



A packed house enjoying a live performance at the Levitt Pavilion, which is one of many attractions that helped the Arlington Cultural Arts District gain official TCA designation as a cultural district.

Photo by Emile Diou, provided by the Arlington Cultural Arts District.

New Grants and Cultural Districts Approved

On September 7, TCA Commissioners approved funding of 974 grants in the first funding round for fiscal year 2017. The grants total over \$7 million and will go to nonprofits and units of government in 120 cities. These grants include the Arts Create program, which provides operational support to established arts organizations; the Arts Respond Cultural District Project grants; the first of two funding rounds for the Arts Respond Project program; the quarterly Arts Respond Performance Support program; and the quarterly Commission Initiatives and Designated Funding category. **TCA's full list of fiscal year 2017 grants is [here](#).**

TCA Commissioners also approved the designation of seven new cultural districts. Cultural districts are special zones that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization. These districts can become focal points for generating business, attracting tourists, stimulating cultural development and fostering civic pride. The new cultural districts are the Amarillo Cultural District, the Arlington Cultural Arts District, the Downtown Plano Cultural District, the Rockport Cultural Arts District, the Salado Art and Cultural District, the Texarkana Arts and Historical District and the Waco Downtown Cultural District. These designations bring the total number of [cultural districts in Texas](#) to 35.

[Arts Create](#) grants provide year-round operational support to Texas arts organizations with budgets over \$50,000. This grant category also provides funding to be subgranted on a local level by local arts organizations with a proven track record of grant making. For fiscal year 2017, 397 Arts Create grants totaling \$3.3 million are allocated to 382 organizations in 73 Texas cities.

[Arts Respond Cultural District Project](#) grants support projects that use the arts to diversify local economies, generate revenue, and attract visitors and investment through significant cultural tourism projects. These grants are available only to arts organizations and government entities verified as based in TCA-designated cultural districts. For fiscal year 2017, 17 applicants from 12 different cultural districts in eight Texas cities will receive funding totaling \$2.8 million.

[Arts Respond Project](#) grants fund arts-based projects that address one of the priority areas of economic development; education; health and human services; natural resources and agriculture; or public safety and criminal justice. For the first round of these grants for fiscal year 2017, applications came from 305 arts organizations in 61 cities. 413 grants are approved to receive a total of \$730,658 in this program.

[Arts Respond Performance Support](#) grants provide partial support to help applicants host an artist from the [Texas Touring Roster](#) in their community. The 144 grants for this quarter total \$178,641 and will go to 99 organizations and units of government in 65 Texas cities.

The [Designated Funding and Commission Initiatives](#) grants for this quarter include a grant to support hosting a national arts conference in Austin, and funding received from the National Endowment for the Arts to conduct two regional convenings with the Texas arts field, and to conduct the [Poetry Out Loud](#) high school competition in Texas. These three grants total \$31,000.

Grant Reports Due September 30

If your organization received a grant from TCA for fiscal year 2017 (September 1, 2016-August 31, 2017), you will have some paperwork to do before your new grant(s) can be paid.

Online reports are due for grant activities that ended as TCA's prior fiscal year (September 1, 2015-August 31, 2016) concluded. All Arts Create, Arts Respond Project, and Arts Respond Cultural District Project grant report forms for fiscal year 2016 should be completed and submitted online by September 30, 2016. **Grant reports must be submitted and complete before new grants will be paid. Please note that the data collected from these reports is provided to the State of Texas and the National Endowment for the Arts as TCA's main funders. Receiving your complete report on time with appropriate supporting documentation helps TCA make a case for the amount of dollars it receives for its grant budget.**

State Artist Nominations

The Texas Commission on the Arts is now accepting [nominations](#) for the 2017 and 2018 Texas State Artists. Nominations are accepted for Texas State Musician, Texas Poet Laureate, Texas State Two-Dimensional Artist (visual arts), and Texas State Three-Dimensional Artist (visual arts). Any Texas citizen is able to nominate a living artist in any of the four categories and self-nominations



2016 Texas State Musician Joe Ely

are welcome. Nominees must be native Texans or have resided in the state for at least five years. They must have attained the highest levels of excellence and success in their respective disciplines and earned a statewide, regional or national reputation for their high caliber work. **Nominations will be accepted online through October 15, 2016.** The Texas Poet Laureate, State Musician and State Artist Committee, composed of members appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, will make the final selections for the Legislature's consideration and approval in spring 2017. Each individual nominee will be evaluated by the panel based on the artistic quality of their work, not on the

number of nominations they received.

