



# NEWS FROM TCA: NOVEMBER 2022

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[State of the Arts License Plate](#)

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Congratulations to the Downtown Conroe Cultural District, which hosted the first in person cultural district designation ceremony since 2019 on Sunday, October 24! We're pleased to have it as the 52nd official Texas cultural district. TCA Executive Director Gary Gibbs is shown standing behind the podium, along with Conroe leaders.

## Coming Soon: A New TCA License Plate



In recent months, TCA has been working with the Texas license plate vendor MyPlates to launch a new design for the TCA *State of the Arts* license plate. The new black and silver minimalist design is available for pre order now at

[https://www.myplates.com/design/background/passenger/black\\_silver\\_state\\_of\\_the\\_arts](https://www.myplates.com/design/background/passenger/black_silver_state_of_the_arts). MyPlates and the Texas DMV expect to be able to fulfill orders for the plate starting in February 2023. This plate design can go on a passenger car, motorcycle, trailer, or private bus (attention, Texas bands!). As with TCA's long established classic *State of the Arts* license plate design, TCA will receive a portion of the sales of the new design. Note that this plate is part of MyPlates' "Lone Star Series," but only the *State of the Arts* plate supports TCA.

If you've always meant to order the classic Texas flag look *State of the Arts* license plate, there is a limited time left to get it on your car. Holders of that license plate design can continue to renew their plates in future years and keep it on the road. Each sale and renewal of that plate sends \$22 to TCA. At the time this newsletter was released, you could still order the plate [here](#).

**We'll humbly suggest that either design makes a great holiday gift for your favorite Texans.**

TCA is working with MyPlates to update promotional materials to feature the new design. We are grateful to the many arts organizations who have promoted TCA's *State of the Arts* license plate over the last 25 years, and we're looking forward to sharing the new materials with you.

## Upcoming TCA Meet-and-Greet Opportunities

Texas Commission on the Arts' newest Program Administrators Matrex Kilgore and Rron Karahoda will be holding online meet and greets between Monday, November 28 through Friday, December 2 to speak with constituents in their specialty areas.

These optional meetings will be conducted on Zoom and are an opportunity for organizations in **music, dance, theater, and arts education** with a FLUXX account to meet their new TCA representative, learn about each other, and discuss possibilities for future convenings.



Our staff members are excited to get to know you! Organizations will receive their invitations with further information and RSVP details by e mail, so please keep an eye out for those communications in the next few weeks.

If you work in a different artistic discipline and want to meet with a TCA staff member, you can schedule a one on one meeting [here](#).

Matrex Kilgore photo by Tia Boyd Photography; Rron Karahoda photo by In The Shade Photography.

## Apply to Be a TCA Grant Evaluator

Each year, TCA invites roughly 200 Texans to serve as peer reviewers of the grant applications we receive. We are grateful to these members of our arts field who donate their time and knowledge to our panel review process and assess the quality of grant applications. The peer review process is central to the Commission's efforts to maintain an accountable, accessible awards system for the State of Texas.

If you would like extra insight into the grant evaluation process, we invite you to nominate yourself to serve on a panel. TCA is not able to pay for this work, but it will allow you to gain experience as a grant evaluator, see how other organizations present their programs and challenges, and ensure that TCA grant decisions can be made—**we really can't do this without you**. Nominations are accepted year round

and can be made [here](#).

Panels can be held online or in person in Austin. TCA reimburses for travel and hotel costs for in person meetings. For online panels, TCA assigns reviewers no more than 25 grant applications to help keep the workload reasonable. **Evaluators can also be grant applicants**—TCA excludes evaluators from reviewing and scoring an application that they submitted or have any other conflict of interest with.

TCA is currently recruiting for Arts Respond Project panels, which will be conducted online starting in late January 2023. Information about the Arts Respond Project program can be found [here](#).

## High Schools: Sign Up Now for Poetry Out Loud

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS  
AND POETRY FOUNDATION PRESENT



It's not too late for high schools and organizations across the state to participate in the Poetry Out Loud program. Interested educators should [contact TCA](#) soon to sign up and to receive materials to help them conduct the program during the fall semester. The teacher's guide, anthology, and other resources are 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, 2022**. The school winner will compete in a virtual semi finals, and finalists from that round will go on to compete at the state competition on March 11, 2023.

At the state level, the winner and runner up receive cash awards and their school libraries receive money to help them buy poetry books. The state winner will represent Texas in the national competition, which has a pool of \$50,000 in scholarships for students and cash awards for schools. More information on the state competition is [here](#).

## Farewell, Cynthia

In October, TCA said a fond farewell to Program Assistant Cynthia Gray as she retired. For many years one of the first voices constituents heard when they called TCA, Cynthia received a degree in sociology from the University of Texas at San Antonio. She worked in the field of human resources before joining TCA in 1997 as Staff Services Officer in the finance division. In that capacity she worked with payroll, purchasing, employee benefits and finance operations.



Several years later she moved to the grants division as a program assistant. In addition to her program assistant duties, Cynthia continued to help coordinate employee

benefits and safety. She also assisted Spanish speaking constituents, as she was born in Puerto Rico and raised in Mexico City. In her free time—which we hope she'll have a lot more of now that she's retired— she paints, draws and makes jewelry.

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