



NEWS FROM TCA: JUNE 2026

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Texas is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and TCA is funding several arts-filled America250 events! Scroll down for just one recent example hosted by the Lewisville Lake Symphony! Photo: Lisa Chittenden

The 2026-2028 Texas Touring Roster Launches in June

TCA will be launching a new Texas Touring Roster later this month. The Roster will go into effect for performances, arts services, and workshops to be done as early as September 1, 2026. Applicants to be listed on the 2026-2028 Texas Touring Roster will be notified of their results via email by June 12. The new Texas Touring Roster and [Performance Support](#) application form will be available online by July 1. Until this update is done, the Performance Support grant application form is



not available. The first round of Performance Support grants that can use artists on the new Roster will have an application deadline of August 3.

West Texas Grants Workshops



Midland and Fort Stockton areas, please join us on Tuesday, June 23, in Midland or Wednesday, June 24, in Fort Stockton for free grants workshops for West Texas organizations! Hosted by Humanities Texas and the Nonprofit Management Center in partnership with the Texas Commission on the Arts and the Texas Historical Commission, the workshop will highlight new funding opportunities and other resources.

Representatives from each organization will offer resources and answer questions throughout the workshop. Don't miss this opportunity to speak directly with statewide funders and learn how to access their grants and resources!

[Registration](#) by June 12 is required. Morning refreshments and lunch will be provided.

This workshop is free and open to all humanities, arts, cultural, and educational non-profit organizations in rural Texas. This event is ideal for representatives of nonprofit organizations and units of government, including schools, museums, and libraries.

Texas Celebrates America250

In 2026, America commemorates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. To take part in this momentous celebration, TCA awarded Commission Initiative grants to arts organizations in each of the state's 38 U.S. congressional districts earlier this fiscal year. As we approach that July 4 anniversary, organizations are kicking off their events that will last throughout the summer.



An early celebration of the events has already wrapped up, with great success. In Texas's 26th district, the Lewisville Lake Symphony kicked off this season of festivities with their free, outdoor community-wide event, America250: An Anniversary Celebration of Creativity and Country on the Plaza, held at the Wayne Ferguson Plaza in Old Town Lewisville. The event was in collaboration with eight of the ten members of the Greater Lewisville Arts Alliance, representing music and choir, theater arts, dance, and visual arts. Reaching over 200 participants, the event activated the plaza and reached many individuals and families encountering the performances unexpectedly while visiting the area. According to narratives collected by the organization, "the atmosphere

throughout the event reflected a strong sense of community pride and shared celebration.”



A highlight of the day included a brass quintet presented by the symphony performing an opening fanfare and two featured sets of patriotic and Americana-inspired music. Throughout the event, audiences experienced a vibrant

celebration of American history and culture through performances by local music ensembles, theater organizations, dancers, and choral groups, while visual artists created live patriotic-themed artwork on site.

In their grant report, the Symphony also reflected on the day's larger impact. “Beyond celebrating America250, the event showcased the breadth and quality of the arts within our community and demonstrated the power of collaboration among local arts organizations.



The grant not only supported a meaningful patriotic celebration, but also strengthened partnerships, expanded public engagement with the arts, and created a highly visible community event accessible to residents of all ages.”

TCA hopes you can find an America250 celebration near you to be a part of this unforgettable moment in U.S. history! Thank you to our partners at the National Endowment for the Arts for helping to fund these activities across the state.

Photo: Lisa Chittenden

Welcome, Commissioner Turner!

On May 28, Governor Greg Abbott appointed **Janine Turner** to the Texas Commission on the Arts for a term set to expire on August 31, 2029.

Commissioner Turner, of North Texas, is an Emmy and three-time Golden Globe nominated actress. She is best known for portraying Maggie O'Connell in the hit CBS television series, Northern Exposure, starring in the blockbuster movie, Cliffhanger, with Sylvester Stallone, Universal's Leave it to Beaver, and for her additional series work on CBS's Dallas, ABC's General Hospital, Lifetime's Strong Medicine, and NBC's Friday Night Lights (filmed in Texas). Turner grew up in Euless and Fort Worth, starting her career at the age of three as a model with The Kim Dawson Agency, apprentice to the Fort Worth Ballet, and actress at Fort Worth's classic theater, Casa Mañana. She created and hosted the talk radio show, The Janine Turner Show, in Dallas and Houston for over two years, and in 2010 founded and co-chaired Constituting America, an organization, now in its sixteenth year, with the mission to spread non-partisan awareness about the relevance of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. Turner has given over 600 speeches as a visiting scholar



nationwide both to students and adults, spanning a broad range of topics including women's issues, motivation, civic duty, and faith. We welcome Commissioner Turner and are excited to work with her!

Upcoming TCA Application Deadlines

TCA has a few 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 draft review requests would be made at least two weeks before the application deadline.

Designation Program: Cultural District Designation

This program designates special zones in Texas cities and 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; application due June 15

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

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

Grant Program: Cultural District Projects

This program is designed for projects that focus on significant cultural tourism projects happening in a designated cultural district, by established arts organizations that are based in the cultural district and authorized to apply by their cultural district's managing entity.

Activity dates must occur: Between September 1, 2026 and August 31, 2027

Application deadline: Midnight on June 15, 2026

Application form: [Online](#) now for eligible organizations

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

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 start: Between September 1, 2026 and March 31, 2027

Application deadline: Midnight on July 15, 2026

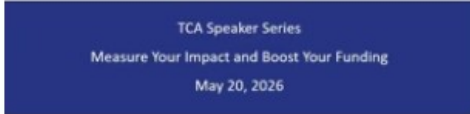
Application form: [Online](#) now for eligible organizations

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](#)

TCA Speaker Series: Measure Your Impact & Boost Your Funding

On May 20, TCA held an online convening titled **Measure Your Impact and Boost Your Funding**, as part of our quarterly Speaker Series. The session explored how collecting good quantitative and qualitative data is necessary for good grant applications and reports and looked at a framework that organizations of any size can use to construct stronger evaluations for their



programs. If you weren't able to join the live event, a recording of it is available [here](#).

