020. AB5 adopts the “ABC” test that has been used by courts and government agencies to determine employee status. Under this test, workers can only be classified as independent contractors when a business demonstrates that the workers fit within set conditions.

[Link to Source](#)

## **AB 189 - Arts Council: California cultural districts (Assem. Richard Bloom, 2015)**

This bill authorized the California Arts Council to establish criteria and guidelines for state-designated cultural districts as well as a competitive application system for certification. The bill also established that certification as a state-designated cultural district would be effective for 5 years, after which the district may renew certification every 3 years.

[Link to Source](#)

## **AB 812 – California Assembly Bill 812, Reserving affordable units in or near a cultural district for artists (Assem. Tasha Boerner, 2023)**

This bill authorizes a city or county that requires, as a condition of approval, that a certain percentage of units of a residential development be affordable housing, as specified, to reserve for artists up to 10% of those required affordable housing units, except as provided, if certain conditions are met, including that the units reserved are located within or within one-half mile from a state-designated cultural district or within a locally designated cultural district, as specified

[Link to Source](#)

## **Arts on Prescription**

Originating decades ago in the UK, social prescribing allows healthcare providers to refer patients not only to conventional treatments, but also to a breadth of local resources that can support health and wellbeing. Referrals are made to services like food banks, exercise programs, educational opportunities, and housing assistance—as well as arts, volunteering, gardening, and more.

The aim is to better address “social drivers of health”—the many factors beyond medical care that drive health outcomes.

[Link to Source](#)

In 2024, CA for the Arts hosted a webinar series titled “Arts & Health.” The four part series featured panel discussion and was sponsored by Music Man Foundation. Recordings are available in the video library.

[Access the Video Library](#)

### **California Creative Corps**

The 2021 State Budget included \$60 million one-time General Fund allocation for the California Arts Council (CAC) to implement the California Creative Corps pilot program, a media, outreach, and engagement campaign designed to increase: (1) public health awareness messages to stop the spread of COVID-19; (2) public awareness related to water and energy conservation, climate mitigation, and emergency preparedness, relief, and recovery; (3) civic engagement, including election participation; and (4) social justice and community engagement.

The CAC awarded fourteen administering organizations to direct investments into every county across the state. As of October, 2024, the administering organizations are submitting reports to the CAC. The link below is to the grant program information page. A google search for “creative corps” will list the program pages of the administering organizations, which will provide access to a sense of the scope, scale and impact of the CA Creative Corps.

[Link to Source](#)

### **California Cultural Districts**

Originating with the adoption of Assembly Bill 189 in 2015, authored by Assemblyman Richard Bloom, the California Cultural Districts program aims to leverage the state’s artistic and cultural assets. Aligning with the mission and values of the California Arts Council, the districts will celebrate the diversity of California while unifying under an umbrella of shared values—helping to grow and sustain authentic grassroots arts and cultural opportunities, increasing the visibility of local artists and community participation in local arts and culture, and promoting socioeconomic and ethnic diversity. Currently there are fourteen state designated cultural districts.

[Link to Source](#)

### **Caltrans’ Clean California Local Grant Program**

Trash has plagued California’s streets and highways for decades. Clean California makes significant investments in litter collection, community engagement and education to ultimately transform unsightly roadsides into spaces of pride for all Californians. This is truly a statewide effort with potential projects in all 58 counties and with nearly a third of the funds going directly to cities, counties, tribes and transit agencies to clean local streets and public spaces.

[Link to Source](#)

### **Creative Youth Development Grant**

The Creative Youth Development program is rooted in the CAC’s belief that arts learning is an essential tool for healthy human development and that it should be available to all young people throughout California, including but not limited to those whose lives have been impacted or interrupted by the justice system. The CAC envisions that all of California’s young people are provided with meaningful, culturally responsive arts-learning experiences so that they can

reach their full potential. All projects may occur during or outside of traditional school hours and should take place at arts and culture venues, community centers, court/school sites, juvenile halls and camps, county-operated correctional facilities, social services agencies, and other youth-oriented settings.

[Link to Source](#)

### **Grassroots Artists Advocacy Program (GAAP)**

The Grassroots Artists Advocacy Program (GAAP) is a cohort-based fellowship program for artist advocates that live or work in Oakland or San Francisco. Artist Advocates include diverse artists, culture bearers, and creative workers with a dedicated and committed artistic or cultural practice who directly engage in advocacy and policy development to advance the holistic well-being of the field. GAAP is part of CA for the Arts' Regional Advocacy Infrastructure Network (RAIN), which seeks to reinforce advocacy capacity and efficacy at the local, state and federal levels by designing new models of collaboration at the local (county and municipal) level. In 2024-25, the program will support two cohorts of arts advocates beginning in November.

