



# NEWS FROM TCA: DECEMBER 2024

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As December comes sailing in, this newsletter looks to the future, with virtual field listening sessions, several upcoming deadlines, the consideration of our next budget, and a feature on a TCA grant that helped young people envision their futures. Photo from the Downtown Corpus Christi Cultural District.

## TCA's Next Budget to Be Determined in Legislative Session



The 89th Session of the Texas Legislature will begin on Tuesday, **January 14**. State leaders anticipate additional resources of \$20 billion more than the current budget. Since the Texas Legislature meets biennially, it will make decisions on two years' worth of State budgeting, including TCA's budget for fiscal year 2026 (September 1, 2025 August 31, 2026) and fiscal year 2027 (September 1, 2026 August 31, 2027). As part of the budget

process, TCA filed a Strategic Plan and Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR). The format of the LAR allows TCA to request the amount of its current two year budget as

the Base Appropriations Request, and to ask for additional Exceptional Items as additions to the budget for the coming two years.

TCA's Legislative Appropriations Request is available in full [here](#).

**Base Appropriations Request:** \$31,935,146 over the biennium  
**Exceptional Items:** \$11,570,192 over the biennium  
**(detailed below)**

In addition to the Base Appropriations Request, TCA is requesting increased funds (Exceptional Items) of \$9 million over the biennium for arts organization grants, \$2 million over the biennium for cultural districts, and \$570,192 for staff retention and two additional staff members over the biennium.

TCA's Legislative Appropriations Request will be considered as part of **Senate Bill 1**. After the Legislature convenes on January 14, committee appointments will be made. The Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriations Committee will review TCA's LAR and discuss all requested amounts. The Legislative Session will end on June 2, 2025.

Mark your calendars! [Texans for the Arts Foundation](#) will host an Arts Advocacy Summit at the Capitol on February 5, 2025.

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



Holiday shopping on your to do list? TCA's chic 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!

## TCA Speaker Series: Upcoming Listening Sessions

We want to hear from you! For our last Speaker Series installments of the year, TCA will be holding **online listening sessions**. The free listening sessions will be conducted on Zoom and are an opportunity for TCA to learn more about you and your recent successes, challenges, and needs. Through your participation, you can help TCA assess the needs of our field, and guide the next year's slate of TCA Speaker Series events. TCA is holding two sessions to accommodate greater interest. Each session will follow the same agenda.

The sessions will be held on Tuesday, December 10 at 11 AM Central (register [here](#)) and Thursday, December 12 at 2 PM Central (register [here](#)).

Note that registration does not guarantee a spot in this event, as spaces are limited. Be quick to join us on the day of to experience this conversation in real time!

# LISTENING SESSIONS

12/10/24 11 AM CST

12/12/24 2 PM CST



Join us online

## Upcoming TCA Deadlines

TCA has several upcoming deadlines. 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.

### Grant Program: Arts Respond Project

Arts Respond Project grants provide project assistance grants to nonprofit arts organizations on a short term basis and may include administrative costs directly related to the project. Projects must address one of the following priority areas: economic development, education, health & human services, public safety & criminal justice, or natural resources & agriculture.

**Activity dates must be:** Between April 1, 2025 and August 31, 2025

**Application deadline:** Midnight on January 15, 2025

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

**Application Limit:** Organizations may submit one application for this deadline. Organizations should not submit more than one application addressing the same priority area per TCA fiscal year.

**Resources:** [Grant guidelines](#), [eligibility check](#) by priority area, [video](#) about the grant program and online application process, [contact TCA staff](#)

### Designation Program: Cultural Districts Designation

This program designates special zones in cities and Texas communities that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization. Interested applicants to TCA's Cultural Districts Designation program are required to submit a Letter of Intent.

**Letter of Intent deadline:** January 31, 2025; TCA recommends using the form found [here](#) to ensure all the key pieces of information are included, and scheduling a Zoom visit with TCA staff by emailing [districts@arts.texas.gov](mailto:districts@arts.texas.gov).

**Application deadline:** June 16, 2025

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

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

### Grant Program: 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 or conduct a workshop. These applications are funded based on a

percentage of contracted fees.

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

**Application deadline:** Midnight on February 3, 2025

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

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

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

**POETRY  
OUT LOUD**  
**20 YEARS**



Time is running out for high schools and organizations across the state to participate in the [Poetry Out Loud](#) program. Interested educators should fill out [this form](#) as soon

as possible 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. The school winner will compete at the state virtual semi finals in January 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.

TCA is currently recruiting for Arts Respond Project panels, which will be conducted online starting in early February 2025.

## Grantee Spotlight: The Arts Help Students Imagine Their Futures

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.

Today, we are highlighting the **Rubin Center for the Visual Arts at The University of Texas at El Paso**, a dynamic actor for arts education and community engagement in the El Paso area. In 2024, the Rubin Center collaborated with New York based Theatre Mitu to bring their innovative production *Utopian Hotline* to the Gaspar Enriquez Cultural Center, which is a new part of the Rubin Center located in the San Elizario Cultural District. *Utopian Hotline* explores questions like, "If we were to send a message into the distant future, what would it be, and how do we imagine the future in which it would be received?" The production served as the foundation for a series of innovative storytelling workshops for San Elizario high school students centered on the prompt, "How do you imagine a better future?"



Throughout the summer, students learned about storytelling, character development, and about various production roles from papier mâché artist Manuel Urreta, filmmaker Celina Galicia, and San Elizario High School's theater teacher Justin Del Valle. Guided by the prompt, students mixed traditional and contemporary techniques in the creation of elaborate, futurism inspired papier mâché identity masks that reflected each person's possible future self, and a short film that incorporated these characters in a thought provoking exploration of the students' challenges, concerns, and hopes for a better future in San Elizario and throughout the world.

By posing the questions of *Utopian Hotline* to these students, this project not only sparked new connections between local youth and the broader world of experimental theater and visual arts but also strengthened the connection between the Rubin Center and the San Elizario community, laying the groundwork for future collaborations and expanded arts programming in the area.

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

## 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.

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