



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Ashleigh Kanat
Director, Economic &
Workforce Development
Department

SUBJECT: FY 2023-24 Informational Report on
Oakland Cultural Affairs Division's
Operations

DATE: April 11, 2023

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (May 1, 2024 12:25 PDT)

Date: May 1, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report From The Oakland Cultural Affairs Division On The Status Of Its FY 2023-24 Operations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This informational report represents an update to the Life Enrichment Committee to apprise the City Council and the public on the operations of the Cultural Affairs Division (CAD) of the Economic & Workforce Development Department (EWDD), including its programs and the activities of the volunteer-based advisory body Cultural Affairs Commission for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The Cultural Affairs Division leads with the value of “Belonging in Oakland” which informs the work, purpose, and vision of its staff as public servants operating within a public agency.

The CAD, housed in EWDD, has a mission to increase investment in the City of Oakland (“City” or “Oakland”) in a way that contributes to the growth of the City’s economy, fosters fiscal sustainability, expands job opportunities for all Oakland residents, and enhances the City’s sense of place and quality of life.

The Cultural Affairs Division includes:

- the Cultural Funding Program, which provides funding for the following initiatives: approximately \$1.3 million in grants to support the arts in Oakland;

- the Public Art Program, which has more than \$1 million in funds currently dedicated for public art installations across Oakland;
- professional development opportunities for artists and arts organizations;
- policy research and advocacy; and
- philanthropic partnerships.

The CAD forms strategic alliances between business, government agencies, and private philanthropy that support programs that advance the civic life of Oakland. The Cultural Affairs Commission and the Public Art Advisory Committee are volunteer advisory bodies, whose members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, and who advise the Division on cultural policy matters.

In 2017, the CAD embarked on the development of "Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan"¹— the City's first cultural plan adopted by City Council in 30 years. The Plan's introduction describes the process as being a "journey of celebration and reflection as we identified our assets and shortfalls. It has been an undertaking that has been both telescopic and microscopic in its process: we hosted community meetings, met with civic leaders, conducted research into the economic and social impact of the arts, surveyed the public, and met with our grantees. We listened, looked, and learned about the many ways Oaklanders express themselves," said Roberto Bedoya.

The Plan generated the tag 'Culture is the Frame, Equity is the Driving force and Belonging is the Goal,' which operates as a guide to how the CAD does its work. The Oakland Cultural Plan is a national model that generated the 'North Star of Belonging', that speaks to Oakland's distinctiveness and identity that exists in the nexus of our Civic Body (policy, governance, and the public realm) and Creative Practice (how we imagine our lives together through stories, sound, music, images, and design), as a guide.

The Plan revealed how Oaklanders find deep meaning in being able to live in an equitable society. Living in an ethically just and aesthetically diverse and rich city is the democratic charge we must address. To that end, the Plan's orientation to equity and culture feeds an action agenda that entails a behavioral shift: one that sees the CAD's embrace of connectedness and intersectionality as key to realizing belonging. The work of the CAD is to serve the civic narrative of belonging in all its beauty, temperaments, and complexities.

OVERVIEW OF CAD PROGRAMS

The following programs executed by the Cultural Affairs Division help advance the citywide priority of **economic and cultural security**. By supporting Oakland Creatives, this workforce will build social cohesion and foster security and belonging through civic engagement activities.

¹ [City of Oakland | City of Oakland Cultural Plan released in September... \(oaklandca.gov\)](#)

Cultural Funding Program Overview

The Cultural Funding Program was established by the City Council in 1985 as the City's mechanism to support Oakland-based nonprofit arts and cultural organizations through an annual competitive application process. These grants infuse Oakland's neighborhoods with arts and cultural activities that increase exposure to, understanding of, and respect for diverse cultural heritages, support arts activities that engage the community, and support hands-on arts instruction in Oakland's public schools. In the past five years, the Cultural Funding Program has awarded an average of \$1.373M to Oakland artists and arts organizations annually.

Cultural Funding Program staff strive to have a diverse team of community members to serve as panelists - representing various ages, backgrounds, races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, and professions to help City staff evaluate each grant category. The grant review panelists have been selected for their expertise relevant to each grant category. Applicants receive the biographies of each panelist the day prior to the public review panels. As part of the review process, applicants have the opportunity to address the panel for three-minutes. Oakland's Cultural Funding Program is one of the only local grant-making agencies in the State that allows applicants to address the community peer reviewed panel. The applicant's three-minute address is used to clarify any questions or misinterpretations that the applicant may have heard during the panel discussion.

