

NEWS FROM TCA: FEBRUARY 2019



Texas
Commission
on the Arts

Investing in a Creative Texas

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Photo: Texas Legislature Online

Texas Legislative Session Update

The 86th Session of the Texas Legislature began on Tuesday, January 8. Since the Texas Legislature meets biennially, it will make decisions on two years' worth of State budgeting, including TCA's budget for fiscal year 2020 (September 1, 2019-August 31, 2020) and fiscal year 2021 (September 1, 2020-August 31, 2021).

As part of the budget process, TCA filed a Strategic Plan and Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR). The format of the LAR allows TCA to request the amount of its current two-year budget as the Base Appropriations Request, and to ask for Exceptional Items as additions to the budget for the coming two years. The Legislative Session will end on May 27, 2019.

TCA's Legislative Appropriations Request is available in full [here](#).

Base Appropriations Request: \$12,636,076 over the biennium
Exceptional Items: \$5,550,000 over the biennium (detailed below)

- **Exceptional Item #1 - Restore Cultural Districts Project (CDP) Grants Base-Level Funding**
TOTAL: \$5,000,000 over the biennium. In 2017, the 85th legislature cut funding for this grant program entirely for fiscal years 2018 and 2019, despite the Office of the Governor's and the Legislative Budget Board's joint determination that this money was in fact part of the agency's base level appropriations. Current and future cultural districts are in need of staffing support, infrastructure (signage and capital improvements), marketing budgets, and event underwriting. Adequate funding for this program is critical to ensure Texas' competitiveness with respect to similar programs in neighboring states such as Louisiana, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.

- **Exceptional Item #2 - Arts Healing Grants for Active Service Members and Veterans**
TOTAL: \$500,000 over the biennium. Texas is home to a significant and increasing number of active-duty service members and veterans, and their families, who experience severe physical and/or psychological hardships related to their military deployment. A wealth of research confirms the therapeutic benefits of arts-based programs for these constituents. Building on its experiences at the 2018 Texas Creative Forces Arts and Military Conference at Fort Hood, which included Karen Pence, Second Lady of the United States, and Cecilia Abbott, First Lady of Texas, as participants, the agency is requesting grant funding for organizations to provide arts-based programming to serve these populations on active military bases and in their surrounding communities across the state.

- **Exceptional Item #3 - CAPPs Financials Implementation**
TOTAL: \$50,000 over the biennium. The Comptroller of Public Accounts has selected the agency for transition to the CAPPs Financials module during the 2021 fiscal year. Based upon the Comptroller's guidance, the agency has determined it is likely to incur significant out-of-pocket costs relating to the computer programming services necessary to ensure that its Grants Management System interfaces properly with the new CAPPs system. The agency also expects to incur a number of significant soft costs during this transition, but will absorb these costs within its current base-level funding and staffing levels.

The [Texas Association of Business](#) has endorsed TCA as part of their [legislative priorities](#) for economic development "to foster the growth of arts and culture industries throughout the state, resulting in job creation and increased cultural tourism. Restore funding to the TCA's Cultural & Fine Arts District Program, which catalyzes economic development and community revitalization, leveraging additional public and private resources, enhancing the quality of life for residents and attracting tourists."

TCA's Legislative Appropriations Request will be considered as part of **House Bill 1** and **Senate Bill 1**. As filed, both bills recommend that TCA receive the Base Appropriations Request amount without adding any Exceptional Items. The Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriations Committee will review TCA's LAR and discuss all requested amounts. Both the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee have been appointed and have started meeting. TCA testified before the Senate Finance Committee on January 23 regarding its budget requests. TCA will testify to the House Appropriations Committee in the coming weeks.

The **House Appropriations Committee** has John Zerwas (Richmond) as its Chair and Oscar Longoria (Mission) as Vice Chair. The other members of the Committee are: Cecil Bell (Magnolia); Greg Bonnen (Friendswood); Brad Buckley (Killeen); Giovanni Capriglione (Southlake); Philip Cortez (San Antonio); Sarah Davis (West University Place); Mary E. González (Clint); Cole Hefner (Mt. Pleasant); Donna Howard (Austin); Jarvis D. Johnson (Houston); Rick Miller (Sugar Land); Ina Minjarez (San Antonio); Sergio Muñoz, Jr. (Palmview); Toni Rose (Dallas); Matt Schaefer (Tyler); J.D. Sheffield (Gatesville); Carl O. Sherman, Sr. (DeSoto); Reggie Smith (Sherman); Lynn Stucky (Denton); Steve Toth (The Woodlands); John Turner (Dallas); Gary VanDeaver (New Boston); Armando Walle (Houston); Terry M. Wilson (Marble Falls); and Gene Wu (Houston). The subcommittee that will take up TCA's funding is the **Subcommittee on Articles I, IV & V**. Its members are Oscar Longoria (Mission), Chair; Rick Miller (Sugar Land), Vice Chair; Brad Buckley (Killeen); Giovanni Capriglione (Southlake); Jarvis D. Johnson

(Houston); and Gene Wu (Houston).