[Link to Source](#)

### **Individual Artist Fellowships program**

Through a network of regionally-based Administering Organizations (AOs), the Individual Artists Fellowship (IAF) program will continue to recognize, uplift, and celebrate the excellence of California artists practicing any art form. In doing so, the CAC will showcase the centrality of artists' leadership in guiding the evolution of our traditional and contemporary cultures.

[Link to Source](#)

### **Prop 28 – California Proposition 28, Arts and Music in Schools Funding**

On November 8, 2022, California voters approved Proposition 28: The Arts and Music in Schools (AMS) Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act. The measure required the state to establish a new, ongoing program supporting arts instruction in schools beginning in 2023–24.

The legislation allocates 1 percent of the kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) portion of the Proposition 98 funding guarantee provided in the prior fiscal year, excluding funding appropriated for the AMS education program. Local educational agencies (LEAs) with 500 or more students are required to ensure that at least 80 percent of AMS funds to be expended are used to employ certificated or classified employees to provide arts education program instruction. The remaining funds must be used for training, supplies and materials, and arts educational partnership programs, with no more than 1 percent of funds received to be used for an LEA's administrative expenses.

[Link to Source](#)

### **Regional Advocacy Infrastructure Network (RAIN)**

RAIN is a CA for the Arts program that strengthens, trains, and empowers emerging local arts advocacy networks, catalyzing constituent-driven regional policy change and local investment while building more effective and sustainable cultural advocacy infrastructure for California. Supported by Music Man Foundation as a pilot program worked with two advocacy organizations in 2023-24: the Sacramento Arts Regional Alliance (SARA) and the San Diego Regional Arts and Culture Coalition. RAIN is currently in the planning phase for further expansion.

[Link to Source](#)

### **SB 1116 - California Senate Bill 1116, Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (Sen. Anthony Portantino, 2022)**

The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund was allocated \$12.5M in the 2024-25 California state budget. It is currently under development in partnership between CA for the Arts and the California Office of Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA) and will launch in early 2025.

The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund was established to help small nonprofit performing arts organizations address the financial challenges presented by ever increasing payroll expenses. Small Nonprofit Performing Arts Organizations (SNPAOs), defined as those with annual budgets of less than \$2.5 million. Eligible SNPAOs can apply on a quarterly basis for reimbursement of a percentage of payroll expenses, including wages, workers compensation insurance, health and retirement benefits, and payroll processing fees. The percentage is based on budget size, with the smallest organizations receiving the largest percentage of reimbursement.

[Link to Source](#)

### **SB 628 - California Creative Workforce Act of 2021 (Sen. Ben Allen, 2021)**

The California Creative Workforce Act is the first legislation in the nation to establish creative arts workforce development as a state priority. Signed by Governor Newsom on October 9, 2021, the bill directs the California Arts Council to work with the California Workforce Development Board to create a program that promotes employment and “earn and learn” job training opportunities for creative workers. The bill requires the council to consult with local government, community nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions, among others, in this effort.

[Link to Source](#)

### **State and Local Partners Grant Program**

The State-Local Partners (SLP) is a program of the California Arts Council that provides general operating support and technical assistance for county-designated local arts agencies. The purpose of the program is to foster cultural development on the local level through a partnership between the State and the counties of California. The nature of this partnership includes funding, information exchange, cooperative activities, and leadership. The partnership enables individuals, organizations, and communities to create, present, and preserve the arts of all cultures to enrich the quality of life for all Californians.

[Link to Source](#)

### **Statewide & Regional Networks Grant**

**Program** The Statewide and Regional Networks (SRN) is a program of the California Arts Council. The grant program contributes to the health and vitality of the creative workforce in California by creating a resilient network of arts service organizations and artists. Applicants must be arts services organizations with statewide or regional reach.

[Link to Source](#)

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Front Row | From L: NeFesha Yisra'el, Tracy Hudak, Jennica Bisbee, Jean Young, Martha Dempson  
Back Row | From L: Teri Ball, Julie Baker, Eduardo Robles, and L.T. Martinez

# Thank You

From the team at CA for the Arts and CA Arts Advocates

