



Council Votes Unanimously to Approve Allocations for 2026 Grant Program Awards

State invests nearly \$24.6 million for 1,200 grants to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations throughout California

SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES, August 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The California Arts Council voted at its business meeting last Friday, August 14 in San Rafael to allocate nearly \$24.6 million in program funds for 1,200 grant awards, supporting nonprofit organizations and units of government across the state.

The unanimous vote by Council distributes monies across six programs supporting general operations and projects for arts and cultural organizations, youth programs, community collaborations, and local arts agencies and infrastructure.

The Council maintains general oversight of the agency's local assistance program policy and annual appropriations. As in the FY25-26 grant season, members chose to maintain consistency in available programming to facilitate reliable data collection for better policy-making, as well as retain their prioritization of small organizations, first-time grantees, and communities in low Healthy Places Index quartiles.

This model aimed to boost funding for priority applicants through a transparent decision support tool that centers place-based work in under-resourced neighborhoods. Funding levels were established at \$30,000 for operations and \$25,000 for project-based grants, supported by simplified application forms.

The success of this refined strategy, in combination with agency outreach and a \$4 million reinstatement of local assistance funds by the FY26-27 state budget, was demonstrated in the data from this year's overall pool of grant applicants and organizations selected for award: Fifty-three percent of all eligible 2026 applicants had total operating revenues below the \$250,000 threshold. Forty-four percent serviced areas inside the lower Healthy Places Index (HPI) quartiles, and 39 percent had never before received a grant from the CAC.

Of the organizations awarded, nine out of ten met one or more of those priorities established by Council, with 41 percent as first-time CAC grant recipients, 63 percent serving HPI lower quartiles, and 72 percent with operating revenues under \$250,000.

"This year's grant cycle has made every effort to maximize access to funding and distributing our resources where we hope they are most needed," said Council Chair Roxanne Messina Captor. "This work utilizes one of the most powerful tools at our disposal to build a stronger, more vibrant California for everyone and ensures that our state's creative sector can experience meaningful and long-lasting growth."

"I'm delighted to usher us into another year of investment into uplifting the extraordinary cultural and creative expression of California, and with immense gratitude for Governor Newsom and the Legislature's increase. As responsible stewards of these funds, we are proud to partner with our 2026 grant award recipients in providing free and low-cost access to exemplary arts programs that serve all Californians and will resonate throughout our communities today and into the future," said CAC Executive Director Danielle Brazell.

Additional funding details, including organization names, award amounts, locations, project descriptions and more will be made available in a further announcement this fall highlighting the work of the CAC's 2026 grantees.

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