The positions, created by SB 1043 of the 77th Legislature, are filled for one-year terms. The eight appointees for 2015 and 2016 were selected for the exceptional quality of their work and for their outstanding commitment to the arts in Texas. Each Texas State Artist reflects the state's diversity and high-quality artistic offerings. The 2015 appointees are Texas Poet Laureate Dr. Carmen Tafolla of San Antonio, Texas State Musician Jimmie Vaughan of Austin, Texas State Two-Dimensional Artist Vincent Valdez of San Antonio, and Texas State Three-Dimensional Artist Margo Sawyer of Elgin. The 2016 appointees are Texas Poet Laureate Laurie Ann Guerrero of San Antonio, Texas State Musician Joe Ely of Austin, Texas State Two-Dimensional Artist Dornith Doherty of Southlake, and Texas State Three-Dimensional Artist Dario Robleto of Houston.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the Texas State Artists nomination process and to submit nominations.

TCA Proposes Grant Program Rule Changes

At the September 7 Commission meeting, TCA staff proposed a number of changes to the agency's grant guidelines, and received approval from Commissioners to post the changes to the Texas Register for public comment.

The proposed changes are:

- To end the [Arts Create Subgranting](#) program
- To change the application limit for [Arts Respond Projects](#) from two applications to one per deadline
- To classify all arts organizations with budgets under \$50,000 into verified and unverified based on whether they filed with the IRS using a Form 990 or a Form 990-EZ (which both include financial data) or an e-postcard 990-N (which contains no financial data)
- To update the eligibility rules for [Arts Respond Projects](#) specifying that arts organizations with budgets under \$50,000 must have verified budgets to apply.
- To cap the maximum request amount for [Cultural District Projects](#) at \$250,000
- To add an annual reporting requirement for [TCA-designated cultural districts](#)
- Additional changes to update and clarify current guidelines without making rule changes.

These changes are proposed to help address increased demand on TCA grant programs, recommendations of the Sunset Commission staff, risk reduction, best practices and efficiency. Once the complete changes are published in the [Texas Register](#), TCA will place a link to the

Professional Development Webinar Series: Bonus Webinar & More!

If you watched Ballet Austin and Texans for the Arts' **Cookie Ruiz's** June webinar on building a fundraising board and fundraising basics, you may have been among the people clamoring for a follow-up webinar from her. We're pleased to announce that **Cookie has graciously recorded a "part two" webinar**, which is now on our [Vimeo page](#).



Cookie Ruiz

Mark your calendars for TCA's next live professional development webinar at **2:00 pm CDT on Wednesday, October 19**. The webinar, presented by Dallas Black Dance Theatre's **Zenetta Drew** and the Long Center's **Brett Barnes**, will address development. A webinar invitation will be sent out as the date approaches. As always, these webinars are provided for free. TCA sends sincere thanks to all of our webinar presenters who are volunteering their time and expertise to help our field grow.

Poetry Out Loud



As detailed in our August newsletter, TCA is signing up high schools across the state to participate in the Poetry Out Loud program. Interested educators should contact TCA by September 30 to sign up and to receive materials in the mail to help them conduct the program during the fall semester. The materials are also online [here](#).

The Poetry Out Loud recitation contest is a national project of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. This exciting program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage. High school students memorize poems and perform them in competition. Each participating high school will hold its competition to determine its school winner by December 15, 2016. The school winner will go on to compete at the state competition in Austin in February 2017.



The Texas Commission on the Arts receives funding from the Texas State Legislature, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Texas: State of the Arts license plate, the Texas Cultural Trust, and Texas Women for the Arts.

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