For FY 2023-24, the Cultural Funding Program provided grants in three categories:

Cultural Organizational Assistance (Two Year Grant) provides general operating support to established, primary arts organizations. To be eligible, an organization must have received Cultural Funding Program funding in two of the past four consecutive funding cycles.

Neighborhood Voices for Festivals builds belonging within the dynamic neighborhoods of the City by supporting culturally engaging efforts to bring our community members together through festival culture. Festivals to be supported may include, but are not limited to: block parties, parades, performances in poetry, dance, music or theater, visual art, and literary presentations, that are rooted in a sense of place.

Networks of Care: Teaching Artist Support Grants provides organizations funding for Teaching Artists conducting arts instruction for Oakland youth. The program awards grants of \$10,000 to Oakland-based non-profit organizations to supplement current teaching artist salaries, and/or provide them with professional development opportunities to advance how we care for ourselves, and one another.

Due to budget cuts across the City in FY 2023-24, the Cultural Funding General Fund Allocation was reduced from \$1.5M in FY 2022-23, to \$884,096 for FY 2023-24. This significant drop (representing a 41% decrease) in funding resulted in the elimination of two grant categories, including Neighborhood Voices for Organization Projects and Neighborhood Voices for Individual Artists.

Table 1: FY 2023-24 (Year to Date) Cultural Funding Program Grant Statistics

FY 2023-24 Funding Category	No. of Applications Received	Total Awards	% of Applications Awarded	Average Award Amount	Amount Awarded
Organizational Assistance	31	27	87%	\$30,000.00	\$810,000.00
Neighborhood Voices for Festivals	58	33	57%	\$15,588.24	\$517,000.00
Networks of Care: Teaching Artist Grants (Pending Approval)	36	15	42%	\$10,000.00	\$150,000.00
GRANTMAKING TOTAL	125	75	62%	\$18,529.41	\$1,477,000.00

Public Art Program Overview

Oakland’s Public Art Program provides oversight and guidance on best practices for public art in the City and commissions original works of art for public spaces throughout Oakland.

Informed by the Oakland Cultural Plan, “Belonging in Oakland,” the program enriches the City’s visual environment; integrates the creative thinking of artists into our communities, public spaces and new construction projects; provides career opportunities for professional artists and a means for residents and visitors to enjoy and experience the cultural diversity of Oakland. Public Art Program staff act as Program and Collections managers, facilitators and artist advocates for projects on public property (e.g. City/Caltrans/BART) and Oakland Municipal Code (OMC) mandated Public Art Projects for Private Property, with guidance and support from the PAAC. Key program oversight responsibilities include:

- City Managed CIP Public Art Projects funded through a 1.5% allocation from all eligible City capital improvement projects (CIP), eligible grant revenue as well as private contributions. In 1989, the City adopted Ordinance No. 11086 C.M.S. (amended in 2019: Ordinance No. 13562 C.M.S.) authorizing the allocation of 1.5% of municipal capital improvement project (CIP) costs to commission and acquire public art
- Public Art for Private Development Projects funded through the 2014 OMC adopted requirement for 0.5% of residential or 1% of nonresidential private development costs.
- In June of 2018, the municipal code was amended to adopt Chapter 15.78, Public Art Requirements for Private Development (Ordinance No. 13491 C.M.S.)
- Civic Art Collection Records and Maintenance monitoring and assessment of City commissioned permanent artworks, as needed
- Temporary/Permanent City-Funded Artist and Community Initiated Projects commissioned as funding becomes available; facilitated in collaboration with other departments and reviewed for completeness and feasibility with City requirements.

- Artists' Professional Development and Workshops provided by City staff to local artists for new CIP opportunities, and through partnerships with local organizational stakeholders and regional trainings with public art programs in nearby cities.
- Public Art Advisory Committee Staff to PAAC prepare agendas and minutes and facilitate presentations for the monthly meetings of the nine-member advisory group.

