



NEWS FROM TCA: AUGUST 2023

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If we feature a photo of an overcast sky and lush, green plants, will it feel less hot? Here's hoping! Photo: the Laredo Cultural District.

A Year in the Life of TCA

A new fiscal year will start for TCA on September 1. This means that much of TCA's summer is spent wrapping up the work of the fiscal year that's ending while simultaneously readying the agency—and assisting applicants—for the grants to come in the next fiscal year. Here's just some of what TCA did in fiscal year 2023:

- Designated a new [cultural district](#), the Downtown Conroe Cultural District.
- Provided almost 1,500 grants for arts activities to organizations across the state, totaling over \$11 million.
- Managed the process of selecting the 2023 and 2024 [Texas State Artists](#) for the positions of Texas Poet Laureate, Texas State Musician, Texas State Visual Artist in 2D, and Texas State Visual Artist in 3D.
- Conducted the [Poetry Out Loud](#) recitation contest for the state of Texas, and saw Texas champ Mariam Botana de Armas reach the top nine national finalists and earn \$1,000 as her prize.
- Launched the new [TCA Speaker Series](#) of online convenings for the Texas arts field's free reference.
- Reviewed closeout reports for over 1,400 fiscal year 2022 grants.

Applications Open for 2024 Young Masters

The Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) and the Texas Cultural Trust are accepting applications for the 2024 class of Young Masters, a **joint initiative that provides exemplary Texas student artists in grades 8-11 with the financial help they need to pursue advanced study in the areas of visual arts, literary arts, music, theater, dance, musical theater, folk arts, and media arts.**



The state's most talented young artists will receive the title of "Young Master" and be awarded grants of **\$5,000 per year** to further their studies in their respective disciplines. Students are eligible to receive the grant for **two years**, but they must submit a report and an update. The students selected for this program will represent the 12th class of Young Masters. To date, the Trust and TCA have given 401 grants to 184 Young Masters, awarding more than \$1.2 million.

Applications, information and guidelines are available online at <http://tinyurl.com/youngmaster>. Applications and required supporting materials must be submitted by **November 1, 2023**. To be considered for the grant, students must be legal U.S. residents living in Texas and participating in a school based program, a summer institute, or a specialized course of study or receiving private lessons from a qualified professional instructor. They must also maintain passing grades in all academic areas. The Young Masters will be selected by a panel of arts experts from across the state based on artistic excellence, level of commitment, and quality of their proposed plan of study. The 2024 Young Masters recipients will be honored at a celebration in spring of 2024 in Austin, Texas.

A flyer to help promote this opportunity is available [here](#).

New Texas Travel Industry Recovery Grant Opportunity

Our State colleagues at the Governor's Office of Economic Development & Tourism (EDT) have been administering the Texas

Texas Travel Industry RECOVERY PROGRAM

Travel Industry Recovery Grant (TTIR) Program for the last year. Recent legislation will allow a significant change to this program, **increasing the possible grant size to up to \$250,000 in total.**

Accordingly, EDT will **open a new application window with an anticipated opening date of September 1, 2023**. You may sign up [here](#) for direct notifications about this TTIR funding opportunity.

The TTIR Program was originally established by Senate Bill 8 and signed into law by the Governor following the 87th Legislative Session to administer \$180 million of funds received from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

If you have any questions, please visit the [TTIR webpage](#) or reach out to the TTIR Program staff by emailing tourismrecoverygrant@gov.texas.gov.

Beware of SAM-UEI Scams



If your organization has a SAM UEI (System of Award Management Unique Entity Identifier) issued by the federal government, TCA wants to remind you this service is **100% FREE**. Scammers are sending out convincing looking “official” emails offering to help with SAM UEI renewals for a fee. **Renewals are free**, so any mention of a fee should alert you that the email is a scam. TCA recommends marking those emails as junk, blocking those senders, and deleting those emails. Only organizations that apply directly to a federal agency for funding need to renew their SAM UEI.

TCA Grant & Program Updates

Upcoming TCA Application Deadline

TCA has an upcoming application deadline. 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 requests would be made at least two weeks before the application deadline.

Grant Program: Performance Support

This program provides professional artist fees to Texas nonprofits, schools, colleges, and units of government for hiring an artist from the [Texas Touring Roster](#) to do a performance. These applications are funded based on a percentage of contracted fees. Please let us know if you have questions about the plan you are considering.

Activity dates must start: between December 15, 2023 and March 14, 2024

Application deadline: midnight on November 1, 2023

Application form: [online](#)

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

Grant Applications for Fiscal Year 2024

The TCA Commissioners will hold their quarterly meeting on September 7, 2023. At this meeting, they will make final funding decisions on applications for **Arts Create** (Year 1) funding, **Cultural District Project** funding, **Arts Respond Project** funding, and **Performance Support** funding. They will also consider recommendations for the **Cultural District Designation** program.

If your organization has a pending Arts Create, Cultural District Project, Arts Respond Project or Performance Support grant application, you will receive an email notification about your recommended funding amounts **by Thursday, August 24**.

