



NEWS FROM TCA: JULY 2026

arts.texas.gov

[State of the Arts License
Plate](#)

[Art Jobs](#)



Texas has been celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, including in the Granbury Cultural District, where this 2025 photo was taken. Additionally, TCA funded several arts-filled America250 events--scroll down for two recent examples! Photo by Eric Killingsway, courtesy of the Granbury Cultural District.

The 2026-2028 Texas Touring Roster Is Here

On June 11, TCA Commissioners approved 153 Texas artists and arts companies to the [Texas Touring Roster for 2026-2028](#). The Texas Touring Roster features some of the state's best artistic talent and is designed to ensure that all Texans may enjoy events and performances by these artists in their local communities. Congratulations to all the 2026-2028 Texas Touring Roster artists!



Artists on the roster must have a history of touring and maintain a reasonable fee range. TCA provides grants to arts presenters, schools, libraries, festivals, and other nonprofits and government units throughout Texas to help with the cost of bringing in companies and artists from the roster.

Presenters may apply through TCA's [Arts Respond Performance Support](#) grant category for a portion of the artistic fees for artists from the Texas Touring Roster. **The Performance Support application is updated and [available now](#)** for activities happening between September 1, 2026 and August 31, 2027. The **August 3 quarterly deadline** covers activities starting between September 1, 2026 and December 14, 2026.

Acceptance onto the Texas Touring Roster is for two years, and benefits groups and artists by giving them a powerful marketing tool. Access to grant funds, combined with the fact that Texas Touring Roster artists have been deemed the best in their field by a panel of statewide experts, makes these artists attractive to a variety of clients.

Artists on the Texas Touring Roster range from individual performing and visual artists to large performing arts companies. They represent artistic disciplines including music, visual art, dance, theater, storytelling, literary art and folk art. Options are diverse and range from ballet to Indian classical dance, western swing to conjunto, mosaic to poetry, jazz to children's theater, sitar to puppetry, and everything in between.

Presenters may be interested in the many new faces on the 2026-2028 Texas Touring Roster, including:

[Aaron Stephens](#) • [Alda P. Dobbs](#) • [Alex Tha Great](#) • [Amalia Ortiz](#) • [Anel I. Flores](#) • [Angela Henderson Smith](#) • [ARCOS Dance](#) • [Austin Symphony Orchestra](#) • [Austin Taiko](#) • [Azul Barrientos](#) • [Ballet Nepantla](#) • [Big Love Car Wash](#) • [Central Texas Philharmonic](#) • [Chibbi](#) • [Chloe de Souza](#) • [Community Arts](#) • [Danielle Talamantes](#) • [Kerry Wilkerson](#) • [Diaz Music Institute](#) • [Dirty River Jazz Band](#) • [Double Vision Jazz Ensemble](#) • [Dr. Sunanda Nair and Sunanda's Performing Arts Center \(SPARC\)](#) • [Ebony Stewart](#) • [El Chanclazo](#) • [Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra](#) • [Georgia Parker](#) • [Hope Shiver](#) • [Hot Club of Cowtown](#) • [Hot Pickin 57s](#) • [Houston Grand Opera](#) • [Ida y Vuelta Flamenco Dance Company](#) • [Invincible Czars](#) • [Invoke](#) • [Iron Frog Press](#) • [Jelly Ellington](#) • [Jomo & The Possum Posse/Jomo Edwards](#) • [Jonathan Palomar](#) • [Juan Longoria Jr. y Conteño](#) • [Kam Franklin](#) • [Kim Lehman](#) • [Light Crust Doughboys featuring Marek Eneti](#) • [Lone Star Circus](#) • [Loop38](#) • [Madam Radar](#) • [Melissa Carper](#) • [Nancy Churnin](#) • [Natyanjali Kuchipudi Dance School](#) • [Paramount Story Wranglers](#) • [Ramazinis Circus Theater](#) • [Ramblin' Rita](#) • [Raul Ayala Band](#) • [Riyaaz Qawwali](#) • [Rochelle & the Sidewinders Duo](#) • [Rudi Harst](#) • [Russell Joe Thompson](#) • [Shasparay](#) • [Taylord](#) • [Terrence Taps](#) • [Texas Gypsies](#) • [Tio Toto](#) • [Vocal Majority Chorus](#)

Rio Grande Valley Workshop



TCA will be participating in Telling Our South Texas Stories: A Gathering for South Texas Arts & Culture Creators, Stewards & Advocates on Saturday,

August 15 from 10 am - 4 pm at the San Benito Cultural Heritage Museum. Attendance is free; participants can [request](#) up to \$150 to support their travel costs.

