



2023 Arts for LA's Policy and Advocacy Agenda

**BUILDING  
A THRIVING**

**CREATIVE  
INFRASTRUCTURE**



pictured: San Cha

Photography by Austin Goswick



Despite its stature as the creative capital of the world, Los Angeles has not built a **Creative Infrastructure**<sup>^</sup> that adequately supports its creative communities, its arts institutions, or its international reach.



While Los Angeles – among US municipalities – ranks **#1 among US Cities (on a per capita basis) in the number of arts providers** (independent artists, arts employees, and arts, culture, and entertainment nonprofits and firms)



It drops down to **#52 in arts dollars** (program and contributed revenue, total expenses, and total compensation)



and **falls all the way down to #259 in government support**<sup>1</sup>

This deficit of private and government support, including the logjams in distribution, affects LA arts communities across the board, but is felt disproportionately, and most keenly, by BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color), low-income communities, and BIPOC-centered organizations, creating barriers to participation and representation in LA's most important sector.

We must continue to channel the energy of our solidarity movement toward **building a thriving Creative Infrastructure** that underpins the quality of our lives in the Los Angeles region.



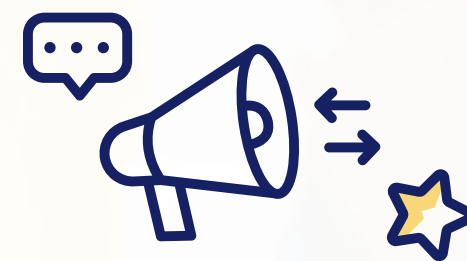
# OUR VISION

We envision a **fully-resourced and equitable Creative Infrastructure**, which makes possible a Los Angeles creative economy that includes:

Sustainable livelihoods  
for our artists and arts workers



Access for all young people  
to a quality arts education  
and careers in the arts



Resources for diverse and often  
under-resourced arts communities



Affordable spaces for artists  
and arts workers in which  
to live and work in LA County



Inclusion in decision making  
of communities historically  
underrepresented in policymaking



Partnerships between government,  
for-profit entities, and nonprofit  
organizations in advancing LA's role  
as a global arts and culture leader





# THE ROADMAP TO A JUST AND HEALTHY INFRASTRUCTURE



## ***Building Solidarity through Sector-wide Convenings***

Strengthening Creative Infrastructure will require collaboration. Arts for LA is expanding **its role as a convener of arts sector-wide engagement**, growing our communities' capacities for equitable and collective action.

- Arts for LA is leading a series of convenings co-organized by the Los Angeles City Department of Cultural Affairs through its *Network Optimization Program*, offering opportunities for cohorts within LA's arts communities to network, share resources and ideas, and build unity of purpose
- Arts for LA is co-chairing *The Creative Economy Work Group*, which is a new statewide initiative sponsored by CA Forward



## ***Empowering arts communities through Mobilization and Thought Leadership***

Arts for LA is working to **strengthen four key aspects of the Creative Infrastructure**:

1. Resources & Capital
2. Equitable Arts Education
3. Creative Jobs
4. Affordable Space

It is critical that the arts and culture sector coalesce around **long-term visions** and **short-term priorities** to incubate and grow the Creative Infrastructure we know is possible.





# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO EXPAND RESOURCES & CAPITAL



## LONG-TERM VISION



**Arts for LA envisions the development of arts resources commensurate with LA's size, diversity, and influence** as the international center of arts, culture, and entertainment, while allocating resources equitably to support individual artists and the full spectrum of arts organizations and workers who contribute to the social, cultural, and economic well-being of all LA residents.

## SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES

### Mobilization

- **Mobilize community support to double the Organizational Grant Program** at the LA County Department of Arts & Culture (LADAC)
- Urge municipal leaders to increase the availability of **public dollars (including those from the Arts Development Fee)**, by reforming contracting and reporting processes and by funding our creative communities at higher levels, with more urgency, and where the need is greatest

### Thought Leadership

- Encourage public and private funders to move towards **trust-based philanthropy**, offering more multi-year grants, more money to cover **general operating expenses**, and more funding for **BIPOC, undocumented, and underrepresented creative communities**; plus, raise awareness of these opportunities among arts communities
- Persuade more funders to **support artists directly**
- **Encourage cross-sector support** from social justice, economic development, and community health funding sources
- Raise awareness of the need for increased **funding of arts advocacy** to drive change, innovation, and equity

**READ MORE<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup>SMU DataArts, Cultural Data Project, proprietary data available upon request, <https://www.culturaldata.org/what-we-do/for-researchers-advocates>, 2017





# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ARTS EDUCATION

## LONG-TERM VISION

**Arts for LA envisions the creation of a high quality, well resourced, and culturally meaningful arts education system** as described in the Regional Arts Education Blueprint, and funded by Proposition 28. This includes the recognition of the arts as essential to the full development of every student; a fairly-paid education workforce that reflects the demographics of LA County; and a collaborative network of credentialed teachers, school district leaders, community-based organizations, and private philanthropy.

## SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES

### Mobilization

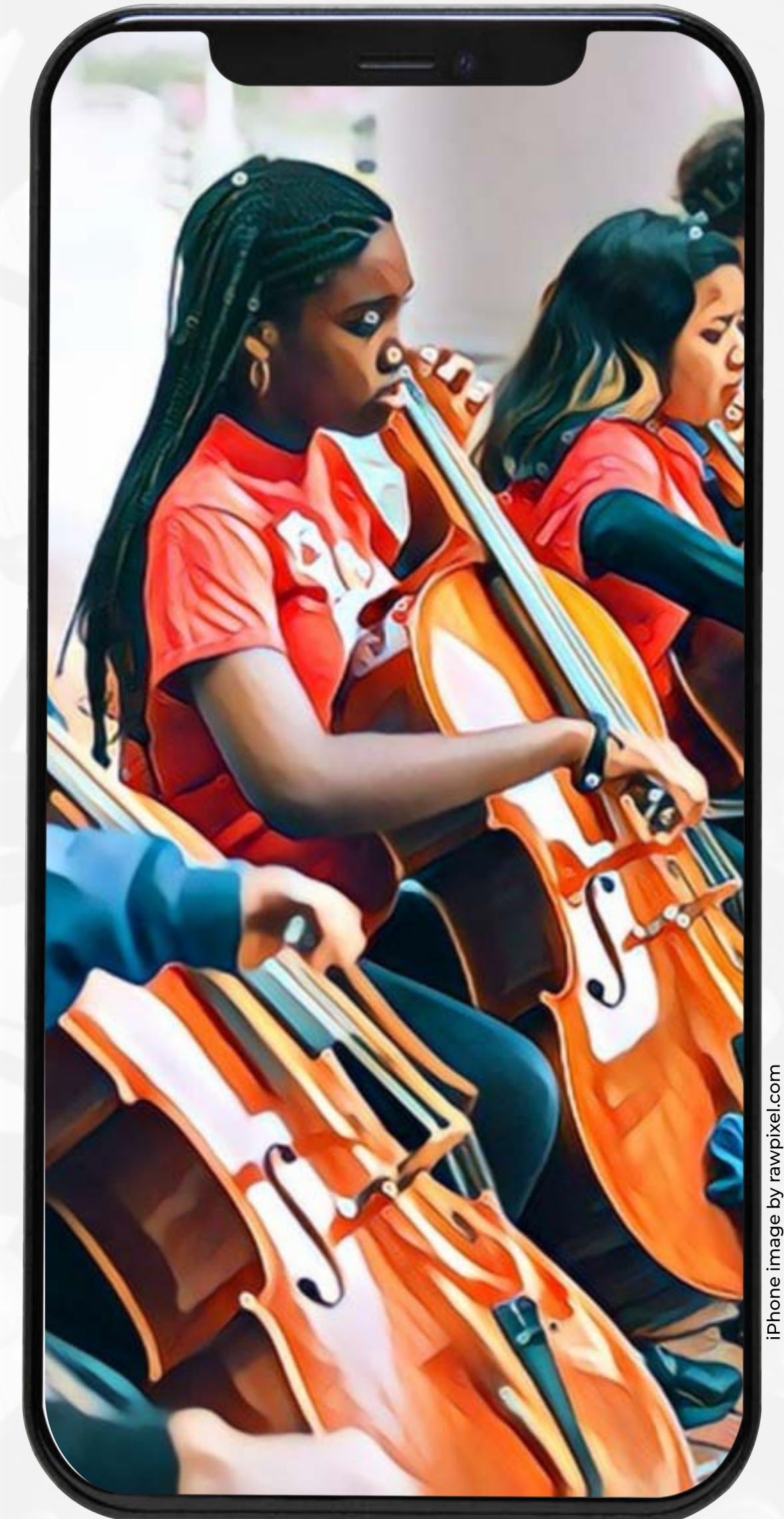
**Lead a coalition of regional arts ed stakeholders** to ensure equitable implementation of **Proposition 28 funds** by:

