



Bay Area **Arts Advocacy** A Historical Overview

Policies and Events Impacting the Bay Area
Arts Ecosystem (1917-2018)

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CONSULTING**



RYSE youth programming participants advocate for Richmond Kids First Ballot Measures in 2018

Thank you to the arts leaders and advocates who spoke with us, and responded to surveys and emails, to help us learn more about events and policies that have shaped the Bay Area arts ecosystem.

Kimberly Aceves-Iñiguez, RYSE (East Bay)
Tamara Alvarado, Shortino Foundation (South Bay)
Roberto Bedoya, Oakland Cultural Affairs (East Bay)
Terry Byrnes Finnerman, Napa County advocate (North Bay)
Mike Courville, Open Mind Consulting, (North Bay)
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Patrick Dooley, Shotgun Players (East Bay)
Michael Fried, Arts Executive (East Bay)
Berniz House, Western Stage (South Bay)
John Killacky, Vermont State Representative
Angie Kim, Center for Cultural Innovation (Statewide)
Kristin Madsen, Creative Sonoma (North Bay)

Maria X. Martinez, Department of Public Health (SF)
Leslie Medine, On the Move (North Bay)
Jonathan Moscone, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (SF)
Nancy Ng, Luna Dance Institute (East Bay)
Stan Rosenberg, Former Massachusetts State Senator
Diane Sanchez, Consultant (East Bay)
Kevin Seaman, Artist & Activist (SF)
Joshua Simon, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (East Bay)
Nina Simon, Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (South Bay)
Judith Sulsona, Monterey County advocate (South Bay)
Nina Tunceli, Americans for the Arts
Debra Walker, SF Arts Democratic Club (SF)

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of numerous overlapping triangles in various colors including blue, green, yellow, orange, red, and purple. The triangles are of different sizes and are arranged in a way that they fill the vertical space of the page.

Introduction

This timeline is a compilation of some (but certainly not all) of the policy milestones, government actions, and advocacy efforts that have contributed to shaping the arts ecology of the Bay Area. It provides objective descriptions about what transpired, historical context, and observations about each episode's significance for the arts communities of the Bay Area and for understanding how arts advocacy has worked.

Books (and book shelves) have been filled with the full story behind most of the items included, so we have provided links to further readings should one wish to learn more.

In this historic overview there is a mix of specific moments when a law was passed, a court case was lost, or a budget was saved and the arts landscape changed. But there are also mini-histories of the institutions and networks that impacted and influenced the lives of artists, the built environment of a city, the quality of public education, and society's understanding of what role government should play in supporting artistic expression and cultural participation.

Deciding what to include in this timeline is a subjective undertaking. Arts policy, like art itself, means different things to different people in different circumstances.

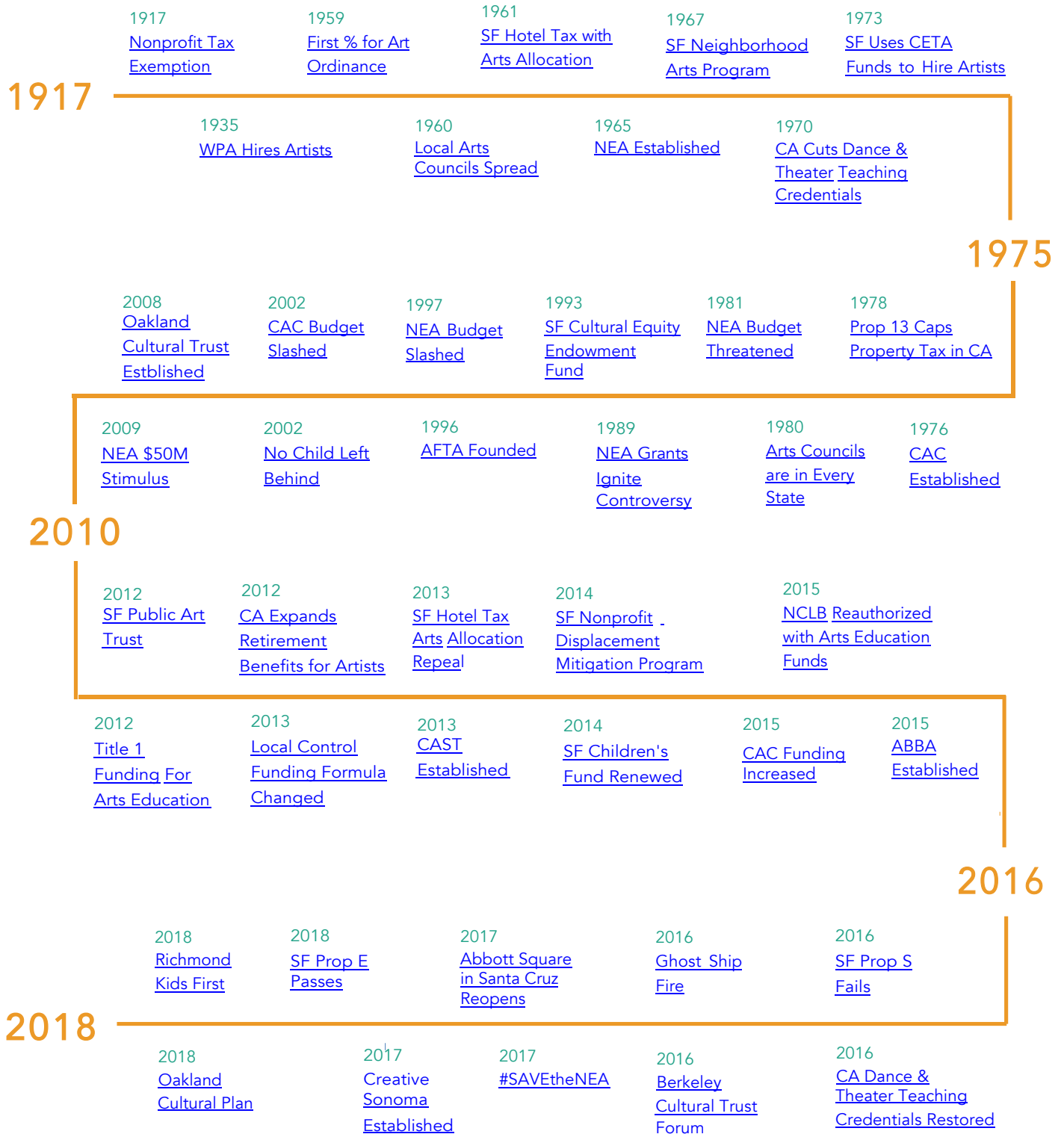
The nonprofit art sector in the United States is a \$30 billion economy, of which direct public arts funding represents a small fraction (approximately 5%) of the whole sector but a large portion of the budgets of community-based arts organizations. Individual donors and private foundations provide most of the capital upon which artists and arts institutions depend and have done so for the past hundred years because the tax code has encouraged it. Arts policy is, therefore, concerned with volatile and contentious government budget cycles and with deeply entrenched tax policies. But, as this timeline illustrates, it's also about where artists live and where art is created and experienced, whether schools offer arts instruction and who teaches it, and how the arts have been engaged by policy makers to address problems affecting communities that go far beyond the arts field, from unemployment in the 1930s to racial injustice today.

In selecting items to include, we received generous input from 25 artists, arts organization leaders, and arts advocates from around the Bay Area and the country, and we're very grateful to their insights. We know, however, that asking more people with different experiences, knowledge sets, and different ideologies would fill in many gaps in this effort.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their insights, and we hope you find this overview edifying and inspiring too.

- Marc Vogl and Kelly Varian
Spring 2019

Arts Ecosystem (1917-2018)



Policies and Events Impacting the Bay Area

Contextual Demographic Data

HISTORICAL SNAPSHOTS

1917: Federal Tax Code Changes to Exempt Nonprofits and Introduces Individual Income Tax Deduction for Charitable Donations

1935: Federal Arts Projects of the Works Progress Administration Hires Thousands of Artists

1959: Philadelphia Creates First % for Art Ordinance in the U.S.

1960s: Local Arts Councils Rapidly Establish Across the Country

1961: San Francisco Establishes Hotel Tax Fund with Dedicated Arts Allocation

1965: President Johnson Creates National Endowment for the Arts

1967: San Francisco Arts Commission Creates Neighborhood Arts Program

1973: Congress Passes the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA),
SF Uses Funds to Hire Artists

1976: Governor Jerry Brown Establishes California Arts Council

1978: Proposition 13 Caps Property Tax Assessments in California

1980: Every State Has a State Arts Council

1993: San Francisco Establishes Cultural Equity Endowment to Expand Arts Funding

1996: American Councils of the Arts and the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies Merge to
Create Americans for the Arts

2002: President Bush signs No Child Left Behind, Arts Education Budgets Suffer

2008: Oakland Cultural Trust Advocates to Preserve Local Arts Funding in Budget Crisis

2012: New California Law Expands Retirement Benefits for Arts Workers

2012: Title 1 Funding Guidance Enables Federal Funds To Be Used for Arts Education

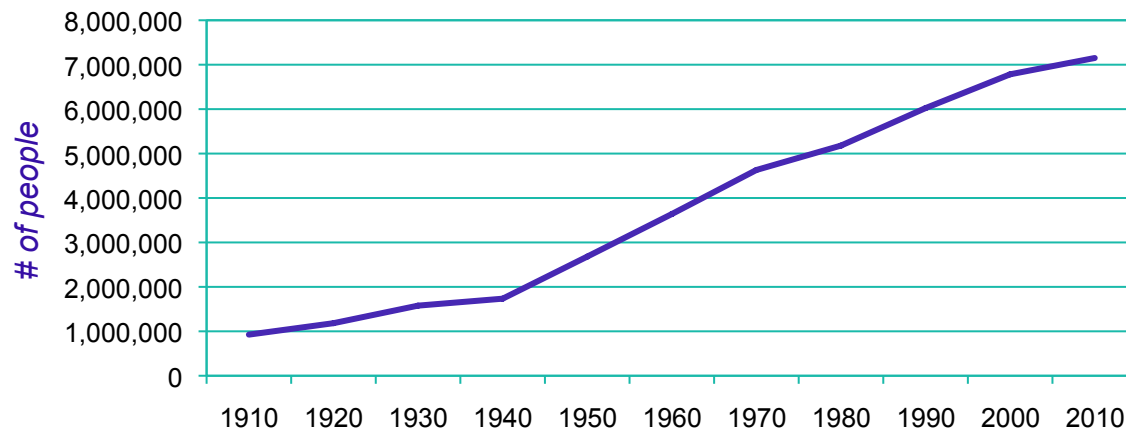
- 2013:** California Establishes Local Control Funding Formula Allowing School Districts to Invest More in Arts Education
- 2014:** Voters Renew the SF Children's and Public Education Enrichment Funds Ensuring Stable, Long-Term Arts Education Funding
- 2015:** Arts for a Better Bay Area (ABBA) Forms to Advocate for More Public Arts Support and Wins \$9m in New Funding
- 2016:** Oakland Ghost Ship Fire Leads to Artist Displacement
- 2016:** 46 Years Later California Reinstates the Dance and Theater Teaching Credentials
- 2017:** Creative Sonoma Established a Decade After Local Arts Council Folds
- 2017:** Abbott Square in Santa Cruz Reopens Thorough Arts/Government Collaboration
- 2018:** Richmond Fund for Children and Youth Act Provides Funding for Arts Education Programming
- 2018:** Oakland Creates First Cultural Plan in 30 Years

Bibliography

Contextual Demographic Data

Just as the Bay Area arts ecosystem has changed dramatically over the past century, the region's demographic makeup has changed too. Generally, the region has become more populous, older, financially better off (on average), and more racially and ethnically diverse. Due to limited data availability, the statistics below describe the nine-county Bay Area region and exclude Monterey and Santa Cruz counties.

