

AGENDA REPORT



TO: The Honorable City Council

FROM: Councilmember Fife and
Economic and Workforce
Development Department

SUBJECT: FY2025-27 Budget Amendment
Cultural Affairs Manager

DATE: October 16, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

Councilmember Fife and the Economic and Workforce Development Department Recommend That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Amending Resolution No. [90827 C.M.S.](#) Which Adopted The City Of Oakland Biennial Budget For Fiscal Years 2025-27, To Reallocate Funding From the General Purpose Fund, Non-Departmental To Add One (1.0) Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Cultural Affairs Manager Position In The Economic & Workforce Development Department As Set Forth In Exhibit 1.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Councilmember Fife and the Economic and Workforce Development Department request Council approval to amend the FY 2025-27 Biennial Budget to add (1.0) FTE Cultural Affairs Manager, restoring the position that was eliminated when the Budget was adopted. This senior-level position plays a critical role within the City and the Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD). It oversees the Cultural Affairs Division (CAD) and is charged with supporting and protecting Oakland's diverse artistic and cultural communities.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The Cultural Affairs Unit (CAD) is a division within the Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) and is currently staffed by four (4.0) FTE positions. Most broadly, the CAD is responsible for managing the City's cultural funding programs, providing grant funds to artists, cultural organizations, and community festivals and events, and overseeing the City's public art programs. In the current budget cycle (FY 2025-27), the CAD will also advance many Council priorities and adopted policies, including designing a new Cultural Districts Program and managing grant awards for critical City cultural institutions consistent with the adopted budget.

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The CAD will continue to help administrator Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) funding for fairs and festivals in alignment with Council priorities for entertainment and activation. Public Art staff will advance public art projects related to City capital projects and private development, consistent with City's public art requirements and continue to manage the City's Civic Art Collection. The Division will also work to raise additional philanthropic and government funding to serve Oakland's arts and culture community.

Together the CAD manages approximate \$6.56 million in City resources, including \$3.7 million in grant subsidies to cultural institutions, \$600,000 in contracts serving the cultural community, and \$575,000 in operations and maintenance funding.

On June 11, 2025, the City Council approved Resolution No. 90827 C.M.S, adopting the Biennial Budget for FY 2025-27. The Cultural Affairs Manager position was eliminated as part of that action. Management of the Division continued under the direction of an Interim Manager, working as an Exempt Limited Duration Employee, whose term expires in November 2025. This Resolution identifies funding and amends the FY 2025-27 Budget to restore the Cultural Affairs Manager position.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Restoring the Cultural Affairs Manager position will ensure dedicated and expert leadership to guide critical programs and initiatives consistent with the City's adopted budget and policies. More specific examples of these programs include:

- Cultural support programs to support artists and cultural organizations through grantmaking (when funding is available), technical assistance, and resource referrals
- The Public Art Program, enhancing the visual landscape of the City through creative expression
- Partnerships with local cultural institutions, including the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA), Children's Fairyland, Chabot Space & Science Center, and the Oakland Asian Cultural Center
- The Just City Cultural Fund, a funding partnership between the City of Oakland and local philanthropic organizations including the Akonadi Foundation and the East Bay Community Foundation
- The Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program, embedding artists within City departments to inform public policy
- Development and implementation of a cultural districts program to help celebrate and sustain Oakland's cultural identity
- Staffing of the City's Cultural Affairs Commission and Public Art Advisory Committee.

Restoring the Cultural Affairs Manager position will provide the leadership needed to coordinate these efforts. It will bring focused attention to shaping and implementing policies and programs that preserve, support, and elevate Oakland's diverse artistic and cultural communities, in alignment with the City's economic development priorities. By restoring this position, the City will be better positioned to attract philanthropic investment and align cultural programming with Council priorities.

The recommended action supports the Citywide priority of **housing, economic, and cultural security** by funding the position directly responsible protecting and supporting Oakland's cultural communities and growing Oakland's creative sector, a major driver of economic activity in Oakland.

Alternatively, the Council could vote against the recommendation, which would mean there would not be funding for the Cultural Affairs Manager position, and the City of Oakland would not have dedicated leadership focused on arts and culture.

FISCAL IMPACT

The annual cost of adding one (1.0) FTE Cultural Affairs Manager, fully burdened is \$293,616. The FY 2025-27 Adopted Biennial budget included \$1,490,000 for the purpose of 'preventing the layoff or salary reduction of an estimated 8.0 FTE positions.' Following the implementation of the adopted budget, staff reconciled these funds and determined that there was a residual balance of \$325,369. These funds are available in the General Purpose Fund, Non-departmental budget and can be used to support the restoration of the Cultural Affairs Manager position (1.0) FTE, see Exhibit 1 to the report.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

No specific public outreach was undertaken in development of this resolution, but in response to the elimination of the position, hundreds of artists, culture workers, and advocates from Oakland's arts community spoke at Council meetings, expressing the need for the position.

COORDINATION

Councilmember Fife and Economic & Workforce Development Department coordinated with the City Administrator's Office, Department of Finance, and Office of the City Attorney on the production of this report.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The addition of this position will support Oakland's creative economy, which provides jobs, attracts visitors and sustains small businesses.

Environmental: There are no direct environmental impacts.

Race and Equity: The position will support the City's cultural equity goals by working to ensure that programs and resources are distributed more fairly across communities.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Councilmember Fife and the Economic and Workforce Development Department Recommend That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Amending Resolution No. [90827 C.M.S.](#) Which Adopted The City Of Oakland Biennial Budget For Fiscal Years 2025-27, To Reallocate Funding From the General Purpose Fund, Non-Departmental To Add One (1.0) Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Cultural Affairs Manager Position In The Economic & Workforce Development Department As Set Forth In Exhibit 1.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Ashleigh Kanat, Director of Economic and Workforce Development Department at AKanat@Oaklandca.gov and Rediat Bayeh, Policy Director for Councilmember Carroll Fife at RBayeh@Oaklandca.gov.

Respectfully submitted,



Councilmember Carroll Fife, District 3



Ashleigh Kanat (Oct 14, 2025 10:20:47 PDT)

Ashleigh Kanat, Director
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