FY 2023-24 Public Art Activities

- **Public Art Artist Workshops:** Completed a series of public art professional development workshops for 147 artists with **Cultural Strategist-in-Government for Public Art** Sorell Raino-Tsui to provide new, equitable access to upcoming public art opportunities in the city. Covered best practices in applying for City projects, preparing proposals, developing budgets, managing contracts and working with collaborators, including site visits to local, Oakland fabricators studios. The 78 Oakland artists who completed the entire workshop series will automatically be eligible for the 2024 pre-qualified artist pool.
- **CIP Program: Public Art Pre-Qualified Artist Pool Planning and Recruitment:**
 - Facilitated artist selection for Tyrone Carney Memorial Park Project (Artists Dana King and Cjay Roughgarden)
 - Completed recruitment process to hire new public art staff to assist with launch and recruitment of artists for upcoming mural and City-funded capital projects, including but not limited to: Mosswood Recreation Center, 14th Street Streetscape Project, DeFremery Park Project, Estuary Park Project, Lincoln Recreation Center, Fire Station 29, Council District Mural Projects
- **Public Art for Private Development** Facilitated review and project compliance for over fifteen residential and commercial developments including but not limited to:
 - 95th & International (Artist June Grant), Coliseum Self Storage (Artist Illuminaries), UC Benioff / Children's Hospital (Artist Walter Hood), 5441 International (Artist David Ruth), One Piedmont (Artist Leah Rosengberg), 2121 Wood Street (Artist Eric Powell), 412 Madison (Artist Shawn Hibmacronan), Arthaus Jack London (Artist Fernanda Martinez), Marriott Residence Inn (Artist Kenturah Davis), 1900 Broadway (Artist Woody De Othello), Ancora Place / 2227 International Ave. (Artists Tommy Wong/Civic Design Studio & Leslie Lopez), Samuel Merritt College (Artists Hughen Starkweather), 1510 Webster (Artist Shogun Shido and ABG Art Group), Phoenix Housing Project for 81 Pine St. (Artists Timothy B and Zoe Boston with BAMP), 101 E. 12th (Artist Craig Dougherty), 3550 International / Native American Health Center Project (Artist Tommy Wong/ Civic Design Studio and Francisco Sanchez).
 - Commenced planning with Oakland Housing & Community Development (OCHD) for 2024 Public Art in Affordable Housing Workshops.
- **Artist-Community Initiated Projects** Facilitated permitting and design review in partnership with Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development (OPRYD) and Oakland Department of Transportation (DOT) staff for nine murals and temporary projects throughout Oakland including but not limited to:

- The Sunflower Path Stairs Mural Project (Artist Collaborative with Mona Sani and Thitiwat Phromratanapongse), Dimond Park and Studio Naga (Artist Deb Koppman), 8th Street Traffic Calming Utility Box Project (Artists Refa One, Andre Jones and Ashley Cousin, Nyia Luna), Joaquin Miller Park Restroom Murals (Artists Cece Carpio, Kristi Holohan), Dimond Gateway Sculpture (Artist Andrea Bacigalupo), and Peralta Hacienda Historical Park (Artists Linda Yamane and Walter Hood).

Special Programs Overview

The following special programs of the CAD were designed to support Oakland's individual artists and arts organizations, who are desperate for resources that will allow them to continue operating in Oakland and contribute to Oakland's captivating vibrancy. Most of the funds needed to support these programs are the result of the CAD Manager's fundraising efforts and professional relationships.

Just City Cultural Fund

Belonging in Oakland: A Just City Cultural Fund (JCCF) is a public-private funding collaborative of CAD, the East Bay Community Foundation, and the Akonadi Foundation focused on supporting deeply-rooted Oakland BIPOC artists and cultural practitioners to imagine with their communities an Oakland where everyone belongs. The brainchild of CAD's manager, the JCCF was made possible with an initial \$1.2M, three-year investment from the Surdna Foundation's national initiative, *Radical Imagination for Racial Justice*, and additional funding from the East Bay Community and Akonadi foundations.

Launched at the beginning of the COVID lockdown and administered as the racial reckoning unfolded, the JCCF made 12 grants of \$25,000 to artists and arts organizations to "reflect & reimagine" what a just Oakland could look like. The CAD served as an advisor to the JCCF, therefore grants did not have to be approved by Oakland City Council. In 2021, eight two-year grants totaling nearly \$800,000 were awarded to projects that: shift narratives about Black fathers; restore Indigenous visions of the land; elevate Black joy and Black genius; reimagine public spaces for under-served communities; envision Oakland as a hub for radical reparations; reclaim knowledge and healing traditions of Two Spirit people; activate the creativity and agency of unhoused Oaklanders; and lift courageous conversations of Black women and other marginalized voices. In 2023, the JCCF was awarded \$2.8M from Surdna for an additional six years of programming.

Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program

In accordance with the City's Cultural Development Plan (see p. 92 of the plan)², the CAD created and implemented the pilot program, *Cultural Strategists-in-Government (CSIG)*, in FY 2018-19/FY 2019-20 with City funding. The CSIG Program seeks to co-create new ways of fulfilling equity aspirations by having City workers collaborate with cultural strategists from communities most impacted by inequities and who can bring a new lens to the work of building a fair and just city for all Oaklanders.

² cao-94612.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/documents/Cultural-Plan-9.24-online.pdf

In its pilot iteration, the CSIG Program embedded six CSIGs into five City entities—i.e., Department of Race & Equity, Oakland Department of Transportation, Human Services Department, Office of the Mayor (Housing Security), and the Planning & Building Department. After addressing rapid relief efforts for the cultural sector in response to the pandemic, the CAD Manager was able to partner with The Oakland Fund for Public Innovation to secure a \$900,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to expand the program to place CSIGs in 11 different City entities with a more robust CSIG fee structure (4x that of the pilot program). The City entities who collaborated with CSIGs in its second round included: African American Museum and Library at Oakland, Department of Race and Equity, Oakland Department of Transportation, Department of Violence Prevention, Economic and EWDD (Public Art), Human Services Department (Head Start), Office of the City Administrator (Communications), Oakland Public Works (Environmental Services Division), Office of the City Council President, Office of the Mayor (AssistHub), and Planning & Building Department.

An aim of the program is to demonstrate the value of embedding cultural strategists in government to advance the City's equity agenda. The program attracted attention from other municipalities and ran its second iteration through 2023.

In 2024, CAD launched the third cycle of this innovative model of strengthening belonging, trust and equity through the nation-leading Cultural Strategist-in-Government program. The ongoing partnership between the CAD and the Oakland Fund for Public Innovation successfully secured new financial support in the amount of \$500,000 through the Bay Area Creative Corps funding program, a partnership of the California Arts Council and the San Francisco Foundation.

On the heels of nearly a dozen successful projects - including a new comprehensive professional development workshop series for under-represented public artists, a "love acknowledgment" inspired by the City's motto that opens public meetings, and deeper understanding by City leaders of resident experiences and challenges with city services - culminating in 2023, the six 2024 Cultural Strategists bring new perspectives and creative thinking to help City staff address some of the greatest problems faced by Oakland's diverse communities. These projects represent a unique approach to civic engagement through collaborative efforts to address issues that include school absenteeism, public safety, and cultural legacy in a shifting city.

In 2024, the program placed six Cultural Strategists in City departments and the offices of elected officials, including the Mayor's office. Their projects will focus on the neighborhoods that are most impacted by the negative outcomes of inequity. It also contributes to the stabilization and growth of Oakland's arts and culture workforce through funding, professional development and exposure. Cultural Strategists are people who work or live in the realm of culture, art making, or traditional and aesthetic practices, and who intentionally bring these unique skill sets, methods and perspectives to bear on challenging civic, social and economic problems. For 2024, the Cultural Strategist placements are:

- Elo Almaraz working with the office of Councilmember Fortunato Bas, District 2

- Rashida Chase working with the office of Councilmember Fife, District 3
- Charles Johnson working with the office of Councilmember Reid, District 7
- Corey Johnson working with the office of the Mayor
- YaVette Holts working with Business Development
- Noel Anaya working with Citywide Communications

Oakland Poet Laureate Program

In 2021 the City's Cultural Affairs Commission supported the research, development, and launch of the first Oakland Poet Laureate Program for Oakland residents ages 18+. Twenty-five applications were submitted but ultimately Ayodele Nzinga was selected to serve in this two-year role. The program was created through in-kind donations and City-funding.