The **Senate Finance Committee Chair** is Jane Nelson (Flower Mound) and the Vice Chair is Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (McAllen). The Committee's additional members are: Paul Bettencourt (Houston); Brian Birdwell (Granbury); Donna Campbell (New Braunfels); Peter P. Flores (Pleasanton); Kelly Hancock (North Richland Hills); Joan Huffman (Houston); Lois W. Kolkhorst (Brenham); Robert Nichols (Jacksonville); Charles Perry (Lubbock); Larry Taylor (Friendswood); Kirk Watson (Austin); Royce West (Dallas); and John Whitmire (Houston).

Grantee Spotlight: Gonzales Crystal Theatre



Gonzales Crystal Theatre's youth performers

In 2017, TCA was able to provide special recovery funding to Texas arts organizations affected by Hurricane Harvey. TCA dedicated a portion of its budget to this effort and also received funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. While the needs were greater than the \$446,500 that was distributed, the grants were the first monetary assistance that many organizations and artists received to help them recover from Harvey. The grants were awarded to 52 arts organizations and 17 artists in 15 Texas cities: Beaumont, Clute,

Corpus Christi, Elgin, Friendswood, Galveston, Gonzales, Hallettsville, Houston, Orange, Port Aransas, Port Arthur, Rockport, Round Top and Spring. Grants to organizations ranged in size from \$1,500 to \$40,000; artist grants ranged from \$1,500 to \$2,500.

Due to Hurricane Harvey, Gonzales's Crystal Theatre incurred damage to the roof and ceiling of its over 100-year-old playhouse, rendering it unsafe for use until repairs could be completed. TCA's modest \$2,500 Hurricane Harvey Recovery grant assisted the organization in continuing its programming while moving forward with restoring the building to safe use (a process which is still underway). Most immediately, this affected programming for Texas Independence Day, which features an original script written and performed by members of the Crystal Theatre's youth program.

The Crystal Theatre's youth program is dedicated to providing arts-in-education opportunities for young people from all backgrounds. It includes the year-round Shakespeare Ninja Project in conjunction with the University of Texas Shakespeare at Winedale program, the summer youth workshop, and free live performances for all students.

Crystal Theatre representatives reported to TCA, "We utilized the TCA funds to continue our work throughout the spring. We studied and worked in a donated location; but the needed artists and educators' stipends and the utilities to keep the building stabilized until the restorative work could be completed were quickly depleting our emergency funds." As TCA funding allowed the theater building to have its mildewed ceiling tiles removed and its air quality improved, a community church hosted theater students' rehearsals so that the show could go on. "The tireless work of these young people has inspired the commitment of both the parishioners and the young people themselves to support the continued work of the Crystal Theatre and the Shakespeare Ninja Project. [...] It also raised the visibility within our community immensely." TCA is proud to have been part of the community effort to rehabilitate the building and support the programs of Gonzales's Crystal Theatre.

Texas Poetry Out Loud Finals

The Texas Commission on the Arts will present the Texas Poetry Out Loud recitation contest for high school students at 1:00 PM on Saturday, February 23, in Austin. The finals, graciously hosted by the [Bullock Texas State History Museum](#), will be open to the public and free to attend. 31 students will represent their schools in the competition. The event will be hosted by internationally renowned Texas poet Naomi Shihab Nye.

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. At the state level, the winner and runner up receive cash awards and their school libraries receive money to help them buy poetry books. State winners compete in Washington, DC for a pool of \$50,000 in scholarships for students and cash awards for schools.



New Roles for Familiar Faces at TCA



Amber W. Rhodes

Frequent visitors to TCA's online [staff roster](#) may have noticed a few changes over the last few weeks. **Amber W. Rhodes** has been named TCA's new **director of finance**. Amber holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Film Studies from the University of Minnesota. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband and three-year-old son. In the past, she enjoyed playing drums around town in a couple of local bands. Amber has been with TCA since 2007, and most recently served as a program administrator with a focus on film and media arts organizations. In that role, her responsibilities also included oversight of grant contracts and payments, managing the final reporting process, and serving as TCA's records management officer for the agency.

These duties are now the responsibility of TCA's newest **program administrator, Kenneth Williams**. Kenneth joined TCA as a program assistant in November 2016, and provided admirable and well-organized support to TCA's grants and programs in that role. He is a graduate of UT Austin with a BA in English through the Liberal Arts Honors program. He has a keen interest in theater, film, and television, as well as literature. Previously, Kenneth worked at the Harry Ransom Center at UT in the Theater & Performing Arts archives, Shakespeare at Winedale at both UT and Round Top, and the Hidden Room Theatre in Austin. He is originally from Longview.



Kenneth Williams

Free Professional Development Webinar on Community Foundations

Join us for our next free professional development webinar, A



MariBen Ramsey

Community Foundation Insider Tells All. At 2 PM (Central) on **February 20, MariBen Ramsey** will discuss community foundations. These locality-focused philanthropic organizations provide funding opportunities for a variety of nonprofit organizations. MariBen Ramsey, nonprofit consultant and lawyer, served as the Chief Philanthropy Officer and General Counsel for the Austin Community Foundation for 20 years. A question and answer session will follow MariBen's presentation. Registration is on a first come, first served basis, so [reserve your spot](#) now!