Bay Area Population, 1910-2010



Population By County, 1910-2010

Year	Alameda	Contra Costa	Marin	Napa	San Francisco	San Mateo	Santa Clara	Solano	Sonoma	BAY AREA
1910	246,131	31,674	25,114	19,800	416,912	26,585	83,539	27,559	48,394	925,708
1920	344,177	53,889	27,342	20,678	506,676	36,781	100,676	40,602	52,090	1,182,911
1930	474,883	78,608	41,648	22,897	634,394	77,405	145,118	40,834	62,222	1,578,009
1940	513,011	100,450	52,907	28,503	634,536	111,782	174,949	49,118	69,052	1,734,308
1950	740,315	298,984	85,619	46,603	775,357	235,659	290,547	104,833	103,405	2,681,322
1960	908,209	409,030	146,820	65,890	740,316	444,387	642,315	134,597	147,375	3,638,939
1970	1,071,446	556,116	208,652	79,140	715,674	557,361	1,065,313	171,989	204,885	4,630,576
1980	1,105,379	656,380	222,568	99,199	678,974	587,329	1,295,071	235,203	299,681	5,179,784
1990	1,279,182	803,732	230,096	110,765	723,959	649,623	1,497,577	340,421	388,222	6,023,577
2000	1,443,741	948,816	247,289	124,279	776,733	707,161	1,682,585	394,542	458,614	6,783,760
2010	1,510,271	1,049,025	252,409	136,484	808,235	718,451	1,781,642	413,344	483,878	7,150,739

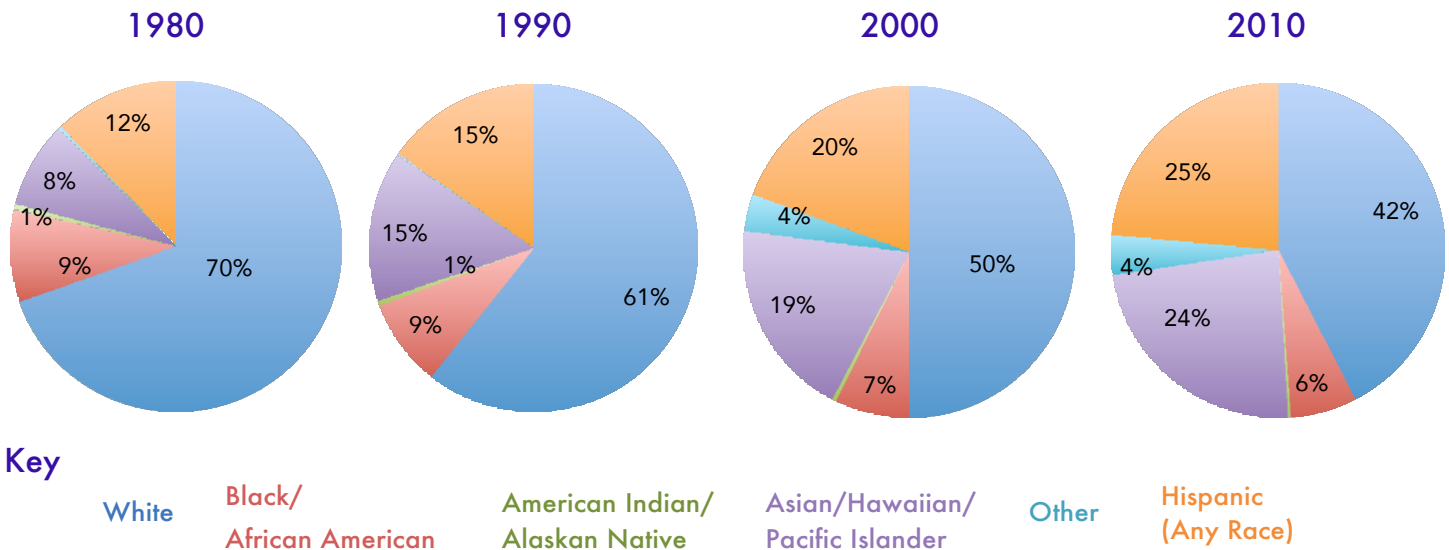
Change in Bay Area Population by Age 1980 - 2010

Year	Median Age	% under 18
1980	31.1	28%
1990	33.7	23%
2000	36.6	24%
2010	38.5	22%

Change in Bay Area Population by Income 1980 - 2010

Year	Median household income	Below poverty level
1980	\$15,866	13.70%
1990	\$33,414	12.40%
2000	\$55,221	11.30%
2010	\$71,304	11.90%

Change in Bay Area Population by Race & Ethnicity, 1980-2010



Change in Bay Area Population by Race & Ethnicity, 1980-2010

Year	White	Black/African American	Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaskan Native	Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	Other	Hispanic (Any Race)
1980	69.60%	8.90%	0.60%	8.40%	0.30%	12.20%
1990	60.70%	8.60%	0.50%	14.70%	0.20%	15.30%
2000	50.00%	7.30%	0.40%	19.30%	3.60%	19.40%
2010	42.40%	6.40%	0.30%	23.60%	3.80%	23.50%

Racial & Ethnic Diversity by County, 1980-2010

County	1980	1990	2000	2010	
Alameda	0.68	0.77	0.89	0.90	Most diverse
Solano	0.60	0.70	0.84	0.89	
Contra Costa	0.50	0.60	0.76	0.83	
San Francisco	0.76	0.78	0.82	0.81	
Santa Clara	0.56	0.68	0.79	0.80	
San Mateo	0.57	0.68	0.78	0.80	Least diverse
Napa	0.32	0.40	0.53	0.65	
Sonoma	0.28	0.36	0.50	0.58	
Marin	0.28	0.37	0.49	0.56	
BAY AREA	0.61	0.69	0.81	0.84	

The Racial and Ethnic Diversity Index ranges from a low of 0.0 (entire population is of one racial/ethnic group) to a high of 1.0 (population is equally distributed between all racial/ethnic groups.)

1917: Federal Tax Code Changes to Exempt Nonprofits and Introduces Individual Income Tax Deduction for Charitable Donations



A concert at The Montalvo Arts Center Garden Theater in Saratoga in the early 20th century

The Story

In 1917, the federal tax code was changed to exempt nonprofits from paying taxes and to permit patrons to deduct donations to nonprofits from their personal tax obligations. The 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, allowing the federal government to levy an income tax, was ratified only four years earlier, and the Revenue Act of 1917 was intended to spur charitable contributions as income taxes were going up to fund U.S. entry into WWI. In 1918, bequests were recognized as charitable deductions as well.

This change in policy coincided with the formation of the nation's first major private foundations (e.g. Carnegie Foundation 1905, Rockefeller Foundation 1913). "Thus, the government became a policy partner supporting the city ballet, symphony orchestra, and art museum," writes former NEA Chairman, Bill Ivey of this new arts-funding mechanism. "And nonprofit status became a marker of our fine arts scene."

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

The creation of nonprofit status radically changed the cultural sector. Prior to this, arts organizations had been run by individual proprietors, and outside of academically affiliated museums and ecclesiastical music groups, almost all theaters, orchestras, and cultural societies were for-profit enterprises succeeding or failing based on market demand and capacity to pay for services. For-profit arts didn't, of course, go away (and even

grew as radio and film technology expanded commercial markets) but it was around this time that communities in the Bay Area began to establish many of the major fine arts institutions that exist to this day and did so with the patronage of individual and institutional philanthropists benefitting from the new tax law.

For example:

Year Founded	Organization
1906	M.H. de Young Museum
1911	San Francisco Symphony
1921	Legion of Honor
1923	San Francisco Opera
1928	Santa Rosa Symphony
1933	San Francisco Ballet
1933	Oakland Symphony (Oakland East Bay Symphony, 1988)
1935	Museum of Modern Art (SF)
1937	San Jose Symphony (Symphony Silicon Valley, 2002)
1939	Montalvo Arts Center

Learn More

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- Ivey, Bill. *How Greed and Neglect Have Destroyed our Cultural Rights*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. 1-25. Print.

1935: Federal Arts Projects of the Works Progress Administration Hire Thousands of Artists



1937 WPA mural at the Beach Chalet in San Francisco by Lucien Labaud

The Story

At the height of the Great Depression, 15 million Americans were out of work, thousands of them artists. Under the direction of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Commerce Secretary Harry Hopkins, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was launched and became the nation's largest employer. Included in the WPA's many infrastructure-building divisions were the Federal Art Project, Federal Music Project, Federal Writers Project, and the Federal Theater Project.

Created in 1935, with a \$27 million budget (\$500 million today), the scope and sophistication of the four WPA arts projects was extraordinary. The Federal Music Project presented 225,000 concerts to over 150 million people; The Federal Theater Project produced over 2,700 shows and included the Negro Theatre Unit, which mounted dozens of productions across the country, 30 alone at the Lafayette Theatre in Harlem; the Federal Writers Project employed 6,600 writers creating local and oral histories, ethnographies and compiling 275 books in the *American Guide* series from every state; artists hired by the Federal Art project produced 475,000 works of art including many murals in libraries, courthouses, and government buildings in the Bay Area.

The voluminous creative output invariably stirred controversy. Theater-makers and writers, in particular, drew the ire of the Congressional House Un-American Activities Committee who accused federally funded artists of being Soviet-funded communist agents.