- Building short- and long-term pathways into arts instruction that will ensure a **workforce reflective of the diversity of LA County**, done in partnership with Arts for LA's Creative Jobs Collective Impact Initiative
- Advocating for meaningful roles for community-based organizations

### Thought Leadership

Work with cross-sector, for-profit and nonprofit partners to **lessen the digital divide** and **uplift distance learning models** as a means of addressing inequities in arts education access

**READ MORE**<sup>3</sup>



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# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO INCREASE AND IMPROVE CREATIVE JOBS

## LONG-TERM VISION



Arts for LA envisions the realization of its decade-long **Creative Jobs Collective Impact Initiative (CJCII)**, including the creation of **10,000 living wage jobs** in the LA region’s creative economy; **ensuring a median wage for entry-level jobs**; and building pathways to the sector for **youth and adults from communities most impacted by COVID-19 economic contraction and systemic inequity**.

## SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES



### Mobilization

**Obtain broad support for a countywide motion** that prioritizes a regional creative workforce development initiative to increase diversity and advocate for entry-level living wages

**Secure statewide funding to support creative jobs and workforce development**, including: a pilot program that creates pathways into high paying jobs; “high road training” partnerships; capitalization of small nonprofit employers to guarantee living wages through a statewide equitable payroll system (Senate Bill 1116); and equitable practices in arts education hiring and partnerships (through Prop 28 funds)



### Thought Leadership

**Initiate CJCII’s thought leadership phase by:**

- Onboarding the **CJCII steering committee** partners and facilitators
- Creating infrastructure and working groups for **community input and engagement**
- **Collecting and sharing data and learnings** to understand the status of our region’s creative workforce
- Bringing **values of a people-centered culture** to improve workplaces throughout the sector

[Read more](#)<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> SMU Data Arts, 2019, LA County Department of Arts and Culture Workforce Demographic Study Results, [https://www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/lacounty\\_2019\\_workforcedemographicsstudy\\_final.pdf](https://www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/lacounty_2019_workforcedemographicsstudy_final.pdf).



# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE SPACE



READ MORE<sup>5</sup>

## LONG-TERM VISION

Arts for LA envisions the proliferation of solidarity-based approaches to LA's housing and work-space crisis in the arts sector: innovative models of space sharing, common property ownership, cooperatives, lease-to-own arrangements, and community land trusts.

## SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES

### Mobilization

- Continue advocating for space share programs **offering safe, subsidized space** in the LA Countywide Cultural Policy Strategic Plan
- Increase awareness of **LA county facilities available for use** by artists and arts organizations, and collaborate to make the opportunities accessible

### Thought Leadership

- **Educate local decision makers** about the necessity of including **arts and culture in economic development** plans and advocate to make dedicated economic development funds more accessible to artists and arts organizations
- Raise awareness of more **innovative solutions to LA's space crisis** by leveraging the power of the larger solidarity economics movement





# TAKE ACTION TO BUILD A THRIVING CREATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

**More Information:** This Policy Agenda is the culmination of a five-month listening and engagement process led by Arts for LA, in which hundreds of artists, arts workers, arts advocates, and civic leaders across the Los Angeles region participated in conversations, surveys, and convenings on policy priorities for the creative sector.

For more information on this process see: [\*\*AFLA policy development process\*\*](#)

For a summary of 2022 Advocacy successes, see: [\*\*2022 AFLA successes\*\*](#)

**READY TO GET INVOLVED?** Take action [\*\*HERE\*\*](#) in support of our Creative Infrastructure Agenda.