MariBen Ramsey is a native Austinite and a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin where she received her undergraduate and law degrees. A former shareholder with the Graves, Dougherty, Hearon & Moody law firm, she saw the light, so to speak, and launched a new career with the Austin Community Foundation that married her passions for Austin and nonprofit service. For 20 years she served as the foundation's Chief Philanthropy Officer and General Counsel, led its grantmaking program and worked closely with families on realizing their philanthropic goals. During her tenure the Foundation made grants of over \$200 million. MariBen is now the principal of Ramsey Philanthropy, which provides nonprofit consulting for organizations and their boards and philanthropy advising for individuals and families. She is also the principal of MariBen Ramsey Law, PLLC. Her legal practice primarily focuses on public charities and private foundations. MariBen has served on more than 30 boards of nonprofit organizations at the local, state, national and international levels with expertise in board governance and nonprofit management.

If you aren't able to attend the live webinar, or if you'd like to see what else we've offered over the years, we have good news! All of our professional development webinars are recorded and available [online](#) for free.

Upcoming TCA Application Deadlines

TCA has two upcoming application deadlines. As always, the TCA staff is happy to discuss your goals and eligibility to determine which programs are right for you. You may also request that a TCA staff member review your application and provide feedback. Ideally, these requests would be made at least two weeks before the application deadline. For your assistance, TCA has recently recorded a **Grant Writing Basics** webinar with Humanities Texas, available [here](#).

Grant Program: Arts Create

This program provides multi-year operational support to arts organizations with established cash budgets over \$50,000. Applicants write their grant for a one-year period, and if funded, will provide an update for the second year. Depending on the availability of funds, the organization's award amount will be the same for two fiscal years.

Support dates must be: Between September 1, 2019 and August 31, 2020

Application deadline: Midnight on March 1 or March 15. Note: deadline varies depending on organization classification. Your specific deadline will be shown in your online account with TCA.

Application form: [Online](#)

Resources: [Grant guidelines](#), [contact TCA staff](#), links to recorded webinars about the application process will be sent to eligible account holders.

Texas Medal of Arts Awards



Our friends at the [Texas Cultural Trust](#) have announced the recipients of the 2019 Texas Medal of Arts Awards (TMAA). The Texas Medal of Arts Awards will be celebrated on February 27, 2019 at the Long Center for the Performing Arts in Austin.

This year's honorees include **Mark Seliger, Conspirare, Stephen Harrigan, the Vidal M. Treviño School of Communications and Fine Arts, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Boz Scaggs, Jennifer Holliday, and Matthew McConaughey.** Award recipients will be honored at celebration events on Tuesday, February 26, and Wednesday, February 27. This biennial event, co-chaired by Leslie Blanton and Leslie Ward, celebrates the state's legendary artists, entertainers, and art patrons with a series of events, including a gala dinner,

star-studded awards show, and concert. Click [here](#) to learn about all TMAA honorees or purchase event tickets.

Catching Up with Young Master Kira Viola (Dance, 2008)

Since its inception in 2002, the [Young Masters](#) grant program has supported 328 Texas high school students' studies in the arts. We're using this month's newsletter to share an update from one of our Young Master alumni.

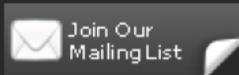
Kira Viola started dancing at age four in El Paso with a strong focus in ballet. While still in middle school, Kira was named a Young Master in ballet by the Texas Commission on the Arts. The Young Masters grant funding she received helped her attend the [Rock School for Dance Education](#) in Philadelphia, PA her first summer as a Young Master. For her second year of funding, Kira participated in the [Pittsburgh Ballet Summer Intensive](#). Among the subsequent opportunities Kira received in her early dance career was a grant from the US State Department and the Russian American Foundation to study at the Bolshoi Ballet Academy in New York and Moscow.



Kira Viola. Photo: Courtney Ross

Kira writes, "I was awarded the Young Master's grant in 2008, and it gave me the opportunity to travel and study at multiple recognizable dance summer programs across the US. **Without the grant, I simply would not have had the funds to attend these programs.** I learned and grew each summer and was exposed to multiple styles of dance at each program I went to. I was training exclusively in ballet at home in El Paso, so being exposed to these different styles was really helpful to me then, to become more well rounded, and especially now, as I pursue contemporary dance at Rogue Co. in Denver, Colorado. **I can truly say I would not be where I am now without the Texas Young Master program and the opportunities it allowed me to have.**"

Kira moved to Colorado in 2012 and received a degree in graphic design from the University of Colorado Denver. She currently dances with [Rogue Co.](#) in Boulder and Ballet 5280 in Denver. TCA is proud to have been a part of Kira's early development as an artist, along with our partners at the [Texas Cultural Trust](#).



Texas Commission on the Arts

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