



NEWS FROM TCA: MAY 2023

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May 7-13 is National Travel & Tourism Week, a good reminder to take a break, go somewhere different, and enjoy yourself! Texas' 52 official cultural districts have a wealth of offerings. In this 2021 photo, dancers perform for a crowd at Dallas' Latino Cultural Center.

Photo courtesy of the Deep Ellum Cultural District

Texas Legislative Session Update

Texas' 88th Session will wrap up at the end of this month. The budgets proposed for TCA by each side of the Legislature have some differences. The **House Bill 1** budget includes the full [exceptional items TCA requested](#). The budget in **Senate Bill 1** proposes partial funding of the exceptional items, which would provide an increase of \$1.5M for arts organization grants, and another \$1.5M for cultural district grants.



The differences between the two bills will be addressed and reconciled by a conference committee made up of five members each of the House and Senate. The

Conference Committee members are Representatives Greg Bonnen (Chair, Friendswood), Mary Gonzalez (Clint), Jacey Jetton (Richmond), Gary VanDeaver (New Boston), and Armando Walle (Houston) and Senators Joan Huffman (Chair, Houston), Brandon Creighton (Conroe), Lois Kolkhorst (Brenham), Robert Nichols (Jacksonville), and Charles Schwertner (Georgetown). You can use [this page](#) to follow the progress of each bill.

Since the Texas Legislature meets biennially, it will make decisions on two years' worth of State budgeting, including TCA's budget for fiscal year 2024 (September 1, 2023 August 31, 2024) and fiscal year 2025 (September 1, 2024 August 31, 2025). The Legislative Session will end on May 29, 2023.

Photo: Texas Legislature Online

Support Texas Arts with the New *State of the Arts* License Plate



TCA's new black and silver *State of the Arts* minimalist design license plate is available to order at

<https://www.myplates.com/go/arts>.

This plate design can go on a passenger car, motorcycle, trailer, or private bus (attention, Texas bands!).

TCA will receive a portion of the sales

of the plate. Note that this plate is part of MyPlates' "Lone Star Series," but only the *State of the Arts* plate supports TCA. There is a price break for those ordering their plate for multiple years. Make a long term commitment to the arts!

Upcoming TCA Application Deadlines

TCA has a few 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 can [schedule a virtual appointment](#) with a staff member. You may also request that a TCA staff member review your application and provide feedback. Ideally, these draft review requests would be made at least two weeks before the application deadline.

Designation Program: Cultural District Designation

This program designates special zones in Texas cities and communities that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization.

Application deadline: Letter of intent to apply due January 31; application due June 15

Application form: On [Cultural Districts Program page](#)

Resources: [Program guidelines](#), [contact TCA staff](#)

Grant Program: Cultural District Projects

This program is designed for projects that focus on significant cultural tourism projects happening in a designated cultural district, by established arts organizations that are based in the cultural district and authorized to apply by their cultural district's managing entity.

Activity dates must occur: Between September 1, 2023 and August 31, 2024

Application deadline: Midnight on June 15, 2023

Application form: [Online](#) soon for eligible organizations

2023 Poetry Out Loud National Competition

The 2023 Texas Poetry Out Loud champ, Mariam Botana de Armas, will compete at the national level in Washington, DC, May 9-10, for a pool of \$50,000 in scholarships for students and cash awards for schools.

The competition will be live streamed at https://www.arts.gov/initiatives/poetry_out_loud. Tune in to support Mariam, an 11th grade student at the Northside School of Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship in San Antonio!

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
AND POETRY FOUNDATION PRESENT



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. The students are evaluated on qualities such as articulation, evidence of understanding, accuracy and overall performance.

Grantee Spotlight: TCA Investment in Cultural Districts Yields Big Returns in Fort Worth



Every fall, TCA staff spend many, many hours reviewing report forms that grantees submit as they close out their grants. These reports share arts organizations' trials and tribulations, challenges and solutions. Many of these stories will resonate with others across our field, so we're sharing some of them through grantee spotlights.

This month, we are highlighting the [Amon Carter Museum of American Art](#) in Fort Worth. In addition to their report to TCA, the Museum released an Economic and Education Impact statement for the 2022 fiscal year. Last year, the Amon Carter Museum was awarded \$70,000 through TCA's Cultural District Project grant. These competitive grants constitute some of TCA's largest grant awards and exist to support the continued growth and success of Texas' cultural districts, which are special zones that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community vitality.

The award granted to the Amon Carter Museum supported *Sargent, Whistler, and Venetian Glass: American Artists and the Magic of Murano*, an exhibition and accompanying glass sculpture installation in the Fort Worth Cultural District. In their impact report, the Amon Carter Museum indicated that, including this project, they had an overall economic impact of \$17,000,000, which includes \$720,013 raised in state tax revenue and \$591,362 raised in local tax revenue. **The economic impact of *Sargent, Whistler, and Venetian Glass* alone was \$1,500,000, making for a**

staggering 2,042% return on economic impact from TCA's original award. When taken in tandem with a 2020 Texas Cultural Trust study of four cultural districts, which received a total of \$542,000 in Cultural District Project grants and an overall impact of \$52.3 million in economic activity (constituting a 9,549% return on impact), the Amon Carter Museum's results indicate that TCA's investment in these zones continues to have a positive, transformative effect on Texas' cultural and economic landscape.

Behind all these metrics lies another story, that of the on the ground experiences of those served by the Amon Carter Museum. In the museum's grant report, they relayed the story of a young visitor who made multiple trips to the museum while *Sargent, Whistler, and Venetian Glass* was running. He had returned to the museum to track the progress of *Shaking the Shadow*, a glass installation piece by Texas based artist Justin Ginsberg. The piece involved Ginsberg creating a waterfall like sculpture out of nearly 30 foot long glass threads that he would fire during weekend glassmaking sessions held on the Museum's lawn. These threads would then be installed during the week in the Carter Museum's main gallery. The young visitor's parents had brought him in because he was so excited at the prospect of seeing how pieces he had seen made the previous Saturday fit into the overall piece. When a Carter Visitor Experience Associate joked about seeing the child on the coming Saturday, the family genuinely responded that they would likely be back the following Tuesday instead, so they could see how the installation changed with even more new additions.

TCA is proud to be able to support the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, and so many wonderful organizations across the state who make the arts accessible to so many of our fellow Texans. For more information about TCA's Cultural Districts, please check out [this link](#).

Photo: Amon Carter Museum of American Art

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. TCA is currently assembling panels of evaluators to review applications for Cultural District Project grants, Arts Respond Project grants, and Cultural District Designation.

If you would like 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.

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