



# NEWS FROM TCA: JANUARY 2026

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*The new year brings new possibilities! Maybe it's time to get a new haircut, spruce up your wardrobe, learn a new art form, or grow tentacles out of your building. However you mark the new year, make sure you know what opportunities TCA is offering below!*

*No octopuses were harmed in the making of this photo. Photo courtesy of the Original Denton District.*

## Applications Due February 2 for Texas Touring Roster Inclusion

TCA is accepting applications for the 2026-2028 Texas Touring Roster. The application deadline is February 2, 2026.

The program is designed to ensure that all Texans have the ability to enjoy work done by outstanding Texas-based companies and artists in their own communities. Artists from throughout the state apply to be included on the Texas Touring Roster. Touring artists offer performances as well as optional



services that may include workshops, master classes, lecture-demonstrations, arts education components, residencies, or short performances. These artists must have a history of touring and must be willing to travel outside of their community to do a performance or other work. They are also required to maintain a reasonable fee range. Evaluators with expertise in touring arts evaluate applications to this highly

competitive program.

TCA has prepared a wealth of application resources, all linked in the program [guidelines](#). We recommend that potential applicants review all these resources. TCA staff will also be offering live online Q&A sessions. January sessions will be held on:

**Tuesday, January 13 at 10 AM Central** Register [here](#)

**Thursday, January 22 at 1:30 PM Central** Register [here](#)

**Wednesday, January 28 at 2 PM Central** Register [here](#)

## Upcoming TCA Application Deadlines

TCA has several 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 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, 2026 and August 31, 2026

**Application deadline:** Midnight on January 15, 2026

**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 fiscal year.

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

### **Designation Program: Cultural District 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.

**Application deadline:** Letter of Intent to apply due February 2, 2026; application due June 15

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

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

### **Designation Program: Touring Roster Inclusion**

Texas-based nonprofits, individuals, universities, and unincorporated/for-profit groups providing arts performances apply to be included on the 2026-2028 Texas Touring Roster.

**Application deadline:** February 2, 2026

**Application form:** On [Submittable](#)

**Resources:** [Program guidelines](#), [FAQ](#)

### **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. These applications are funded based on a percentage of contracted fees.

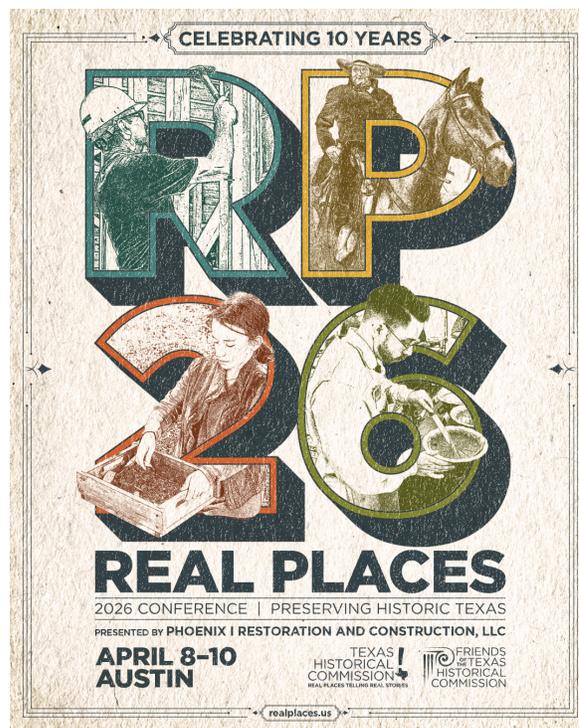
**Activity dates must start:** Between March 15 and June 14, 2026

**Application deadline:** Midnight on February 2, 2026

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

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

## **Real Places 2026**



TCA is a member of a group of State agencies that work together under a memorandum of understanding to promote tourism. One of our partner agencies, the Texas Historical Commission, is holding a conference soon that will address the needs of museums and other cultural venues.

The Texas Historical Commission's Real Places 2026 conference will take place both virtually and in person, in Austin, April 8-10. Presented by the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission in partnership with Phoenix | Restoration and Construction, LLC, Real Places is the premier historic preservation and heritage tourism

event in the Lone Star State, where anyone interested in protecting our past can work directly with industry-leading experts to learn practical, actionable solutions they can apply in their community.