These hearings, combined with the economy's recovery and the beginning of WWII, resulted in the termination of most WPA art project funding in 1939. From that point on, federal investment in the arts shifted to war effort propaganda projects, and in the early years of the Cold War, to State Department-sponsored artist tours and cultural exchanges.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

The free performances and commissioned public artworks that WPA arts projects created gave many Americans their first experience with a new range of arts participation. Historian Cynthia Koch writes that because of the federal arts projects, communities in every corner of the country "dealt with artists on civic boards determining standards for highly visible public commissions in schools, post offices, and city halls. Art and artists were no longer the province of the "high" society of art museums and symphony orchestras, but rather of society as a whole." The WPA also served as a model for government programs that hired artists to work in communities (such as [CETA](#) in the 1970s) and for the \$50 million allocation President Obama included in his 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus bill to support arts organizations during another massive recession. That government patronage of new and provocative art created a conservative backlash, which foreshadowed [controversies the NEA would encounter in the 1980s and 1990s](#) as a public funder of individual expression.

Learn More

- Taylor, Nick. *American-made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA : When FDR Put the Nation to Work*. New York, NY: Bantam Book, 2008. Print.
- "Coast to Coast: The Federal Theatre Project, 1935-1939." *The Library of Congress, Exhibition*. <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/federal-theatre-project>. Accessed 14 2019.

1959: Philadelphia Creates First Percent for Art Ordinance in the U.S.



"There," by sculptor Roslyn Mazzilli, in the City Center of Oakland, is a public Percent for Art project

The Story

When Finland built a new parliament building in the 1930s, they included in the construction budget a special fund for an accompanying piece of public art. Inspired by the example, Philadelphia, in 1959, established the United States' first Percent for Art ordinance requiring that 1% of the construction budget for new government buildings be set aside for an artistic purpose. Following Philadelphia's lead, cities across the country established Percent for Art ordinances. Today nearly 350 U.S. cities and municipalities have such an ordinance. Some apply only to public sector projects while others require a fee on private commercial and residential development projects too. Many offer an "in-lieu" option authorizing developers to pay their fee into a public art trust fund.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

Percent for Art ordinances have proven an elegant mechanism for including art in the physical transformation of Bay Area cities and towns.

Most Bay Area cities have established Percent for Art programs, cumulatively generating tens of millions of dollars for the arts across the region, (including in Berkeley, Dublin, El Cerrito, Emeryville, Livermore, Mountain View, Napa, Oakland, Palo Alto, Petaluma, San Francisco, Salinas, San Jose, Santa Rosa, and Walnut Creek). Language in the City of Oakland's Percent for Art Ordinance stresses the benefit of public art for "the vitality of the artist community as well as the quality of life for all Oakland residents." Oakland's first Percent for Arts ordinance passed in 1989 and ensured that 1% of municipal development projects be allocated for

public art. In 2015, the city expanded the fee to all commercial projects costing more than \$200,000. In response, the Building Industry Association of the Bay Area sued the City of Oakland on the grounds that it violated a private developer's First Amendment rights by requiring speech in the form of art as well as Fifth Amendment protections against "uncompensated takings" of private property for public use by requiring developers to install a work of public art or pay a fee to the city. In 2018, a federal district court ruled in favor of Oakland, and the ordinance remains in effect.

Three years earlier, the California Supreme Court ruled in favor of the City of San Jose in a similar suit from the California Building Industry Association (BIA Bay Area is a local affiliate). For now, a legal precedent protects Percent for Art ordinances in California.

While this source of public arts funding appears secure, the question of how exactly the funds should be spent remains vexing for some. In many instances, developers determine how funds are directed and use them to buy or commission art that hangs in a new building's lobby or adorn interior atria inaccessible to the public. In other cases, the funds are collected by a municipal building or planning department and are not allocated with any input from a city's arts agencies or by local arts advocates.

Since the first Bay Area Percent for Art program was authorized in San Francisco in 1969, there have been periodic efforts to expand its application. Initially, Percent for Art fees were only levied on downtown building projects; now they are commonly applied city-wide. To prevent developers from applying these public benefit funds only to works on their own building sites, San Francisco's Arts Commission created a Public Art Trust to make curatorial decisions about how Percent for Arts funds should be awarded. Among local governments, and through state agencies around the country, public art and cultural trust administrators are expanding the eligible uses of percent for arts funds beyond the traditional commissioning and acquiring of visual art to include public performances as well.

Learn More

- "Percent for Art Policy Brief." *National Assembly of State Arts Agencies*, 2013. https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/nasaapercentforartpolicybrief/
- "Percent for Art Policy Examples." *Americans for the Arts*. https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/Percent%20for%20art%20Examples_0.pdf Accessed 14 January 2019.

1960s: Local Arts Councils Rapidly Establish Across the Country



Arts Council for Monterey County mural project

The Story

Arts Councils are most simply defined as civcentities to promote the growth of arts and culture in a defined area. Their origins can be found in more than 3,000 late 19th century village improvement associations in New England, hundreds of small-town Opera Houses in the American West (Petaluma's Opera House was established in 1870, for example), arts education programs in settlement house schools in turn-of-the-century New York, and even in the federally funded community choirs and folks arts programs in Appalachia set up by Extension Agents in the 1920s. However, the first formally structured commissions to steward publicly funded arts centers and programs were created in the 1920s and '30s and picked up steam following WWII. By the mid-1950s there were 60 Arts Councils nationwide, and by 1967, there were nearly 500, including one in almost every one of the 25 largest cities in the country.

With the creation of the NEA and the proliferation of State Arts Agencies that arose to route federal arts dollars across the country, the local arts council movement took off. There were over a thousand arts councils by 1980 and 3,000 by 1990. Estimates are that 25% were units of local government, but most were independent nonprofits. While a third have professional staffs, and the largest 2-5% now have budgets over \$1 million, the vast majority today are run by volunteers on small budgets.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

In the Bay Area today there are 11 active local arts councils.

Founded	Organization
1932	San Francisco Arts Commission (public)
1963	Arts Council of Napa Valley (501c3)
1965	Alameda Arts Commission (public)
1965	Solano County Arts Council (501c3)
1979	Santa Cruz Arts Council (501c3)
1982	Arts Council Silicon Valley (501c3)
1982	Arts Council for Monterey (501c3)
1991	Peninsula Arts Council (501c3)
1994	Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County (public)
2015	Creative Sonoma (public)
2015	Marin Cultural Association (501c3)

While many arts councils are constrained by a paucity of resources (and indeed many closed their doors in recent recessions), the quasi-governmental- but-mostly-autonomous position they occupy enables them to broker private sector government partnerships around the arts. Arts councils give mayors and elected officials a body to task with developing local cultural plans and private philanthropy an in-community partner to regrant funds or administer local arts programs. In their most recent incarnations, many arts councils have rebranded to distance themselves from an antiquated name and embrace a broader mandate to champion and partner with creatives beyond the traditional arts sector.

The historical roots and the post-war rise of the local arts council movement tell a very American story about citizen democracy, civic engagement, and social-bridging that can be inspiring for advocates working at the intersection of arts and community building. Like the Friends of the Parks or the Friends of the Libraries, arts councils can provide forums for community members interested in connecting artists and arts organizations to strengthen their community. ([See Creative Sonoma](#))

Learn More

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1961: San Francisco Establishes Hotel Tax Fund with Dedicated Arts Allocation



Proposition E passed in San Francisco in November 2018, restoring Hotel Tax Fund arts allocations

The Story

Today, tourism is a major local industry (over 25 million people visit San Francisco annually), but in the post-war 1950s, San Francisco was primarily a manufacturing town and not a travel destination. In 1961, San Francisco Mayor George Christopher created the San Francisco Hotel Tax (originally a 6% tax on hotel room charges; it is now 14%), which generated money for the city's general fund but allocated a portion of the collected tax revenues for arts funding on the basis that greater investment in cultural activities would draw tourists to the city. The tax was popular with voters and politicians because it was applied to visitors not residents, and this innovative policy inspired cities across the country to enact similar hotel tax (or transit occupancy taxes, aka "TOT") legislation in the 1960s and 1970s. Today Oakland also levies a 14% TOT tax, Berkeley and Sonoma levy 12%, Santa Cruz 11%, and San Jose 10%.

The revenues in San Francisco grew quickly: \$19 million generated in 1978 became \$190 million twenty years later. The fund, however, was tied to the state of the economy and to tourist and business travel budgets in particular. The San Francisco fund fell 37% in 2001-2002 following the dot com bust and the plunge in tourist and business air travel following September 11th--and 13 % again in 2009-2010 as the mortgage crisis took hold. Following the 2001-2002 downturn, larger portions of the hotel tax fund were siphoned away from their dedicated arts allocations and instead applied to the city's general fund as it contended with mammoth shortfalls. This led to less money and more volatility in funding for the city's arts institutions (e.g.

the War Memorial complex, the Fine Arts Museums and Asian Arts Museum), its cultural centers, and its primary arts granting programs (Grants for the Arts and the Arts Commission). Faced with unpleasant budget choices in the last recession, supervisors from neighborhoods with fewer arts organizations in their districts led the charge to break the allocation formula altogether, and in 2013 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted to direct all hotel tax revenues to the city general fund.

Dating back to the San Francisco Task Force in 2005-2006, arts community members had discussed going directly to the voters to secure the hotel tax fund for the arts and to lock in a percentage allocation that elected officials could not alter. In 2016, a coalition of San Francisco arts advocates and homelessness advocates created a joint ballot initiative that would require the Board of Supervisors to reinstate San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund allocations, earmarking 16% of revenues for arts organizations *and* nonprofits serving the city's growing homeless population. Prop S received 65% of the vote, narrowly failing to meet the two-thirds threshold required.

In 2018, [Arts for a Better Bay Area](#) and the SF Arts Alliance put Prop E on the ballot, a measure that would reinstate San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund allocations, this time earmarking revenues solely for arts and culture. After the groups spent nearly \$1 million on the campaign, San Francisco voters passed the proposition with a 75% majority, securing 8% of current hotel tax revenues for nonprofit arts organizations, cultural equity programs, city-owned cultural centers, cultural districts, and a fund to address the needs of the arts community. The controller's office estimated that Prop E would generate an additional \$5 million in FY18-19 and an additional \$13 million in FY21-22 for city arts (allocations fluctuate annually with the tourism economy).