Grant Reports for Fiscal Year 2023 due September 30, 2023

Closeout reports are due for grant activities that end as TCA's prior fiscal year (September 1, 2022 August 31, 2023) concludes. All Arts Create, Cultural District Project, and Arts Respond Project grant report forms for fiscal year 2023 should be

completed and submitted online by **September 30, 2023. Plan ahead—that date is on a Saturday and we can't give extensions!** We ask that you provide all materials electronically using TCA's grants system, and we recommend that you submit your report and materials well before the deadline to ensure timely payment of your upcoming grants. **Grant reports must be submitted and successfully closed out by TCA staff before new grants will be paid.**

Common reasons reports aren't approved:

- Payments made outside of the period of the grant (check your TCA contract for dates)
- Missing data or typo in spreadsheet (check number, date, total amount of check, etc.)
- Amounts in expense categories do not match the Grant Budget page of the online report
- Check sequence variance if you are using multiple checking accounts, include a note for staff
- Payments to people are included in categories other than Administrative or Artistic salaries, contracts, benefits

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.

If you have any questions, please contact our program staff for help (scroll to the bottom of [this page](#) to see artistic discipline assignments by staff member).

TCA Speaker Series: (Re)building Audiences with your Community

Texas Commission on the Arts invites you to a **free, optional** convening titled **(Re)building Audiences with your Community**. Join us and our speakers to discover how engaging with your community can drive deeper, long term involvement with your organization! Our speakers will discuss their specific strategies for acting in partnership with their communities and its impact on their organizations' audiences and overall mission.

The virtual meeting will be on Zoom on **Wednesday, October 25, 2023, from 2:00-3:30 pm CST**. It is open to arts nonprofits and members of the public.

TCA staff will be joined by three nonprofit professionals with a wealth of experience in community engagement:

As Director of Community & Learning at Houston Grand Opera (HGO), **Jennifer Bowman** leads the development of programming that resonates with audiences and educators, performances for students and families, and initiatives that bring HGO in contact with the community. The native Texan previously brought her commitment to inclusive arts experience through leadership of education and community programs at The Kennedy Center for the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington National Opera, and the Center's hip hop, jazz, and chamber music divisions.





Teresa Coleman Wash (she/her/hers) is a producer, writer, and founding artistic director for the Bishop Arts Theatre Center in Dallas. The Bishop's mission is to cultivate a diverse and vibrant arts community committed to social impact while creating opportunities for local and emerging artists to develop new, contemporary, and lasting works that celebrate the diversity and resiliency of our community. Wash is a National Arts Strategies

fellow, having studied at Harvard Business School.

Dr. Yvonne M. De La Rosa is the Executive Director of Teatro De Artes De Juan Seguin (Teatro), which promotes a better understanding of the Mexican American culture through the teaching, study, practice, and performance through the arts and its humanities work. Dr. De La Rosa's research study explores how Teatro is a vehicle for cultural sustainability and how it promotes the resiliency of Seguin's Mexican American community as they attempt to maintain, teach, and celebrate their Mexican American roots, customs, knowledge, and celebrations through community education.



TCA selected this topic using feedback from constituents, and we expect that future convenings in this new series will address other needs expressed by members of the Texas arts field.

Registrations are limited, so [secure your spot today](#) and experience this conversation in real time!

High Schools: Sign Up Now for Poetry Out Loud



The school year is upon us, which means that TCA is signing up high schools across the state to participate in the Poetry Out Loud program. Interested educators should sign up [here](#) so they can receive materials to help them conduct the program during the fall semester. The materials are currently being updated but will be available soon; in the meantime, last year's materials 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, 2023. The school winner will go on to compete at the state competition in February 2024.

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](#).

Photo: James Kegley

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 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.

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 shipping and 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!

Grantee Spotlight: Students Find Their Words in Monologue Writing Program

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.

Marfa Live Arts conducts community theater and arts education programs in Marfa. In 2023 Marfa Live Arts' education programs included their annual

Playwriting Prep Program and their Winter Theater Showcase. The Playwriting Prep program, which serves all seventh and eighth grade students in the Marfa Independent School District, is the organization's preparatory course for a Playwriting Program taught to the district's high school students. Each year, the Playwriting Prep Program engages students in the basics of writing dramatic form while developing critical thinking skills and self confidence.

The Playwriting Prep Program consists of three components: Relaxation (stress reduction exercises); Observation Techniques; and the Writing Studio. Each component, developed in alignment with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, helps students develop sense memory, observation, and problem solving techniques by channeling their creativity into the creation of unique monologues. To date, the Playwriting Prep Program has resulted in over 800 student written monologues, with ten selected works each cycle awarded tech prizes, recognized in the press and performed during the Winter Theater Showcase.

For the students, the opportunity to share their work with their family and community was transformative, enabling the students to explore their own experiences, fears, and dreams. One student said, "I just want to keep doing this, I want to keep writing and talking and I want to keep telling my story." Another student described what he liked best about the workshop, saying, "To be honest there was a lot that really let me express myself in these pieces of writing. It let me talk about different things that I enjoy and things that I cherish with great pleasure. And finally, the awareness and positivity that I gained is immeasurable."

TCA is proud to be able to support Marfa Live Arts and so many wonderful organizations across the state who make the arts accessible to our fellow Texans.

Photo: Tina Rivera

Welcome, Michael!

On July 31, TCA welcomed a new program assistant to our staff. Michael Sherrod was born and raised in San Angelo. He has been involved in the arts from a young age, having studied ballet, tap, and contemporary dance starting at age 10. Throughout middle and high school, he competed in UIL competitions for math, science, and Student Congress. He later went on to receive his Bachelor of Fine Arts in modern dance from Texas Christian University, and he plans to attend graduate school in the near future to receive his MFA. When he's not at work or dancing, Michael enjoys yoga, exploring nature, and watching films with his closest friends.



Photo: Josh Brewster

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