The Commission's action is in response to a long-held community desire for a program to celebrate the beauty, diversity, resilience, and brilliance of Oakland and its residents. Cities and counties throughout the Bay Area, such as San Francisco, Santa Clara County, El Cerrito, and Richmond have a Poet Laureate program, served as models for this new program. A panel of five members of Oakland's literary community using the following criteria to rate and rank applications:

- Understanding of the multiplicity of the aesthetic speeches of the city and consideration of the ways literature, heritage practices, film, arts practices, etc. illuminate how Oaklanders express their poetic souls.
- Command of poetry as a craft.
- Affirmation of a poetic voice that expresses Oakland's diversity, beauty, and distinctions.
- Community engagement experience and ability to communicate well across a diverse range of communities.
- Understanding of civic narratives around equity, culture, and belonging.

Ayodele Nzinga was reappointed to the Poet Laureate position with her term ending December 2024.

Cultural Affairs Commission

The Cultural Affairs Commission was established by Ordinance No. 9969 C.M.S. in 1990 and was re-established by Ordinance 13561 C.M.S. in 2019, with new members appointed by City Council in February 2020.

The Cultural Affairs Commission members are the eyes and ears for the City— elevating the opportunities and surfacing the needs and barriers for the many voices who represent the diversity of the residents of Oakland that are heard through cultural institutions and the work of artists/performers, etc. They do this work as members of the community by supporting and publicizing the work of the CAD to the community and the needs of the CAD to the Mayor, City Administrator and Councilmembers. We advocate for the allocation of the needed funding and resources for the CAD to work effectively and reach the goals of the Cultural Plan and serve the residents of Oakland. Commissioners, like other public servants in Oakland are required to complete a Form 700, comply with the City's ethics policies, and take an oath of office.

In 2024 four new commissioners were appointed to fill vacancies created by term limits or resignations. Vanessa Whang was appointed as the new chair.

Oakland’s approved cultural plan *Belonging in Oakland* sets the framework and goals for the Cultural Affairs Commission’s work. This document emphasizes cultural spaces, neighborhood places, and the civic cultural commons. In order to fulfill the vision of the cultural plan it is necessary to work across government and collaboratively with City colleagues to promote culture equity. The Cultural Affairs Commission tries to build working relations with other commissions and City departments whose work overlaps engages the cultural sector. The Cultural Affairs Commission offers advice, holds up best practices in the field, and partners with others to develop policy, build cultural infrastructure and opportunities that enhance the feeling of belonging in our city.

Update on Staffing

The following is a summary of the status of all the CAD positions, with the CAD currently experiencing a 38.5% vacancy rate.

Table 2: Cultural Affairs Division Staffing

Position	Budgeted	Filled	Vacant
Manager	1	1	0
Program Analyst III (Public Art)	1	1	0
Program Analyst III (Cultural Funding Program)	1	1	0
Program Analyst II (Admin/Cultural Affairs Commission)	1	0	1
Program Analyst II (Public Art)	1	1	0
Program Analyst II (Cultural Funding Program)	1	0	1
Program Analyst II PPT (Admin)	0.5	0	0.5
Total	6.5	4	2.5

FISCAL IMPACT

This item is for informational purposes only and does not have a direct fiscal impact or cost.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

This item is for informational purposes only and did not require public outreach.

COORDINATION

This report has been reviewed by the Office of the City Attorney and the Budget Bureau.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: This item is for informational purposes only and has no economic impact.

Environmental: This item is for informational purposes only and has no environmental impact.

Race & Equity: In 2015, the City adopted a bold Ordinance No. 13319 C.M.S. that states explicitly the government's will to integrate "the principle of 'fair and just' in all the City does in order to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities" on a Citywide basis. The goals of this ordinance form the foundation of Oakland's Cultural Plan *Belonging in Oakland* with the tagline "Equity is the Driving Force. Culture is the Frame. Belonging is the Goal."

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report From The Oakland Cultural Affairs Division On The Status Of Its FY 2023-24 Operations.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Roberto Bedoya, Cultural Affairs Manager at (510) 238-2136.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashleigh Kanat

Ashleigh Kanat (Apr 30, 2024 12:55 PDT)

ASHLEIGH KANAT
Director, Economic & Workforce Development
Department

Reviewed by:
Roberto Bedoya, Cultural Affairs Manager

Prepared by:
Raquel Iglesias, Cultural Funding Coordinator
Kristen Zaremba, Public Art Coordinator
Cultural Affairs Division