



# NEWS FROM TCA: SEPTEMBER 2023

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Time to celebrate! Over \$15 million in new grants, and two new cultural districts, were just approved by TCA Commissioners. Photo: Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District.

## New Grants and Cultural Districts Approved

On September 7, TCA Commissioners approved funding of 929 grants in the first funding round for fiscal year 2024. The grants total over \$15 million and will go to nonprofits and units of government in 110 Texas cities. These grants include the Arts Create program, the Cultural District Project program, 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 program. TCA's full list of fiscal year 2024 grants is [here](#).

TCA Commissioners also approved the designation of two new cultural districts. Cultural districts are special zones that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community vitality. These districts can be focal points for generating business, attracting tourists, stimulating cultural development and fostering civic pride. The new cultural districts are **Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District** and the **Granbury Cultural District**. Please see below for more

information on Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District. We'll profile the Granbury Cultural District in our October newsletter. These designations bring the total number of [cultural districts in Texas](#) to 54.

[Arts Create](#) grants provide year round operational support to Texas arts organizations with budgets over \$50,000. For fiscal year 2024, **449 Arts Create grants totaling over \$4.5 million are allocated to 449 organizations in 88 Texas cities.**

[Arts Respond Cultural District Project](#) grants provide support to projects that use the arts to diversify local economies, generate revenue, and attract visitors and investment. These grants are available to arts organizations and government entities verified as based in TCA designated cultural districts. For fiscal year 2024, **94 applicants from 33 different cultural districts in 23 Texas cities will receive funding totaling just over \$7 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 in fiscal year 2024, applications from **288 arts organizations in 63 cities will receive funding, for a total of over \$1.2 million.**

[Arts Respond Performance Support](#) grants provide partial support to help applicants host an artist from the [Texas Touring Roster](#) in their community. **The 95 grants for this quarter total \$180,446 and will go to 73 organizations and units of government in 41 Texas cities.**

The [Commission Initiatives and Designated Funding](#) program for this quarter distributed \$55,000 received from the National Endowment for the Arts via one \$20,000 grant to conduct the Poetry Out Loud high school competition in Texas and another \$35,000 grant to conduct folk arts apprenticeships and related programs and documentation. Lastly, the Commission approved \$2.1 million in funding designated for a new performing arts center in Flower Mound, as allocated by the 2019 Texas Legislature.

## Get to Know Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District

As noted in the article above, the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) has approved the designation of **Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District** as a new cultural district. Cultural districts are special zones that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community vitality. These districts can be focal points for generating business, attracting tourists, stimulating cultural development and fostering civic pride.



The Texas Commission on the Arts is the only body able to officially designate cultural districts on behalf of the State. Cultural districts are marketable tourism assets that highlight the distinct identity of a community and encourage in state, out of state,

and international visitors. Cultural district development helps a community boost its economy while realizing other cultural and civic benefits. The outcomes of cultural districts extend beyond the arts and benefit all members of a community. Official designation allows cultural districts and qualifying resident arts organizations to be eligible to apply for significant Cultural District Project funding through TCA.

Through tourism, the historic Bankhead Highway's cultural and economic impacts were significant to Garland's development starting in the 1920s. Now, **Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District** includes signature cultural institutions such as the Granville Arts Center, the Landmark Museum and The Plaza Theatre. The district features two culturally noteworthy parks, industrial space repurposed as artist studios, and a historic neighborhood. The heart of the district is downtown Garland, filled with independently owned businesses featuring investments in infrastructure and amenities to attract visitors and residents for arts and culture programs. Garland celebrates a vast array of shopping, arts, outdoor activities and special events.

The cultural district will be officially designated at the grand opening of the downtown square the heart of the district on Saturday, **October 14**. The day will feature a ribbon cutting and remarks, local arts groups, and a variety of activities. The event will culminate in a free concert from Garland's own LeAnn Rimes. TCA staff will present a proclamation marking the official designation.

"We are pleased to highlight the wonderful work the district is already doing to attract visitors to their community, and to enhance the quality of life in our great state," said Gary Gibbs, executive director of TCA. "Their application to the designation process provided extensive information on their qualifications, and was considered through a highly rigorous review process. We congratulate them on this achievement." For complete information on the Cultural Districts Designation Program, please visit [http://www.arts.texas.gov/initiatives/cultural\\_districts/](http://www.arts.texas.gov/initiatives/cultural_districts/).

## 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 has **opened a new application window with an anticipated closing date of September 15, 2023.** TCA encourages eligible entities to pursue this 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](mailto:tourismrecoverygrant@gov.texas.gov).

## 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](#).

## 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.

## Grant Reports and Revised Budgets Due

If your organization was approved to receive an Arts Create grant, a Cultural District Project grant, or an Arts Respond Project grant for fiscal year 2024 (September 1, 2023 August 31, 2024), you will have some paperwork to do before your new grant(s)

can be paid.

Note that all forms and supporting materials should be completed and provided in TCA's online grants system. This excludes direct deposit authorization forms, which must be faxed or mailed to protect sensitive information.

### Revised Budgets

Each funded FY24 Arts Create, Cultural District Project, or Arts Respond Project grant will have a revised budget form that should be filled out and submitted online.

### Grant Reports: Due September 30, 2023

Reports are due for grant activities that ended as TCA's prior fiscal year (September 1, 2022 August 31, 2023) concluded.

- **Plan ahead—the September 30 deadline is a Saturday and there are no extensions.**
- Grant reports must be submitted, and successfully closed out by TCA staff, before new grants will be paid.
- To help ensure timely payment of your FY24 grants, you are encouraged to submit your reports and supporting materials well before the deadline.
- 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.

**Top five problems** that prevent reports from being approved:

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

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 the 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 in full swing, 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 promote the program during the fall semester. Free resources for conducting the program 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: In Kilgore, Local History on the Big Screen



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.

REEL East Texas Film Festival is an arts organization in Kilgore dedicated to using historical sites to host modern day artistic offerings and events. 2022 marked the sixth year in a row for the annual, multi weekend film festival, which screened 58 professional films and 36 student films chosen from over 150 submissions.

The festival is always an exciting time, but this year the draw for the festival seemed to be the adaptive reuse and restoration of the historic downtown sites that host the events. For example, community members from Kilgore and visitors from across Texas came together in the local Texas Theater and Old Post Office to watch films, network with other professionals, and learn about the rich history of each building and the city that has worked to restore them.

Continuing the theme, one of the films showcased in the festival was a documentary called *Voices of Kilgore*. It was filmed and produced by the Kilgore Historical Preservation Foundation over many years, where they organized and adapted photographs alongside interviews to bring Kilgore's history onto modern screens. The documentary featured the historic downtown sites that the city has worked hard to preserve and adapt for future use. For many life long Kilgore residents in the audience, getting to see a film about their history, in one of the theaters where they first experienced films as children, was deeply moving.

TCA is proud to be able to support REEL East Texas Film Festival and so many wonderful organizations across the state who make the arts accessible to our fellow Texans.

*Photo: REEL East Texas Film Festival*

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