The packed schedule features more than 50 workshops, tours, and sessions; over 100 expert speakers from across Texas and the U.S.; several keynote presentations; and a number of fun networking events. Recordings will be available to all attendees, whether joining online or in person, so you'll be able to watch the great presentations you missed due to concurrent sessions. Learn more and sign up at [realplaces.us](#).

## **Governor Abbott Reappoints Chang, Partee to Texas Commission on the Arts**

On December 5, 2025, Governor Greg Abbott reappointed Theresa Chang and Karen Partee to the Texas Commission on the Arts for terms set to expire on August 31, 2031. We're pleased to welcome Chair Partee and Commissioner Chang back to Commission service.



**Theresa Chang** of Houston is an attorney in Harris County. She previously served as Judge of Harris County Civil Court #2. She is a member of the State Bar of Texas, Law Focused Education, Inc. Board of Directors, and the South Texas College of Law Board of Directors and Executive Committee. She is a former member of the University of Houston Board of Regents, Asian American Bar Association of Houston Board of Directors, and the Commission for Lawyer Discipline. Additionally, she is a member of the Houston Grand Opera Underwriters, Theater Under the Stars Board of Directors, Asia Society of Texas Board of Directors, and the Chinese Community Center Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Commissioner Chang received a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from National Taiwan University, a Master of Science in Chemical Engineering from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, and a Juris Doctor from South Texas College of Law.



**Karen Partee** of McKinney is executive vice president and chief marketing officer of Texas Bank and Trust Company and has served as Chair of the Texas Commission on the Arts since January 2024. She is a certified financial marketing professional through the Institute of Certified Bankers and a board member of the American Bankers Association's (ABA) School of Bank Marketing and the ABA Certified Financial Marketing Professionals Board. Additionally, she is a national board member of the Texas Tech Alumni Association, past president and a sustaining member of the Junior League of Longview, and a former member of The

University of Texas at Tyler College of Arts and Sciences Advisory Board and the Longview Museum of Fine Arts Advisory Board. Chair Partee received a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from Texas Tech University, an honors diploma from the ABA School of Bank Marketing and Management, and a certification from the American Institute of Bankers.

## 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 *State of the Arts* License Plate



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!

## Grantee Spotlight: Bringing a Museum to Rural Classrooms

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're spotlighting the **Old Jail Art Center (OJAC)**, an art and regional history museum in Albany (Shackelford County). Housed in a restored

former limestone jail, OJAC's mission is to broaden engagement with visual art and culture through exhibitions, education, and preservation. This past year, OJAC carried out its mission through a variety of programs, including Art-to-Go, an initiative in its 24th year that brings high-quality arts and culture education directly into classrooms across rural West Texas. The program provided monthly arts education to roughly 4,000 students at an average cost of just \$1.33 per child. With support from a TCA Arts Respond Project grant in the education priority area, Art-to-Go delivered monthly, TEKS-aligned lessons to K-12th graders in more than 30 participating schools throughout the predominantly rural area. In Art-to-Go, museum educators come to schools with multimedia presentations, hands-on studio materials, and objects from the museum's Study Collection, so students can explore cultural traditions like Earth Day, Lunar New Year, and National Poetry Month. At the end of the program each May, students visit OJAC to experience the artworks they studied in class and participate in a final art activity.

For many of the students, Art-to-Go not only provides their first visit to an art museum, but a moment of connection with many cultures, including their own. Between studying Japanese illustrations, Navajo weavings, and the works of contemporary artists, students see their heritage reflected in classroom lessons. Shy or reluctant students often become the most expressive when exploring these topics through artmaking activities. During one museum tour, a student explained that she had never felt included in many school activities because she wasn't involved in sports or music, but encountering art in person made her feel seen for the first time, and it created a way for her to connect with her peers. The tour visits not only benefited students, but also created a deeper appreciation for the arts in families who may not have previously felt that museums were accessible to them.

As Art-to-Go continues to expand its reach, OJAC remains committed to serving as an accessible, cultural anchor for rural West Texas. Thanks to partnerships with administrators, teachers, contracted educators, and dozens of participating schools, Art-to-Go continues to build cultural literacy, spark curiosity, and foster a sense of belonging for students across West Texas.

TCA is proud to be able to support the Old Jail Art Center and so many other wonderful organizations across the state who bring the arts to our fellow Texans.

*Photo: Hannah Rankin (Education Department)*

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