Join MINDPOP's Rural Texas Arts and Culture Network, Texans for the Arts Foundation, Texas Commission on the Arts and San Benito Cultural Arts Department for a day of pláticas and resource sharing sessions. Explore how to communicate the distinct cultural identity and impact of the arts to enhance grant proposals and amplify advocacy for the arts locally and statewide. We'll consider ways to collaborate to strengthen grant proposals, hone individual storytelling, and share available funding opportunities and resources to support your work. [RSVP here](#).

TCA Grant & Program Updates

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 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 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 TCA fiscal year.

Resources: [Grant guidelines](#), [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 [2026-2028 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 September 1, 2026 and December 14, 2026

Application deadline: Midnight on August 3, 2026

Application form: [Available now](#)

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

Program Updates

Decisions on applications for Arts Create Year 2, Arts Respond Project Support, Cultural District Designation, Cultural District Project, and Arts Respond Performance Support applications will be made at the September 3, 2026 Commission meeting.

Grantee Spotlight: Fanfares for the United States' 250th Anniversary

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 two organizations who received TCA Commission Initiative America 250 grants to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Houston Youth Symphony and the Bay Area Chorus of Greater Houston

brought music to their communities ahead of July 4. A 250th anniversary only comes once, and these Texas arts organizations met the moment with creativity, collaboration, and performances that brought communities together in memorable ways.



Houston Youth Symphony's Coda Music Program brought 214 at-risk youth together for a joyful Main Stage concert at Strake Jesuit's Parsley Center alongside professional wind ensemble WindSync, performing works showcasing the American composers Aaron Copland, John Philip Sousa, and newly commissioned Texan composer

Ivan Trevino. Leading up to the performance, WindSync and Coda teaching artists engaged students in discussions around the historical and cultural significance of these works and their composers in American music.

The concert was the culmination of more than 120 in-person group string lessons offered free of charge to 3rd–5th graders from September through February. The energy of the program is perhaps best captured in the story of Humberto, a new student who joined with no prior musical experience and threw himself into learning with remarkable dedication. By practicing until he hit his personal goal, Humberto became a source of encouragement and enthusiasm for his fellow students along the way. More than 62% of Coda participants returned to the program this season, a testament to the community it has built over more than a decade.

The Bay Area Chorus of Greater Houston presented "Shadows to Light," the finale of their 61st concert season, featuring an all-volunteer chorus performing alongside 30 professional orchestra musicians before an audience of more than 500 people.

The second half of the program was devoted entirely to works by American composers in recognition of America's 250th



anniversary. "This programming celebrated the richness, diversity, and emotional depth of American musical traditions, especially the music of faith. Through the works of Joseph Martin, [Texas State Musician] Craig Hella Johnson, Larry L. Fleming, Jane Marshall, and Hall Johnson, audience members experienced songs that reflected themes of hope, grace, and the promise of a better tomorrow for people of all backgrounds. These ideas continue to unite Americans after two and a half centuries."

For singers in the all-volunteer chorus, performing these works with the orchestra was both inspiring and transformative. Members expressed a renewed sense of pride, connection, and purpose through the collaborative experience. The music became more vivid and impactful because of the orchestral accompaniment, creating moments of genuine emotional connection among performers and audience members alike.

TCA is proud to support and celebrate the American spirit with Houston Youth Symphony, Bay Area Chorus of Greater Houston, and the numerous other organizations across the state who make the arts accessible to so many of our fellow Texans. Thank you to our partners at the National Endowment for the Arts for helping to fund these activities across the state.