Thanks again to our speakers for this session, **Stacy Keith**, Executive Director at the Lubbock Cultural Arts Foundation, and **Danielle Demetria East**, Founder and Executive Director at East Lubbock

Art House.

TCA will host our next Speaker Series event in August. Please keep an eye out for our July newsletter, where we will announce the details of that webinar and provide the registration link.

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!

TCA Rural Tours Bring More Arts to Underserved Areas



In our continuing efforts to provide more quality performances and arts opportunities to rural areas of the state, TCA has selected five Texas Touring Roster artists and groups to provide free performances in rural counties during the summer. Each artist or group provides five performances in an assigned area, and the performances are hosted by local nonprofits, units of government, or schools. TCA pays each artist a flat fee for the performances directly, eliminating costs to host organizations. Hosts are reminded that any Texas nonprofit or unit of government, including a school or library, is eligible to apply for a Performance Support grant for up to half of a Texas Touring Roster artist's fee.

This month, we are excited to share news about performances occurring in rural counties in West Texas, the Panhandle Plains, and Northeast Texas.

Audiences in Coke and Runnels counties in West Texas will enjoy performances from **Goodhearted Entertainment**. The company believes in goodhearted fun for guests three years old to 103 years young and has presented family-friendly performances featuring puppetry, clowning and magic for over twenty years. Goodhearted Entertainment will be providing a performance and workshop at the Coke County Library in Robert Lee on June 1 at 10 am. Runnels County audiences can enjoy a puppet show at the Carnegie Library of Ballinger on June 5 at 10:30 am.

Singer-songwriter and bilingual storyteller **Sue Young** will be visiting audiences in the Panhandle Plains this June. Sue has delighted audiences around Texas and the United States since 1994 and is a recipient of a Parents' Choice Silver Honor Award. Sue will perform stories and songs on June 23 at 10 am at the Turkey Public Library in Hall County and at the Silvertown Public Library in Briscoe County at 2 pm. She will also be in Briscoe County on June 24 performing at the Caprock Public Library in Quitaque at 2 pm. On June 25, audiences can find Sue at the Memphis Public Library in Hall County for a 10:30 am performance and another at 1 pm at the Childress Public Library in Childress County.



Musician **Joe McDermott** has been entertaining young people for over 37 years with engaging songwriting that has garnered numerous Parents' Choice Awards and nominations. He will be bringing his engaging concerts to communities in Wood and Franklin counties June 25-27. Joe will be performing June 25 at 6 pm at the Winnsboro Center for the Arts Creative Learning Center in Wood County. On June 26, he will visit Winnsboro's Gilbreath Memorial Library in Franklin County at 9:30 am and the Quitman Public Library in Wood County at 1 pm. Joe's final tour performances will be in Wood County on June 27 at 10:15 am at the Alba Public Library & Museum and 12 pm at the Mineola Memorial Library.

If you are local to any of these venues, we hope you'll enjoy these free performances! We'll have more summer performances to share in our July newsletter. Special thanks to the fantastic artists conducting rural tours on behalf of TCA and to their host organizations.

Photos: Goodhearted Entertainment by Kirk Marsh; Sue Young by Brenda Ladd; Joe McDermott by Isabel Suarez.

Grantee Spotlight: Aloha Vaqueros Exhibition Says "Hello" to Texas Tourists

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 **Briscoe Western Art Museum**, which presented *Aloha Vaqueros*, a temporary exhibition exploring the fascinating connections between Mexico's vaquero traditions and Hawaii's paniolo cowboy culture. Developed in collaboration with the Museo del Vaquero de las Californias in Baja California Sur, Mexico, and the Paniolo Preservation Society in Waimea, Hawaii, the exhibition traced the origins of Hawaii's paniolo heritage to 1832, when King Kamehameha III invited Mexican vaqueros to teach cattle herding techniques to the Hawaiian people. Featuring artifacts, photographs, and stories, the exhibition offered visitors a rarely told chapter of Western history that stretches from the ranchos of Baja California to the volcanic coastlines of the Pacific.

With support from a TCA Arts Respond Project grant in economic development, the Briscoe mounted an ambitious marketing campaign that helped the exhibition reach well beyond its base in San Antonio. Exceeding expectations, 14,000 visitors experienced *Aloha Vaqueros*, with 62% of attendees traveling from outside San Antonio, including 33% from other parts of Texas. Increased visitation not only benefited the museum but also contributed to broader downtown economic activity through visitor spending at hotels, restaurants, and local businesses. Programming for the exhibition also surpassed attendance goals at every turn: more than 1,500 students participated in tours, and free events brought in over 2,500 community members. Among those visitors was a family with Hawaiian heritage whose ancestors were paniolos in the early 20th century; seeing their story reflected in a Western art museum moved them deeply.

As the Briscoe continues its mission to preserve the rich traditions and shared heritage of the American West, *Aloha Vaqueros* stands as a model for how expanding the geographic boundaries of Western culture can deepen audience

engagement, strengthen community ties, and position a museum as both a cultural anchor and an economic driver for its city.

TCA is proud to support the Briscoe Western Art Museum and the many other wonderful organizations across the state who make the arts accessible to so many of our fellow Texans.

Photo: Briscoe Western Art Museum

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