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

Today, San Francisco has a \$10 billion city budget. Looked at from afar, the amount of money it allocates to support arts activity is statistically low. However, the stability of the year-in-year-out funding that the Hotel Tax provides to over 200 arts nonprofits (much of it for precious general operating support) is cherished by those who have it and envied by those in other Bay Area cities who do not. As an example of smart public policy, the hotel tax fund is held up as win-win-win: arts organizations get funding, the city gets an abundance of arts and culture activity, and politicians export the tax to visitors.

For years, the insecurity of the hotel tax fund allocations led to bickering and disunity among local arts leaders jockeying for more funds and individually petitioning supervisors or arts agency officials to favor them. During times of economic stress, this hostility spilled out into public view in ways that undermined City Hall's interest in doing more for artists and arts organizations. Thus, the turn-around from the 2013 repealing of the hotel tax to the coalitions formed to mount the 2016 Prop S campaign and the victorious 2018 Prop E campaign represent a powerful and positive shift in the advocacy story.

Learn More

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1965: President Johnson Creates National Endowment for the Arts



President Johnson signs the legislation creating the NEA and the NEH

The Story

In 1965, President Johnson and Congress created the National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities as twin agencies nested in the Department of the Interior. Rather than a centralized European-style “ministry of culture,” the NEA was created to be a federal-state arts partnership. Though the actual federal outlays on arts-related activities turned out to be far greater in the Department of Defense (on marching bands), at the State Department (on cultural exchanges), and in direct support of arts institutions like the Smithsonian Museums and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the NEA has played a leading role in the nation’s arts policy debates. For its first 15 years, the agency pursued its envisioned role delivering financial support and cultural capital to artists in rural areas and through the Expansion Arts program to community-based and culturally specific artists.

By 1975, the budget grew from \$7 million to \$75 million (\$350 million in 2018), and the NEA received 14,000 grant applications. Support for the intrinsic value of the arts, and the importance of the agency, was bipartisan. As President Nixon told Congress in 1969: “The attention and support we give the arts and the humanities, especially as they affect our young people, represent a vital part of our commitment to the quality of life for all Americans.”

By 1980, the NEA budget was at a high-water mark of \$158 million (\$483 million in 2018), but incoming President Ronald Reagan, who said in his inauguration

that “government is not the solution, government is the problem,” proposed cutting its budget in half. The American Council for the Arts (the predecessor to AFTA) sent Board member Edward Block of AT&T, then one of the 20 largest companies in the United States, to testify before Congress and together with staunch support from House Appropriation Chairman Sidney Yates, mitigated the cuts. Reagan, an actor, came around and over his term supported increases to the NEA budget and established the National Medal of the Arts and a high-profile annual award ceremony.

In the 1980s, arts and arts-education advocates benefited from the NEA’s increasing investment in data collection and national field research. The NEA began administering longitudinal Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts, published a Sourcebook of Arts Statistics, and conducted a two-year study of how the arts are taught in schools and distributed 180,000 copies of the report.

Through this era, the NEA made grants to individual artists and administrators and almost always supported the recommendations of peer-review panels first instituted in the late 1960s. However, awards in 1989 for visual artist Andres Serrano’s *Piss Christ* and photographer Robert Mapplethorpe’s *The Perfect Moment* ignited major public controversy, as did Chairman John Frohmyer’s vetoing recommendations in 1990 for grants to performance artists Karen Finley, Tim Miller, John Fleck, and Holly Hughes, (known as The NEA Four). Against the backdrop of the AIDS crisis, work by gay artists that presented explicit and shocking work with sexual and religious themes lit a fuse in the era’s Culture Wars. Led by North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms, Republicans in Congress called for the NEA’s elimination; anti-NEA protests were staged outside museums exhibiting Mapplethorpe’s work, and presenters of work by the NEA Four received death threats.

Following much federal debate, NEA funding was reduced by a symbolic \$45,000 and language was inserted into the appropriations bill prohibiting public funding for “obscene or inappropriate” material.

A more serious restriction on federal support of artistic expression came in the mid-1990s as Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich slashed the appropriation by 40% to \$99 million in 1997 and rewrote authorizing legislation to prohibit the NEA from making individual artist, general operating, and discipline-based grants.

The era of the 'culture wars' concluded in 1998 as the Supreme Court ruled 8-1 in *NEA v. Finley* that when making grants, the NEA must consider "general values of decency and respect for the public diverse beliefs and values of the American public."

To operate within its new guidelines and to rebuild Congressional support, the Endowment's leadership in the late 1990s and 2000s rolled out programs promoting cultural heritage, literacy, and Shakespeare that would appeal in both red and blue states. By President Obama's 2008 election, the strategy and advocacy efforts surrounding the NEA gradually restored the agency's budget from its nadir to \$155 million.

In 2009 the NEA administered \$50 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus bill funding to preserve nonprofits arts jobs in all 50 states. This set a new tone for the NEA, which in stark contrast to the 'art for art's sake' spirit animating the agency at its formation, shifted now to partner with other federal agencies on projects that would engage artists in infrastructure building, community development, and job creation. The NEA's *Our Town* program, and the creative placemaking wave it contributed to, developed in response to a harsh economic recession and contributed to a case-making strategy anchored in the economic impact of the arts.

President Trump entered office in 2017 and submitted a budget to Congress that called for the evisceration of the NEA (and most other arts-related federal agencies). Once more, advocates mounted a #SAVEtheNEA campaign, and thanks to bi-partisan support for the agency, its budget was preserved and even increased. The FY19 budget is \$155 million, the same amount as in 1980, though due to inflation, worth only one-third as much.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

In 2018, California arts groups received \$5.2 million in NEA funding, with 70 grants totaling \$2 million going to groups in San Francisco, Alameda, Santa Clara and Sonoma Counties. The California Arts Council also received \$1.1 million to match and redistribute.

And so, the NEA plays a consequential role in the Bay Area arts-funding landscape. For arts advocates, the NEA's history has several important lessons.

Functionally, as the only institution with a mandate to support artists and arts organizations across the entire country, it plays a critical role in gathering and distributing data on arts activity and participation; in convening conversations with arts community members, government officials, and the private sector

representatives in every state; and using its unique bully pulpit to promote the value of the arts. This service, more than its direct funding, has become its highest value.

It is also instructive to observe that the NEA has changed its own advocacy strategy many times. While other government departments don't have to regularly make the case for their own existence, the NEA has had to become adept at articulating its value to Congress. At times, it has deliberately avoided controversy, and even attention, and instead implemented goodwill programs in each district to build back-channel support. At other times, it has hitched its wagon to broader efforts such as the arts sector's role in healing traumatized communities, advancing educational objectives, or creating jobs.

Most importantly, in its first 50 years, the NEA has survived and at times flourished amidst shifting political climates because of the arts community's political engagement. This was not always the case. In the midst of the culture wars, pleas for NEA support were made in the middle of a Grammy telecast with a special call-your-representative hotline, but in retrospect, it's clear that advocates came up short.

Americans for the Arts has invested heavily in facilitating artist participation in local, state, and federal political engagement through Advocacy Day events and disseminating talking points and digital tools to its members, and the winning advocacy message is summed up well by former arts funder and presenter and now Vermont State Representative John Killacky: "We don't have to say Vote Democrat or Vote Republican but we have to say: Vote the Arts."

Learn More

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1967: San Francisco Arts Commission Creates Neighborhood Arts Program



SFAC Neighborhood Art Program booklet cover from 1978

The Story

The Neighborhood Arts Program (NAP) was created to support festivals and workshops and to provide technical and production support to grassroots organizations and individuals creating work for and in San Francisco's ethnically diverse communities. Conceived at the height of countercultural activism by San Francisco State students, NAP was initiated with a \$25,000 grant from SFAC President Howard Zellerbach looking for community support for a bond measure to build a new symphony hall and initially sustained with [hotel tax](#) money.

The program took off in the 1970s when local funds were augmented by federal job money through President Nixon's new [CETA program](#). NAP put musicians, theatremakers (like Geoff Hoyle and Bill Irwin), and visual artists (like Renee Yanez, founder of Galeria de la Raza and Susan Cervantes founder of Precita Eyes Mural Project) on the city payroll. The program officially wound down in 1984 but evolved into what is today the SFAC's Community Arts and Education Program, which continues to fund events and programs across the city's districts.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

The landscape of the formalized, incorporated nonprofit cultural sector in San Francisco (and the Bay

Area) was, until the 1960s, predominantly comprised of "high-art" institutions working in Western European idioms and performing and exhibiting in downtown venues. Though there were plans to support multiple neighborhood art centers in city-owned buildings across San Francisco, the NAP became the first mechanism for routing significant public funding to artists working in and with communities across the city. As new music, contemporary dance, experimental film, and political theater groups were founded, and as Chicano, Asian American, and African American communities created arts organizations (like Galeria De La Raza in 1970, the Kearny Street Workshop in 1972, and the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts and the Western Addition Cultural Center in 1977) support from the NAP was crucial to their emergence, and in many cases, their blossoming. The NAP evolved into the Community Arts and Education Program of the SF Arts Commission but was also a forerunner of the [Cultural Equity Endowment](#) and the long-envisioned neighborhood-based cultural centers that would be created in San Francisco in the 1990s.

San Francisco's NAP inspired similar CETA-funded community arts programs nationally. The CETA Artists Organization and the Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project in New York City; Community Programs in the Arts in St. Paul, Minnesota; and The Baltimore Theatre Project and The Painted Bride Art Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, also leveraged CETA support to obtain grants for the benefit of artists and their community partners.

By the early 1980s, the CETA federal jobs training program was the largest public funding source for the arts, channeling \$200 million a year (over \$800 million in today's dollars) to the arts. (By comparison, in 1981, the National Endowment for the Arts budget was just under \$159 million). Beyond its economic impact, NAP and the programs it inspired across the country strengthened links between artists and local government departments (like housing authorities and parks and recreation departments), public institutions (like schools and prisons), and community-based organizations.

Learn More

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- Seikaly, Roula. "SF Art Scene, 50 Years On." *KQED*, 5 June 2018. <https://www.kqed.org/arts/13834231/neighorhood-arts-program-culture-catalyst->

1973: Congress Passes the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), SF Uses Funds to Hire Artists

The Story

A recession in the first year of President Nixon's term caused unemployment to rise from 3.5% to 6% and spurred Congress to approve job training legislation. The Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) of 1973 enabled the U.S. Department of Labor to provide block grants to state and local governments to support 300,000 time-limited jobs in a startlingly broad range of areas from public safety to park maintenance to community improvement. The funds were restricted to pay for salaries lasting only one to two years, and their application was at the complete discretion of the local government as opposed to the centrally directed federal arts programs of the Works Program Administration 40 years earlier. San Francisco was the first municipality to use CETA funds to hire artists.