Photos: Houston Youth Symphony by Monica Hindmarsh; Bay Area Chorus of Greater Houston by John Barajas

TCA Speaker Series: Engaging New Audiences through Partnerships

TCA is holding its next Speaker Series professional development event in August! This free optional online webinar is titled **Engaging New Audiences through Partnerships**. Our speakers will discuss how organizations can expand their audiences by developing a deeper understanding of their community and then attracting nontraditional and cross-discipline audiences through strategic partnerships.

The virtual meeting will be on **Thursday, August 13 from 2:00 - 3:30 pm Central**. It is open to arts nonprofits, artists, and members of the public.

TCA is excited to feature our speakers, who bring a wealth of information and experience serving a variety of communities through their programs:

Lynn Barnett has served as Executive Director of the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council since 1980. In this role, she has been instrumental in launching and



nurturing numerous arts organizations and initiatives, including the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature, the Center for Contemporary Arts, Young Audiences of Abilene, and the Children's Art & Literacy Festival. She also spearheaded the Storybook Sculpture Project (58 sculptures) and the Storybook Bench Project (124 benches), as well as the Biennial Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition, which has celebrated 38 years of public art. Additionally, she worked closely with the City of Abilene to secure Abilene's designation as one of the first five Texas Cultural Districts

recognized by the Texas Commission on the Arts in 2010.

Casey Chavez is the ArtWalk Coordinator for the Center for Contemporary Arts in historic Downtown Abilene. For the past four years, she has been a driving force behind the Center's ArtWalk, building bridges, strengthening community connections, and empowering art as the way to bring it all to life! Casey has also been working as a studio artist for the last ten years.



[Register](#) today and mark your calendar! Please note: 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. TCA selected this topic using feedback from constituents, and we expect that future meetings in this series will address other needs expressed by members of the Texas arts field.

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 selected five Texas Touring Roster artists and groups to provide free performances in rural counties between June 1 and August 31. 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 in rural counties in North Texas, the northern Panhandle, and West Texas.



Archer County magic lovers and bibliophiles of all ages will be treated to a variety of performances by **Magic in the Library** this July. Magic in the Library is a program harnessing the excitement of slight-of-hand magic and mechanical/theatrical prop illusions to bring literacy concepts to life, encouraging elementary students to become better readers and excel in

language arts.

Young readers can experience this exciting program July 10 at 10 and 11 am at the Holliday Public Library. On July 28, audiences of all ages are welcome to join Magic in the Library for an enchanting night exploring the history of magic in West Texas at the Royal Theater in Archer City. Festivities will kick off at 6 pm with a lecture and performance, followed by the opening of an exhibition on the history of magic in West Texas.

Young people in Carson and Hutchinson counties will also get to explore the magic of learning through melodramatic storytelling performances and workshops with **Chris Espinosa-XYZ**. Chris is a



Kennedy Center Teaching Artist and a Certified Arts Integration Teaching Specialist who has presented hundreds of assemblies and residencies that use drama to connect students with standards-aligned academic subjects.

You can find Chris in Carson County Library branches on July 13 and 14. He will be at the Groom Branch for a 2 pm performance on July 13. On July 14, he will be visiting the Panhandle Branch at 10 am, the White Deer Branch at 1 pm, and the Skellytown Branch at 3 pm. Hutchinson County audiences can enjoy performances at several library branches on July 15. Chris will perform at the Stinnett Branch at 10 am, the Borger Branch at 2 pm, and the Fritch Branch at 4 pm.



Audiences in Concho and Coke counties in central 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 puppet show performance at the Eden Public Library in Concho County on July 29 at 2 pm. Coke County audiences can enjoy a similar performance at the Bronte Recreation Center on July 30 at 10 am.

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

Photos: Magic in the Library by Tom Steele Photography; Chris Espinosa-XYZ by Chris Espinosa; Goodhearted Entertainment by Kirk Marsh.

Texas Commission on the Arts
1801 Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701
512-463-5535
800-252-9415
arts.texas.gov



Texas Commission on the Arts | 1801 Congress Avenue Suite 6.600 | Austin, TX 78701 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!