



# NEWS FROM TCA: OCTOBER 2024

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[State of the Arts License Plate](#)

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A lot is happening this month, including the payment of hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of fiscal year 2025 grants by TCA! And also, it's spooky season! We're sharing a photo from a 2023 TCA Cultural District Project grant because it is giving us costume goals-- even if the Changing Perspectives Block Party was not held in October. Photo: Mike Brooks for the Dallas Cultural District Foundation.

## State Artist Nominations Closing October 15

On behalf of the Texas State Legislature, the Texas Commission on the Arts is now accepting nominations for the 2025 and 2026 Texas State Artists. [Nominations](#) are accepted for Texas State Musician Nonclassical, Texas State Musician Classical, Texas Poet Laureate, Texas State Two Dimensional Artist (visual arts), and Texas State Three Dimensional Artist (visual arts). **Any Texas citizen is able to nominate a living artist in any of the five categories and self-nominations are welcome.** Nominees must be native Texans or have resided in the state for at least five years. They must have attained the highest levels of excellence and success in their respective disciplines and earned a statewide, regional or national reputation for their high caliber work. Nominations will be accepted online through October 15, 2024. The



Texas Poet Laureate, State Musician and State Artist Committee, composed of members appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, will make the final selections for the Legislature's consideration and approval in 2025.

The positions, created by SB 1043 of the 77th Legislature and in the case of the new Texas State Musician Classical designation SB 281 of the 88th Legislature (2023), are filled for one year terms. Appointees are selected for the exceptional quality of their work and for their outstanding commitment to the arts in Texas. Each Texas State Artist reflects the state's diversity and high quality artistic offerings. To learn more about the Texas State Artists nomination process, and to submit nominations, visit [https://www.arts.texas.gov/initiatives/texas\\_state\\_artist/](https://www.arts.texas.gov/initiatives/texas_state_artist/). Scroll down for a feature on 2024 Texas Poet Laureate, Amanda Johnston!

## East Texas Grants Workshop



Join us in Nacogdoches to learn more about how you and your community can apply for grants and services from Humanities Texas and the Texas Commission on the Arts in this free workshop! Representatives from both agencies will be on hand to discuss their programs and how they can benefit your work.

This event is ideal for representatives of nonprofit organizations and units of government, including schools and libraries.

The workshop will be held on Tuesday, November 19 from 1 to 4 PM, at the Wright Music Building, Music Recital Hall, Room 160, at Stephen F. Austin State University.

[Register](#) in advance to reserve your spot space is limited.

## National Cyber Security Awareness Month

October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month which is an annual campaign to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity. The Internet touches almost all aspects of everyone's daily life, whether we realize it or not. This program is designed to encourage people to learn about cybersecurity threats, reflect on their own IT practices, and learn how to stay safe online. TCA hopes you will join us in raising awareness about the importance of [cybersecurity](#) at home and work this October. Looking for additional information? The [Stay Safe Online](#) website is filled with tips, fact sheets, and free shareable resources.



## TCA Speaker Series: Explore the Power of Fundraising Boards

This Wednesday, Texas Commission on the Arts invites you to a free convening to **Explore the Power of Fundraising Boards**. This event is an opportunity to learn about

fundraising boards and the enormous impact they can have on your organization. Our speakers will discuss the art of developing a fundraising board, what makes them different from working boards, and what considerations will help you take on this important work. The virtual meeting will be on **Wednesday, October 9** at 11 AM Central.

TCA staff will be joined by two arts nonprofit professionals with a wealth of experience to share:

**Luis Purón** has served as Executive Director for the Rockport Center for the Arts (RCA) since 2015, working to elevate the organization to new levels of prominence and recognition in the United States. The most notable accomplishment of Purón's tenure has been the development and opening of the new 1.2 acre campus featuring a 14,000 square foot visual arts and education building, an 8,000 square foot conference center, and a 16,000 square foot sculpture garden, making the organization the first multidisciplinary arts organization in the Coastal Bend.



**Cookie Gregory Ruiz** has more than 30 years of experience in the areas of strategic planning, organizational development, and nonprofit fundraising/management. She has served as Executive Director of Ballet Austin since 1997. Ruiz is the immediate Past President and current member of the Board of Directors of Texans for the Arts, member of the Board of Directors of HousingWorks Austin, President of the Mayor's Better Austin Foundation Board, and is a Fellow of the National Arts Strategies International Chief Executive Program.

Mark your calendar and [register](#) today! TCA selected this topic using feedback from constituents, and we expect that future meetings in this series will continue addressing needs expressed by members of the Texas arts field.

## Support Texas Arts with the *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!

## 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 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.

### Arts Respond 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.

**Activity dates must start:** Between December 15, 2024 and March 14, 2025

**Application deadline:** Midnight on November 1, 2024

**Application form:** [Online](#)

**Resources:** [Grant guidelines](#), [contact TCA staff](#), [FAQ](#)

## 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.

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

TCA is signing up high schools and organizations across the state to participate in the [Poetry Out Loud](#) program. Interested educators should fill out [this form](#) soon to sign up and to receive materials to help them conduct the program during the fall semester.



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/organization will hold its competition to determine its winner by December 15, 2024. Their winner will compete at the state competition in February 2025.

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/organizations.

## 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.

## Amanda Johnston, 2024 Texas Poet Laureate

Texans have through October 15 to [nominate](#) the next Texas State Artists! Want some inspiration? This month, we're turning the spotlight on 2024 Texas Poet Laureate, Amanda Johnston!

Amanda Johnston is the author of two chapbooks, *GUAP* and *Lock & Key*, and the full length collection *Another Way to Say Enter*. Her work has appeared in numerous online and print publications, including *Callaloo*, *Poetry*, *The Moth*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Muzzle*, and the anthologies *Furious Flower: Seeding the Future of African American Poetry*, and *Women of Resistance: Poems for a New Feminism*. Johnston has received fellowships, grants, and awards from Cave Canem, Hedgebrook, Tasajillo, the Kentucky Foundation for Women, The Watermill Center, American Short Fiction, and the Austin International Poetry Festival. She is a former board president of the Cave Canem Foundation and the founder and executive director of Torch Literary Arts. Johnston was appointed the 2024 Texas Poet Laureate. In the same year, she received an [Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellowship](#).



Through her fellowship project, **Praisesong for the People: Poems Celebrating the Heart and Soul of Texas**, Johnston is commissioning seventy poets across seven regions of the state to write poems celebrating everyday Texans. Johnson asks, "Who would you praise with a poem? I encourage you to write a praise poem and share it with those who've made a difference in your life." The project seeks to uplift the

intersecting population across generational, gender, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, differently abled, and immigrant communities. Johnston will also share resources with K–12 educators to encourage students to read and write praise poems. The first several poems have been released—check them out at <https://www.praisesongforthepeople.com!>

*Amanda Johnston photo by Cindy Elizabeth*



Yes, on top of everything else going on this month, it's National Arts and Humanities Month! Make sure to celebrate properly, perhaps with one of our many [grantees!](#)

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