Building on a pilot program the San Francisco Art Commission's John Kreidler, who had previously worked at the Department of Labor, applied for CETA funds and convinced San Francisco's chief personnel officer to create 113 "curatorial aids" in the Art Commission, including visual artists, musicians, dancers, poets, theatremakers, media makers and historians, who were all paid \$250-\$400 per month for 6 month contracts. Following San Francisco's lead, other cities (notably on the West Coast) put artists on the CETA-supported city payroll too. As the recession of the early 1970s worsened (inflation reached 12% in 1975), Congress increased CETA support, and by 1980, it had spent \$51 billion on the program.

The Reagan administration (citing many cases of abuse and fund mismanagement by city governments across the country) slashed the program, laying off 310,000 CETA-supported employees in 1981. CETA was not renewed and its successor, the 1984 Job Training Act, was a much smaller and more targeted program precluding the hiring of artists with federal funds.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

CETA, and specifically the Kreidler's enlightened application of federal funds to hire artists to create new work for community benefit, represented a high water mark for pro-arts public policy. It illustrates how arts advocates with sophisticated understandings of how to operate in local bureaucracies can take advantage of

opportunities created in the midst of an economic downturn as policymakers feel pressure to curtail unemployment. Moreover, as was the case in the 1930s, artists were engaged to apply their talents to uplift communities in creative ways that may have been ephemeral, in the case of live performances, but also enduring, as in the murals, artwork, and documentation that CETA artists created.

CETA's legacy also informed the Obama campaign's Arts Policy Committee recommendations, which led to \$50 million in grants to retain artists and administrators at economically threatened nonprofit organizations in 2009. Another lesson from the CETA experience is that large scale federal programs are hard to sustain, and as the *New York Times* wrote about its demise: "In trying to combine a traditionally liberal approach to social and economic problems with a traditionally conservative method that gives broad discretion to localities, the act became a hodgepodge that was bound to offend political sensibilities."

Learn More

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1976: Governor Jerry Brown Establishes California Arts Council



People who are incarcerated perform a play at Alcatraz Island in 2014, supported by the CAC's Arts-in-Corrections program

The Story

In 1976, California Governor Jerry Brown established the California Arts Council (CAC) on the grounds that "art is essential to the lives of all Californians." The new arts council replaced the California Arts Commission established 13 years prior and was set up to receive matching funds from the NEA and pair them with direct state arts funding appropriations. Steered by an 11 member board and a director appointed by the governor, the CAC's core goals were to make grants to support artists, cultural organizations, artist fellowships and residence programs, touring companies, and arts education programs. The CAC's initial \$750,000 budget grew to \$2 million with NEA funds in 1977 (\$.87 per Californian) and peaked in 2000-2001 at \$32 million (\$.94 per Californian).

In 2002, contending with a \$38 billion state deficit, Democratic Governor Gray Davis slashed the CAC budget to \$18 million. The next year the legislature reduced it to \$1 million, the minimum required to receive NEA matching funds. *In two years, the budget had been reduced by 94%.* For a dozen years, the CAC languished as successive legislatures and governors, mired in protracted state budget crises, passed marginal increases to its budget. By 2011, the agency was getting 50% of its money by selling license plates.

As changes in advocacy strategy paid off, state coffers filled. Governor Jerry Brown returned to office, and the state legislature finally made meaningful increases to the CAC appropriations in 2015 and 2016, lifting its budget to \$21 million.

In his last two years in office, Governor Jerry Brown further increased the CAC's permanent funding and augmented it with time-limited support for arts programs serving youth in the state's juvenile justice system. Upon his exit in 2018, the CAC was no longer dead last in the country in per-capita funding. With a budget of \$27 million, it now spends \$.70 per Californian, which currently ranks 41st. Governor Gavin Newsom proposed increasing the permanent fund allocation by \$1.2 million shortly after taking office in 2019.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

During its more than four decades of existence, the California Arts Council has awarded over 30,000 grants. Yet because its grant making was so paltry for so long, few Bay Area organizations rely on CAC funding today. This is changing for small arts organizations. Now that the CAC has funds to offer, it is becoming a relevant resource for small budget arts organizations for whom \$5,000 and \$10,000 grants for art production and capacity building are important.

However, there was a time when CAC support was critical to the Bay Area. The massive reductions in 2002 and 2003 took an especially hard toll on the region. San Francisco and Alameda counties were two of the top three recipients of CAC Funding at the time. The CAC granted \$1.5 million allocation to the Alameda's Arts Council in 2001 and \$450,000 to Contra Costa County. Dozens of local grantees received grants, some as high as \$100,000.

The advocacy question is: How could a state with as large an arts and entertainment economy as California's come as close to terminating its state arts funding agency as it did in 2003? And how did advocates finally succeed in resurrecting the agency?

State Senator Jack Scott answered the first question in a 2003 editorial: "We could have found some of that \$17 million we cut in the arts somewhere else. We didn't. There was no political will to do that. In addition to myself, there were only a handful of legislators in either party, in either house, who were keenly interested in what would happen to the arts. Please pay special attention to that -- this year, there was virtually no constituency for the arts in the legislature. I don't know how that happened. But it is something each and every one of us has to help reverse." In other words, in the political budget game of special-interests, arts advocates failed to cultivate an arts-caucus that would stand up for the CAC when times got tough.

After years of failing to make progress in the budget process, Californians for the Arts (formerly California Arts Advocates) hired new Sacramento lobbyists and advanced arguments for funding that aligned with the governor's stated priorities in other policy areas. For example, after a judge mandated that California reduce its prison population, CAC budget proposals were shaped to direct funds for arts-in-prison and juvenile justice programs to address recidivism. This, coupled with forces beyond the advocates' control – namely a resurgent state economy and a Democratic supermajority more comfortable with increasing public spending than previous administrations – contributed to the CAC's resurrection.

Learn More

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1978: Proposition 13 Caps Property Tax Assessments in California



California Gov. Jerry Brown speaks in 1978 next to Proposition 13 author Howard Jarvis

The Story

In 1978, California voters approved Prop 13, which set the tax rate for real estate at 1% of a property's sale price and capped annual increases at 2%. This legislation was a bellwether of the national anti-tax movement that has dominated national politics for two generations. The policy aimed to keep older Californians from being priced out of their homes by shifting the property tax burden to new homeowners and compelled the state and municipalities to meet revenue shortfalls by raising income taxes, sales taxes, and usage fees, which disproportionately impacted middle and lower-income residents. Because property tax had been the primary source of public school funding, the state's education budgets took dramatic hits following Prop 13. In 1978, before Prop 13, California's education budget was \$9 billion, and the state ranked 14 in the U.S. in per-pupil spending. In 1979, after Prop 13, the education budget was cut by a third (\$3 billion) and the state fell to 22nd. Today it ranks 43rd.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

Like other aspects of public education, arts education suffered as a result of budget cuts. However, given the litany of restrictions on how school districts could spend state and federal funds prior to the [Local Control Funding Formula](#) of 2012-13, arts education and extracurricular programs (like band, orchestra, drama programs and like sports and recreation as well) were especially vulnerable to cutbacks.

In 1997, California Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin drew a direct line between Prop 13 and the state's fall from being a national leader in arts

education to placing 50th in terms of student-to-music-teacher ratio. "The lack of attention to arts education has been the silent crisis in California schools for too long," she said.

As pernicious as Prop 13 has been, it appears unlikely to be challenged on the ballot because most Californians still support it. A majority of Californians (57%) say that Prop 13 turned out to be mostly a good thing for the state, and homeowners (65%) are more likely than renters (50%) to hold this view.

However, polls indicate that most Californians also say they'd support increasing property taxes on commercial real estate to direct new revenue to K-12 public schools, suggesting an area of opportunity for arts education advocates.

Learn More

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1980: Every State Now Has a State Arts Council



Young musician participates in a California Arts Council funded arts education program

The Story

Beginning in 1957, The Ford Foundation model for arts funding dominated not only private philanthropy's approach to supporting arts groups but influenced the way government funded the arts too. A key feature of this model was to award grants that would be matched by corporate sponsors, private individuals, or local government, and this approach was incorporated into the charter language of the National Endowment for the Arts when it was established in 1965. For the NEA, federal allocations had to be matched and administered by state governments, and this required the establishment of State Arts Agencies (or Councils). There were only four at the NEA's inception, but there was one in every state and territory by 1980, and collectively, state government arts appropriations topped \$500 million.

Initially, State Arts Agencies directed funds mostly to establishment 'high-art' organizations, but in the face of criticisms that government arts funding should be more diffused and reach more diverse communities, the State Arts Agencies devolved their grantmaking to local arts councils. While more funding control strengthened local arts councils, this 'decentralized' strategy served to make State Arts Agencies less relevant to both advocates seeking support for 'high-art' institutions and those championing community-based arts organizations, a problem compounded by budget cuts in the 1980s.

Debates in the 1990s about the types of art government should fund, highlighted by the [Mapplethorpe, Serrano and Finley controversies at the NEA](#), also challenged State Arts Agencies to hold on to political support in their state capitals. For these reasons surveys conducted in 2000 showed that State Arts Agencies were not only invisible to

most of their constituents but deemed irrelevant by many of the artists they were intended to serve.

In 2018, total legislative appropriations to State Arts Agencies were \$358 million. Leading the pack were Washington D.C. (spending \$42 per capita), Rhode Island (\$11 per capita), and Minnesota (\$6 per capita) while lagging the field were Georgia (18 cents), Texas (24 cents), and Wisconsin and Kansas (30 cents). The California Arts Council, with an appropriation of \$27 million, spends 70 cents per person, which currently ranks 41st, one spot behind Indiana.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

The cause of arts advocacy is always strengthened when there is public support for the arts. The stories of State Arts Councils differ from state to state, but a key reason so many of them have historically been underfunded (or even nearly zeroed-out like California in 2003 or actually abolished like Kansas in 2011) is that they did not sufficiently develop public profiles and demonstrate their value to constituents.

To remedy this, State Arts Councils created the National Assembly of State Arts Associations (NASAA) that today conducts and disseminates research and policy rationale materials to equip its members and supporters to make the case for Arts Council support. Because they are working in 50 state capitals and seeking to win over politicians with very different ideologies and constituencies, the organization promotes an *a la carte* advocacy strategy.

