

# New Public Funding Lifeline for Small Performing Arts Organizations

SACRAMENTO , CA, UNITED STATES, February 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [California for the Arts](#) today announced a \$12.5 million grant program for small nonprofit performing arts organizations to help pay employees. The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund, funded by the State of California and administered by the California Office of the Small Business Advocate, is part of a completely new model for arts funding that is expected to provide as many as 20,000 full-time, part-time and seasonal employment opportunities annually.



Photo credit Spud Hilton courtesy of Association of California Symphony Orchestras

“California is leading the way to show continued support for our performing arts sector,” said CalOSBA Director Tara Lynn Gray. “This program makes the point that art work is indeed real work. By reimbursing payroll expenses, we are helping make sure that performers and backstage staff can bring home paychecks so that the show can go on in communities across the state.”

Designed to stave off the collapse of the live arts sector after COVID-19 and years of underinvestment, grant funds reimburse small nonprofit performing arts organizations for payroll expenses for anyone hired as an employee, including actors, musicians, technical staff, directors, choreographers, designers and administrative staff.

“We’ve seen entire communities revitalized by a robust arts scene, and the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund is going to help that happen in towns big and small, all over the state. Investing in local theatres means investing in local economies. Studies show that the average nonprofit theatergoer spends about \$38 more than their ticket on their night out. When we can ensure that these theatres have the budgets to pay more workers living wages, the artists thrive, but beyond that, everyone feels it,” said Brooke Shields, president of Actors’ Equity Association. “Equity is so grateful that the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund can finally begin its important work of ensuring that more of our members, and other arts workers, can earn living

wages plying their craft in California."

Approximately 300 organizations in the state, including nonprofit theater companies, dance companies, choral groups, presenting organizations, performance venues and local arts councils that present or produce performances, are expected to receive funding. To alert nonprofit organizations to the opportunity, California for the Arts is partnering with organizations including Arts Council of Kern, Arts Orange County, Association of California Symphony Orchestras, Dance Resource Center, Dancers' Group, Fulcrum Arts, Latino Theater Company at LATC, North County Coalition for the Arts, Playhouse Arts, Riverside Arts Council, San Diego Performing Arts League, Stanislaus Arts Council, SV Creates, Theatre Bay Area, Theater Producers of Southern California and Ventura Arts Council.

"We need every small performing arts organization in California to know about the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund. This is a lifeline for small arts organizations, designed to give our creative workforce a boost before it's too late," said Julie Baker, CEO of California for the Arts. "People think that the entertainment industry is Hollywood, but it's California's entire creative ecosystem that makes the state a national arts leader and drives our economy. Today we celebrate a major investment in California's creative future."

#### ABOUT THE PERFORMING ARTS EQUITABLE PAYROLL FUND

The Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund, also known as S.B. 1116, will help stabilize the live performing arts sector, stimulate state and local economies, and create and sustain jobs. It directs funding to where it is most needed by providing 80% reimbursement of eligible payroll expenses to the smallest and most vulnerable nonprofit performing arts organizations, gradually decreasing to 20% for organizations with up to \$2 million in adjusted gross revenue.

Nonprofits can register for informational webinars about the program on the [California for the Arts website](#), and applications open in early March 2025. Funding is first-come, first-served, so organizations are encouraged to prepare their applications in advance.

#### ABOUT THE LIVE ARTS

The performing arts sector has always been uniquely positioned to create jobs, enhance tourism and make communities better places to live, work and visit. A [2023 study](#) found that in California, every 100 performing arts jobs support an additional 156 jobs in other sectors. Each performing arts job results in \$13,287 additional state and local tax revenue.

Since 2020, California for the Arts has worked with a broad coalition of arts and culture workers, labor unions, producers, nonprofits, live entertainment venues, and music, film, tv and movie theater representatives on public policies and resources to ensure the recovery and sustainability of the creative industries. While some parts of the arts and culture ecosystem have recovered from the impact of COVID-19, many have not. Nonprofit performing arts organizations

continue to struggle with reduced income from ticket sales, and increasing costs related to inflation, AB 5 compliance and higher rents, and many are shuttering. A groundbreaking policy innovation to support live arts workers at smaller nonprofit companies, the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund was approved with strong, bipartisan support.

Visit the California for the Arts website for more information.

## ABOUT CALIFORNIA FOR THE ARTS

California for the Arts is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary advocacy service organization focused on building resources and public awareness of the value and impact of arts, culture, and creativity across California. Learn more at [www.caforthearts.org](http://www.caforthearts.org).

Nerissa Silao  
Haines & Co.  
+1 310-874-9230  
nerissas@ca.rr.com

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/784733256>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.