NASAA also has created handbooks and tools for State Arts Council employees to navigate their own bureaucracies and come up to speed on the technical elements of seeking and moving money through State legislatures and governments.

These resources, combined with the efforts of state-based arts advocacy groups have fortified – or even resurrected – State Arts Agencies in the last decade in ways that can be adapted to serve local arts councils and commissions in Bay Area cities and counties.

Learn More

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1993: San Francisco Establishes Cultural Equity Endowment to Expand Arts Funding



An opening Reception at SOMArts, neighborhood cultural center supported by the Cultural Equity Endowment

The Story

In 1989, a bombshell report by arts fundraiser Jeff Jones and civil rights activist Russell Cramer called “Institutionalized Discrimination in Arts Funding Patterns” revealed that 80% of the \$17.5 million granted for arts-related purposes by 23 different city agencies in San Francisco went to just 9 large-budget arts organizations. This at the end of a decade in which dozens of multicultural, LGBT, women’s, and small-budget arts organizations had been founded.

Led by Jones and Arts Commissioner Maria X. Martinez, arts community members created a task force to discuss remedying this inequity and ultimately pushed the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to adopt Cultural Equity Endowment Legislation in 1993. This new law required the city to support artists and organizations that “foster artistic expression deeply rooted in and reflective of historically marginalized communities.” The fund mandated grants to support commissions to individual artists, project grants to small and mid- size organizations, a facilities fund, and the creation of a Cultural Equity Initiatives program.

The facilities fund shored up support for a number of neighborhood-based cultural centers already in existence (SOMArts, Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, the African American Art and Culture Complex, and Bayview Opera House) and provided support for new centers. The Queer Cultural Center for Lesbian Gay Bi Transgender Art and Culture was established in 1993 and the Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center in

1996. The Cultural Equity Initiative sought to build the capacity of small-budget arts organizations through a variety of planning and technical assistance programs. Today, the San Francisco Arts Commission stewards \$6 million through the CEEF.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

The CEEF had short and long-term implications for the region. Based on the success in creating CEEF, the advocates for the cultural centers campaigned for a bond measure to fund construction and renovation costs but narrowly missed the two-thirds requirement in 1997. However, the breadth of support, led Supervisor Sue Bierman, to persuade the board to approve a line item in the 1998 budget increased funds for cultural center programming.

Longer term, while national studies from the Foundation Center and the National Center for Responsive Philanthropy continue to demonstrate that the preponderance of philanthropic arts support goes to large-budget ‘high art’ institutions, a 2018 report by the Helicon Collaborative suggests that CEE funding patterns, which closely reflect San Francisco’s demography, have effectively shifted the San Francisco nonprofits arts landscape to better represent the city’s cultural diversity. “As a result of this multi-faceted and sustained work, not only does San Francisco have more diverse nonprofit cultural groups per capita than other cities, those groups also receive a significantly larger share of arts foundation funding than their counterparts in the other urban areas we studied,” the report found.

Learn More

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1996: American Councils of the Arts and the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies Merge to Create Americans for the Arts



San Jose musicians showcased in Americans for the Arts “Arts and Economic Prosperity” report

The Story

Americans for the Arts (AFTA) is the leading federal arts advocacy organization for the nonprofit arts sector in the U.S. today. It operates on a \$15 million budget, is based in Washington, and has a staff of 60. The organization is best known for bringing arts advocates from around the U.S. to meet with their representatives on Capitol Hill on Arts Advocacy Day and for petitioning for preserving, or increasing appropriations to the National Endowment for the Arts and other federal arts agencies.

The organization’s roots lie in the 1960s when the local arts council movement was growing and the field began to formalize. A professional association called Community Arts Councils, Inc. was created in 1960 (later renamed Associated Councils of the Arts or ACA) and standardized guidelines for operating an arts council. ACA set up a lobbying shop in Washington, D.C. and spun off the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) in 1974 and the National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies (NALAA) in 1978. In the 1970s, ACA signed up thousands of members in a new Advocates for the Arts program and also focused on engaging corporate leaders to become arts sponsors and advocates too. (In 1984, an ACA poll found that 55% of Americans felt there should be more federal support of the arts, and 67% believed local governments should spend more).

In 1996, ACA and NALAA merged and became Americans for the Arts under the direction of Robert Lynch. In 2002, AFTA received a \$120 million gift from the Ruth Lily estate, establishing an endowment fund to keep membership costs low and invest more deeply in arts advocacy efforts.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

As a nonprofit with both 501c3 and c4 wings, AFTA conducts and disseminates research on the impact of the arts, provides training on arts advocacy, and convenes its membership annually in a national conference and in affiliate and affinity group forums as well.

AFTA’s *Arts and Economic Prosperity* reports equip arts advocates to make the instrumental argument to local and state policymakers that the arts contribute meaningfully to job creation, urban development, and a municipality’s tax base. These reports (which were first compiled in 1994) have been critiqued on methodological grounds, but they are now accepted as industry standards for measuring the economic impact of the arts. Given that many Bay Area municipalities house their arts administrators in their economic development offices (in Berkeley, Santa Cruz and Sonoma County, for example) and that in economic downturns city officials are particularly attuned to money-making vs. money-taking rationales for support, these resources are especially valuable to local advocates.

More generally, while Washington can feel very far away for many Bay Area artists and advocates, and the dollar value of federal funds is so modest, AFTA plays a singular role in connecting advocates from around the country, and the network effects of these connections have contributed to the growth and development of many Bay Area emerging and established leaders.

Learn More

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2002: President Bush Signs No Child Left Behind, Arts Education Budgets Suffer

The Story

In 2001, President George W. Bush reauthorized the Elementary & Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) in an effort to close the achievement gap in K-12 public schools by promoting fair and equal access to a high quality education for all students regardless of geography, race, or family income. Re-branded as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the legislation describes the arts as a “core academic subject” and deems arts curricula as eligible for funding through teacher training, school reform and technology programs. However, this historic reform for America’s schools resulted in reducing resources for arts instruction in favor of English Language Arts and Math.

In 2015, the act came up for reauthorization again. It was rebranded as the Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA). This time, advocacy efforts by Americans for the Arts, Grantmakers in the Arts, and many other California arts advocates ensured that language was added to the legislation opening up 12 different funding opportunities that state educational agencies, school districts, and schools could use to implement arts integration interventions for K-12 students.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

In the wake of NCLB, arts education advocates worked defensively to prevent the narrowing of curriculum in public schools that would reduce student access to arts instruction. Still, NCLB was devastating. In 2010, the National Art Education Association found that 43% of 3,000 arts educators surveyed reported arts program budget cuts, 84% reported increased scheduling conflicts and interruptions, and many reported that students had less time for, and interest in, exploring the arts as a direct result of NCLB’s emphasis on mandatory high stakes testing in English Language Arts and Math.

When it came time to rewrite the bill in 2015, advocates played offense, engaging with Congress to include language in Title IV Part A of the law that wouldn’t simply allow for federal funds to support arts education and arts-integration, but would explicitly encourage states to apply for ESSA grants to (among other things) include the arts in activities to “provide students with a well-rounded education.”

As follow up to the law’s passing, Americans for the Arts conducted trainings for Bay Area arts education providers about the bill and the opportunities it offers for arts education policymaking at the local level.

ESSA was reauthorized again in 2018, and funding for Title IV part A increased from \$400,000 to \$1.1 million.

Learn More

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2008: Oakland Cultural Trust Advocates to Preserve Local Arts Funding in Budget Crisis



Sign used by Oakland Cultural Trust arts advocates who protested cuts to public arts funding

The Story

As the mortgage crisis of 2007 turned into a national recession, and as state budgets were slashed, pressure mounted on municipalities to reduce their expenses too. In 2008, the Oakland City Council proposed suspending its entire arts grants program as part of a package to close a \$42 million budget gap. In response, Margo Dunlap of the Oakland art gallery Pro Arts, called for arts community members to create the Oakland Cultural Trust and mobilize to change the Council's minds. After staving off the cuts in 2008, the Oakland Cultural Trust was back in action in 2010 as the City Council once more struggled to balance its budget. In large part due to an enormous turn-out at a public budget hearing, the Council, which had initially contemplated zeroing out arts funding, then considered a 15% reduction and finally decided not to cut the arts budget at all.

The Oakland Cultural Trust was modeled after The Berkeley Cultural Trust, which had been established in 1997 as a forum for artists and arts organization representatives to meet and petition local government to advocate for arts-friendly policies. The group most actively engaged in the political arena in 2016 when it hosted a forum at the Freight & Salvage for Berkeley mayoral and City Council candidates. In front of 250 arts community members and arts supporters, the candidates discussed their commitment to arts funding and made on-camera commitments to increase city arts support if elected. The strategy proved effective as Berkeley doubled its investment in the in arts from roughly \$200,000 in 2016 to \$400,000 in 2017.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

The Oakland and Berkeley Cultural Trusts have successfully advocated to protect and increase arts funding in their cities leading to more grant dollars for the artists and arts organizations that serve Oakland and Berkeley. They are examples of organized advocacy efforts succeeding.

The Berkeley Cultural Trust's engagement and effectiveness has waxed and waned over its 20 years in correlation to the urgency of local issues and the energy of individual leaders. However, it has sustained as a formal body made up of many long-time arts leaders in a tight-knit Berkeley community.

The Oakland Cultural Trust was created in a moment of high anxiety in the Oakland arts community, and although it achieved much, once the crises passed, the Trust did not remain a vital force and today does not exist.

Learn More

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2012: New California Law Expands Retirement Benefits for Arts Workers

The Story

In 2012, Governor Jerry Brown signed SB 1234, establishing the *California Secure Choice Retirement Savings Trust Act* (or “Secure Choice”) enabling California private-sector workers who were not included in an employer-provided retirement savings plan to automatically enroll in a state-run plan.

SB 1234 requires for-profit and nonprofits employers of five or more workers to automatically enroll their employees in Secure Choice and deduct money from their paychecks. Employees can opt out or adjust their savings rate and can carry their benefits from job to job.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

The more one can contribute, and the earlier in one's career that one can invest those contributions into a retirement plan, the greater the financial security a worker is likely to have later in life. Historically, nonprofit workers and employees at small firms were left out of retirement plans. In addressing this broad workforce inequity, SB1284 is a policy shift with particular significance for thousands of arts workers in the Bay Area. While many arts sector employees are gig workers or independent contractors to whom SB1284 would not apply, the field is comprised of many administrators who work as part-time or full-time employees for small budget organizations and change jobs frequently.

SB1234 is specifically focused on retirement benefits but is a model for future legislation that arts advocates and allies in other sectors could champion to expand the range of benefits that arts workers (and others) can port between jobs. As the nature of work changes in the 21st century, and the proportion of freelancers in the workforce goes up, legislation like SB1234 could prove a valuable precedent for updating a range of policies to support greater worker protections, income security, and equality.

Learn More

- “SB 1234 - Establishes Retirement Program for Private Sector Employees - California Key Vote.” *Vote Smart Fact Finder*. https://votesmart.org/bill/15300/40741/establishes-retirement-program-for-private-sector-employees#.XDj4R8_YoWo. Accessed 14 January 2019.
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2012: Title 1 Funding Guidance Enables Federal Funds To Be Used for Arts Education

The Story

The U.S. Department of Education and the California Department of Education provide special flexible funding to Title 1 schools serving low-income students. Historically, school officials did not use these funds for arts education activities because they felt pressure to only use the funds on improving test scores in English and math. Persuaded by a concerted advocacy effort that overcoming this misperception (or stigma) was important, in 2012 the California Department of Education issued a letter of guidance stating that Title 1 funds can be used to “support arts education as a strategy to improve student achievement in English and mathematics.” With advocacy follow up, the U.S. Department of Education issued a similar letter in 2013.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

This episode evidences a crucial role that advocacy can play. It is sometimes not enough to win a policy victory, rather it's crucial to see that the fruits of that victory are enjoyed by the intended beneficiaries. In this case, the California Alliance for Arts Education and Arts for LA recruited allied organizations including the California State PTA and the California Arts Council to pressure education officials at the state and federal level to issue clarifying letters about how Title I funds could be used. And once those letters were issued, these groups, and Americans for the Arts, did the follow-up work of disseminating them to superintendents across the state and country, leading to a positive shift in how money was allocated to support arts instruction.

Learn More

- “Arts Education Policy and Advocacy Grantmaking Evaluation of Intent, Impact and Lessons (2007-2017).” *Education First, Prepared for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation’s Performing Arts Program*. January 2018. <https://hewlett.org/library/arts-education-policy-and-advocacy-grantmaking-evaluation-of-intent-impact-and-lessons-2007-2017/>

2013: California Establishes Local Control Funding Formula Allowing School Districts to Invest More in Arts Education

The Story

In 2013, California radically changed the way school districts can use their state funds. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) legislation eliminated categorical funding streams and simplified funding requirement, which freed local school authorities to direct funds as they saw fit. And because LCFF also resulted in the state discarding a school rating system that privileged student performance in reading and math (over other subjects including visual and performing arts), there was more incentive for school districts to spend money on arts instruction.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

A key outcome of LCFF is that advocacy efforts could now effect much more change in the arts education arena on the local level. A provision of the LCFF statute required schools to engage community members in creating plans establishing funding priorities, a process conducive to ground level advocacy efforts. Moreover, the removal of categorical funding meant that rather than advocacy groups competing for a fixed pot of funds, there was a greater incentive for arts education and broader-based educational organizations (like the PTA or the California School Boards Association) to collaborate on allocating funding and priority setting at the local level.

Learn More

- “Arts Education Policy and Advocacy Grantmaking Evaluation of Intent, Impact and Lessons (2007-2017).” *Education First, Prepared for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation’s Performing Arts Program*. January 2018. <https://hewlett.org/library/arts-education-policy-and-advocacy-grantmaking-evaluation-of-intent-impact-and-lessons-2007-2017/>

2014: Voters Renew the SF Children's and Public Education Enrichment Funds Ensuring Stable, Long-Term Arts Education Funding



Advocates rally to support the re-authorization of San Francisco's Children's Fund, June 11, 2014

The Story

In 1991, San Francisco voters passed groundbreaking legislation to establish the nation's first Children's Fund requiring an annual set-aside from the city budget for youth services including arts education programs. The fund was renewed by popular vote in 2000 and again in 2014.

In 2014, 74% of San Francisco voters approved Prop C, which provided more money, over a longer period of time, for the City's Public Education Enrichment Fund and the Children's Fund. The measure guaranteed that the city had to provide a minimum of support to the school district even in years of budget shortfalls, and it provided the district with greater spending flexibility by requiring that payments be made in cash, not in in-kind services. The measure also provided more funds to serve preschool age children and transitional age youth (18-24 years).

Advocates lauded the measure because it also created a new oversight council bringing together representatives from many city agencies with programs for children – from the health department to public works to arts agencies too.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

Money from the Public Education Enrichment Fund is used to hire full-time visual and performing arts teachers to contract with teaching artists and underwrite arts enrichment activities. The Children's Fund enables the Department of Children Youth and Families to grant funds to arts education nonprofits in San Francisco to provide after-school arts programming. Prop C was crafted to respond to a protracted period of state budget deficits and year-to-year uncertainty about allocations to the state's

schools. The sophisticated language of the ballot measure was designed not just to increase the amount of funding that would support public education (including arts education), but to support longer-term planning and investments in programs and people. The measure put the PEEF and the Children's Fund on a 25-year track before reauthorization was required, going a long way towards stabilizing a revenue source for a generation.

Prop C won in a landslide in large part because a multi-interest coalition pooled their resources and aligned their efforts. Because PEEF funding covered arts education activities and also enabled the San Francisco Unified School District to invest in school libraries, sports programs, early childhood programs, and student support services provided by counselors and nurses, it attracted many non-arts organizations to its cause. Politically savvy youth-serving agencies like Coleman Advocates and the Children's Council provided leadership and expertise to the Prop C coalition's advocacy work. They were motivated to do so because while major arts-education funding was a key element of the measure, it wasn't the only item on the menu.

The 1991 establishment of the San Francisco Children's Fund and its subsequent renewals have proven tremendously influential. In 1996, Oakland voters approved the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth requiring that 3% of the city's general fund be set aside to support direct services to youth; voters renewed the fund in 2009. In 2016, Baltimore voters created The Baltimore Children and Youth Fund, requiring the allocation of \$12 million in city property tax revenue to support youth and young adult services. And in 2018, Richmond voters passed the Richmond Fund for Children and Youth Act establishing a Department of Youth and Families and allocating \$950,000 from the city's General Fund for a Children's Fund to support youth programming. In 2020, Sacramento voters may have the opportunity to create a Sacramento Children's Fund setting aside 2.5% of the City's unrestricted revenue for direct services to youth.

Learn More

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2015: Arts for a Better Bay Area (ABBA) Forms to Advocate for More Public Arts Support and Wins \$9m in New Funding



Arts Advocacy Day, March 21, 2017, San Francisco

The Story

Arts for a Better Bay Area is a fiscally sponsored organization dedicated to convening local arts community members to discuss their policy priorities and to organize their advocacy efforts. Former San Francisco Arts Commission staffer and Emerging Arts Professionals Director Ebony McKinney and former SOMArts Executive Director Lex Leifheit founded ABBA. After meeting individually with dozens of arts community leaders, the two gathered 100 people in January 2015 and began coordinating efforts to identify funding priorities and effectively petition the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to dramatically increase funding for artist access to space and for public art, youth-arts, and cultural equity programs in the FY15-16 City Budget.

Culminating in a large rally, and a long string of pro-arts public commenters at the Board's open budget hearings, ABBA succeeded in winning an additional \$9 million for San Francisco Arts Commission and Grants for the Arts programs, the largest increase in a generation.

In the 2016 and 2018 elections, ABBA rallied in support of Prop S and Prop E, provided arts-surveys to candidates for local office, convened arts community members to hear from Oakland and San Francisco cultural affairs officials on the region's "State of the Arts," and distributed advocacy resources suited for individual artists and arts nonprofits. Today, arts administrator Susie McKinnon and a stewardship committee of 12 Bay Area directors of arts groups, service organizations, and cultural centers lead ABBA.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

After the 2015 arts-budget victory, ABBA's co-founders accepted positions in city government. Under new leadership, the group went on to contribute to the successful Prop E Hotel Tax restoration ballot measure in 2018, by engaging small-budget, culturally specific, and fiscally sponsored arts entities in a well-organized political advocacy effort. The organization provides a platform for policy discussion and collective action for a diverse community comprised of many artists working in issues of social justice. It serves as a complement and on occasion a partner to the San Francisco Arts Alliance, a formal association of San Francisco's largest budget arts nonprofits.

Learn More

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2016: Oakland Ghost Ship Fire Leads to Artist Displacement



Lobot Gallery, a West Oakland DIY art space evicted in 2016

The Story

On December 2, 2016, 36 people were killed when a fire broke out during a concert at the Oakland live-work space, Ghost Ship. Many victims were artists. The warehouse space, which was not permitted for occupancy or for entertainment, had provided affordable housing and studio space to Bay Area artists and musicians for years.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

The Ghost Ship Fire devastated the Bay Area arts community, and amidst rising concern by Bay Area arts and nonprofit leaders about the soaring costs of real estate in the nation's hottest market, triggered numerous policy changes and advocacy efforts.

After the fire, landlords throughout the East Bay moved swiftly to evict tenants in under-permitted live-work spaces and code-inspectors in Oakland and Berkeley and Richmond began investigating (and fining and shutting down) alternative arts venues and warehouses in the name of safety.

Hundreds of artists worried about both eviction and unsafe living conditions gathered at Oakland townhall events and at Richmond City Council meetings. Tenants' rights advocates cited the lack of affordable housing in the region as an underlying cause of the tragedy, and a group of artists founded Safer DIY Spaces, a fiscally sponsored organization to help residents upgrade underground spaces and fight eviction.

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf attempted to prevent the displacement of artists and low-income people by issuing an executive order that instructed code enforcement officers to allow residents to remain in unpermitted nonresidential properties unless there was

“an immediate threat to life or safety.” Enforcing the order proved challenging (Schaaf noted that many spaces were unfit for group events and lacked emergency exits), and code enforcement investigations resulted in 10 evictions that displaced more than 45 people.

In 2013, with leadership from the Oakland-based Kenneth Rainin Foundation, the Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) had been established to help arts nonprofits secure their rehearsal, performance, and office space. CAST led to the establishing of a multi-million-dollar Nonprofit Displacement Mitigation Program in 2014 in partnership with the San Francisco Arts Commission. In the aftermath of Ghostship, the city of Oakland partnered in 2016 with CAST, the Rainin Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to launch Keeping Space - Oakland, a two-year pilot program to assist arts organizations facing displacement from Oakland.

Learn More

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- Safer DIY Spaces Website: <https://saferdiyspaces.org>
- “Keeping Space – Oakland.” *Community Stabilization Trust*, <https://cast-sf.org/strategies/keeping-space-oakland-2-2/>. Accessed 14 January, 2019.

Watch:

- “In the Wake of Ghost Ship” – a 20 minute documentary. <https://fieldofvision.org/in-the-wake-of-ghost-ship>

2016: 46 Years Later, California Reinstates the Dance and Theater Teaching Credentials



Dance class at Luna Dance Institute, a Berkeley-based dance education organization

The Story

In 2016, Governor Jerry Brown signed the Theatre and Dance Act (TADA!) authorizing single-subject area certification for the Theater and Dance disciplines as part of the state's visual and performing arts programs. Though these had been in place for many years, the Ryan Teacher Credential Act of 1970 inadvertently eliminated them. The new law ensured, once again, that when dance and theater are taught in California K-12 schools, the instruction would be standards-based and anchored in rigorous pedagogy. The law was good for students and for teaching artists too; without it, dance teachers were required to be credentialed in physical education, and artists with theater degrees needed English credentials in order to teach in public schools.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

Despite being vetoed twice by previous governors, in 2016, this bill sailed through both chambers of the California legislature because of the collaborative advocacy efforts of education and arts education organizations and unions and their collective ability to mobilize "over a thousand arts advocates to send messages of support to their elected officials in Sacramento," according to California Alliance for Arts Education co-president Jessie Kronenberg.

The advocacy strategy also included high-profile celebrity endorsers who testified before the legislature and behind the scenes work to bring elected officials on board with the help of paid lobbyists. The effort also succeeded because arts education advocates built

common cause with the California Teachers Association (who had opposed similar legislation in the 1990s) and made the case that the timing was right as there were now more opportunities for more arts instruction aligned with meeting Common Core State Standards and priorities established in the 2013 Local Control Funding formula. Though the advocacy struggle to pass this arts-education legislation was a long, complex, and major undertaking, it was all about rectifying a very small, technical mistake.

Learn More

- "Breaking: Governor Signs SB 916, AB2862." *California Alliance for Arts Education*, September 2016. <https://www.artsed411.org/blog/2016/09/breaking-governor-signs-sb-916-ab-2862>
- "Arts Education Policy and Advocacy Grantmaking Evaluation of Intent, Impact and Lessons (2007-2017)." 2018, *Education First, Prepared for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Performing Arts Program*. January 2018. <https://www.hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Arts-education-policy-and-advocacy-grantmaking-evaluation-report.pdf>

2017: Creative Sonoma Established a Decade After Local Arts Council Folds



Creative Sonoma musician workshop

The Story

In 2008, the nonprofit Sonoma Arts Council folded, partly as a result of the recession but substantially because funding from the diminished California Arts Council had dried up. About this time, advocates in the country sought to put a pro-arts tax measure before voters, but polling indicated it would fall short of the two-thirds approval required, so the campaign was abandoned. Instead, Sonoma County arts stakeholders made the case to their county supervisors that the arts community needed a formal organization to advocate on its behalf and should create a new agency. In 2015, county officials began working with artists and community advocates to establish Creative Sonoma, a unit of the Sonoma County Economic Development Department to “support and advance the creative community of Sonoma County.” Creative Sonoma was formally chartered in 2017.

In practice, Creative Sonoma administers Transit Occupancy Tax (T.O.T.) funds that go to local artists and cultural organizations, runs technical assistance programs for artists, and partners with government agencies, like the County’s Tourist Commission seeking to leverage the region’s creative talent.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

Creative Sonoma plays a critical role in the county’s arts and cultural life, and as a reanimated arts council, its leadership is very aware that it needs to advocate both inside the county government to ensure that support is maintained and externally so that the public sees their value.

“It’s 100% positive to be within the Economic Development Department,” says Creative Sonoma Executive Director Kristen Madsen. “Because the Supervisors (to whom we report) see the creative sector as a contributing part of this community, which is great because too often arts nonprofits are perceived only to be takers.”

Creative Sonoma takes an instrumentalist line in promoting arts investment that can be especially compelling for arts councils in rural or smaller communities where merely rallying the arts community is not enough to persuade policy makers to pay attention. For example, in the wake of the 2017 fires that ravaged the county, Creative Sonoma connected teaching artists with affected school children and demonstrated how valuable artists and arts educators can be in helping a traumatized community heal.

The dual strategies of advocating from within a government bureaucracy and generating external support not only advance Creative Sonoma’s goals today but insulate it should economic or political winds change so that the agency doesn’t suffer the same fate as the Arts Council that preceded it.

Learn More

- “Creative Sonoma Annual Report 2017-2018.” *Creative Sonoma*, 2018. <https://www.CreativeSonoma.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/www.CreativeSonoma.org/images/2018/12/2017-18-Creative-Sonoma-Annual-Report-WEB-small.pdf>

2017: Abbott Square in Santa Cruz Reopens Thorough Arts/Government Collaboration



Concert in Abbott Square in 2017

The Story

In 2017, the City of Santa Cruz partnered with the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (MAH) to reopen an unused city plaza as a creative town square. Community leaders initiated the project after a series of ordinances restricted street performances, chalk drawing, and busking, creating a need for a designated space for Santa Cruz's vibrant street art scene to thrive. Abbott Square is a public community space with restaurants, bars, and MAH events and exhibitions.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

Abbott Square is an example of a successful public-private partnership, co-designed and co-curated by the community it serves. The expansive group of artists, government officials, business leaders, and social justice organizations that partnered on the ambitious project set an example of how to collaboratively develop accessible and relevant arts spaces.

Executive Director of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, Nina Simon described why an arts organization would engage intensely in a public planning and development project this way: "We're spending five million dollars to take our museum outside...the goal is for Abbott Square to become a new creative heart of our county, a town square that brings together art, history, food, play, and community."

As such, Abbott Square is an example for Bay Area localities of a creative place-making strategy paying off for artists and arts organizations and for local businesses and community developers.

Ultimately, the Abbott Square project has become a cherished asset to local artists, merchants, and to visitors to Santa Cruz, but the multi-year project required deep relationship building, and arts leaders learning to anticipate and mitigate partner concerns about cost, safety, and aesthetics.

Learn More

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- "Abbott Square Art Zone." *ArtPlaceAmerica*, 2014. <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/funded-projects/abbott-square-art-zone>

2018: Richmond Fund for Children and Youth Act Provides Funding for Arts Education Programming



Richmond Kids First youth advocate

The Story

In 2018, Richmond voters passed an amendment to the city charter establishing a Department of Youth and Families and set aside \$950,000 from the city's General Fund in a dedicated Children's Fund to support youth programming, including arts education programs. The Children's Fund is to be administered by the Department of Children and Youth and Families and monitored by a City Council-appointed oversight committee to ensure accountability.

The establishment of the Richmond Children's Fund is part of a local and national trend of advocates successfully securing city money set-asides for youth services. San Francisco established a Children's Fund in 1991 and voters approved renewing it in 2000 and 2014; Oakland's Fund for Children and Youth was established in 1996 and renewed 2009; The Baltimore Children and Youth Fund was established 2016.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

There are many challenges to unlocking funding in any city budget, but all of them are compounded when there is simply so much less money to go around as is clearly the case in Richmond. While referenda calling for already hamstrung city governments to create more categorical or 'set-aside' allocations is arguably not good public policy, it is sometimes the best option to ensure that historically underinvested communities get some financial consideration.

Richmond, a city of 110,000, operates on a \$150 million city budget (spending \$1,300 per person); by comparison, San Francisco, across the Bay, is a city of 900,000 operating on a \$10 Billion budget (spending \$11,000 per resident). Richmond has also had a recent history

of severe financial management challenges. In 2015, according to *The San Jose Mercury News*: "Richmond became the only California city to have its credit rating reduced to junk bond status. High debt obligations, growing expenses and reliance on one-time revenues forced the city to issue new bonds estimated to cost Richmond taxpayers an additional \$10 million."

Observing the financial distress and resulting chronic under-investment in services and support for youth in Richmond, Kimberly Aceves-Iniguez, Director of the youth development nonprofit RYSE, concluded that "we were at a point that if we were going to shift outcomes for our people, something radical had to happen."

With leadership from RYSE, the *Richmond Kids First Initiative* was drafted with input from youth and youth-serving organizations, and it was Richmond youth who, along with adult allies, went door-to-door to collect the 14,000 signatures needed to put the measure on the ballot.

The newly established Department of Youth and Families and dedicated Children's Fund will increase support for local arts education programs, benefiting Richmond's youth and teaching artists. And knowing that winning the fight at the ballot box is only part of the battle, advocates from RYSE are now working on placing young people on the Department of Youth and Families oversight committee so that money designated for arts and healing actually is spent as intended.

Learn More

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2018: Oakland Creates First Cultural Plan in 30 Years



A community meeting during the cultural planning process

The Story

In 2018, the city of Oakland adopted its first cultural plan in 30 years: *Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan*. Under Cultural Affairs Director Robert Bedoya's direction, the plan took two years to develop. It includes goals and strategies to strengthen Oakland as an equitable, distinct, and vibrant cultural hub.

The city's Cultural Affairs Division will launch two initiatives based on the plan in 2019: The Neighborhood Voice: Belonging in Oakland, a grant program to support art-based civic engagement projects throughout the city and an Artist-In- Residence (AIR) program in city government.

The Significance & Bay Area Arts Connection

In the absence of a coherent cultural plan, and with a chronically understaffed Cultural Affairs Division, the city of Oakland made scattershot decisions about how and where to support artists and creativity. The default approach was to delegate grantmaking decisions to an advisory committee of the Cultural Affairs Commission and periodically reroute funds in response to a City Council member's request.

The new plan turns the page on how a major Bay Area city sets priorities when it comes to enacting cultural policy, especially around racial equity. As Angie Kim, President of the Center for Cultural Innovation says, "The city of Oakland Strategic Plan that overtly calls out equity as a goal is an important development. Having an arts strategic plan like Oakland's helps "name" racist practices and policies so that progress can move forward more effectively."

Further, Neighborhood Voice and Artist-In-Residence initiatives are intended to both positively impact the selected artists and to increase public support for arts programs by embedding artists in civic and government life. As such, this is a forward-thinking arts advocacy strategy.

Like many aspirational cultural plans that cities create, there is a significant funding gap between what the Oakland Cultural Plan costs and what the Oakland Cultural Affairs Division has to spend. One long-time Oakland funder observes, "Oakland has a great plan and great value statement but no real money to implement it; still this plan is a very important step."


Learn More

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