



Policy & Advocacy Progress Report

An Update on Arts for LA's 2023-24 Creative Infrastructure Agenda



Every year, Arts for LA engages in ongoing community dialogue with individual artists, creative workers, arts organizations, government agencies, elected officials, private philanthropy, and cultural partners. **In 2023 alone, we engaged 2,817 stakeholders which included 4 community listening sessions for our organizational members.**

These conversations directly inform our advocacy priorities and mobilization efforts. This progress report details what we heard from the field, re-emphasizes our commitments, and reviews our progress on the 2023-24 Creative Infrastructure Agenda.

ONGOING NEEDS

AFFORDABLE SPACE

Theaters are being torn down and small arts organizations are being evicted from their work space. Balancing the high cost of living and housing with the cost of managing an artistic practice is burdensome and leads to attrition from the creative economy. Rental rates are too high, and in spaces that are affordable, physical safety is a concern due to a lack of capital improvements. A central database tracking city and county owned spaces available for use as well as associated rental rates is a priority.

ARTS EDUCATION

There is a lot of anxiety surrounding Prop 28, particularly as it relates to the staffing crisis, teacher pathways, state level guidance, funding implementation, accountability, and community partnerships. More information needs to be relayed to community based organizations (CBOs), students, and family in advance of the school year to better prepare them for advocacy and engagement. Additionally, data and research are required to fully understand the impact of Prop 28 funding on youth, educators, community based organizations, and teaching artists.



ONGOING NEEDS

CREATIVE JOBS

There is an urgent need to expand the definition of creative jobs beyond traditional sectors, such as the entertainment industry. Convening non-profit and for profit organizations could help with that messaging.

Additionally, a creative job fair emphasizing collaboration over competition could showcase opportunities in LA as the entertainment capital of the world. The job fair should: (1) emphasize the importance of hiring local artists, interns, and apprentices, (2) utilize creative arts curriculum, (3) highlight certification programs, and (3) introduce free training initiatives to better support young people and adults transitioning careers. Finally, workforce development policies in California and LA should involve incentivizing businesses to keep work in the state.

RESOURCES & CAPITAL

Streamlined access to resources and grant opportunities are of particular interest for artists and arts organizations. Additionally, **there is a real need to change the narrative** from “arts for arts sake” to the arts as a civic necessity and economic driver.

Collaborative storytelling, data, and a return to “traditional advocacy” through organized meetings with elected officials can help make the case for reduced cost and increased support for artists and arts organizations. Finally, **LA28 is an essential part of building opportunity and legacy for the arts in the region.**



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE SPACE



[READ MORE¹](#)

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

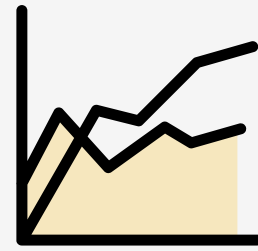
- Continue advocating for space share programs **offering safe, subsidized space** in the LA Countywide Cultural Policy Strategic Plan
- Increase awareness of **LA county facilities available for use** by artists and arts organizations, and collaborate to make the opportunities accessible

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



AFFORDABLE SPACE



PROGRESS

- We are actively encouraging elected offices to support additional projects like the **Hollywood Arts Collective**, a 152-unit, tax credit community for artists.
- We addressed the Burbank City Council, emphasizing the importance of local performing arts organizations after a precarious Request for Proposals process for the Burbank Center Stage.
- We spoke in support of a motion passed by the LA County Board of Supervisors prioritizing the **Southeast LA Cultural Center**.
 - A historical development project that will provide creative space to artists for rehearsals, performances, programming, and education.
- We mobilized advocates in support of **CA Assembly Bill 812**, which passed the state legislature.
 - Authorizes a certain percentage of units (up to 10%) of a residential development be affordable and reserved for artists including those located within or one-half mile from a state-designated cultural district.
- We are positioning artists as creative problem solvers to homelessness in our meetings with elected officials.
 - The County Department of Arts and Culture aims to do this via **Strategy 15 in the Countywide Cultural Policy Strategic Plan** which places artists and other creative workers in paid residencies at County departments to work alongside local government staff to develop innovative solutions to complex social challenges.



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

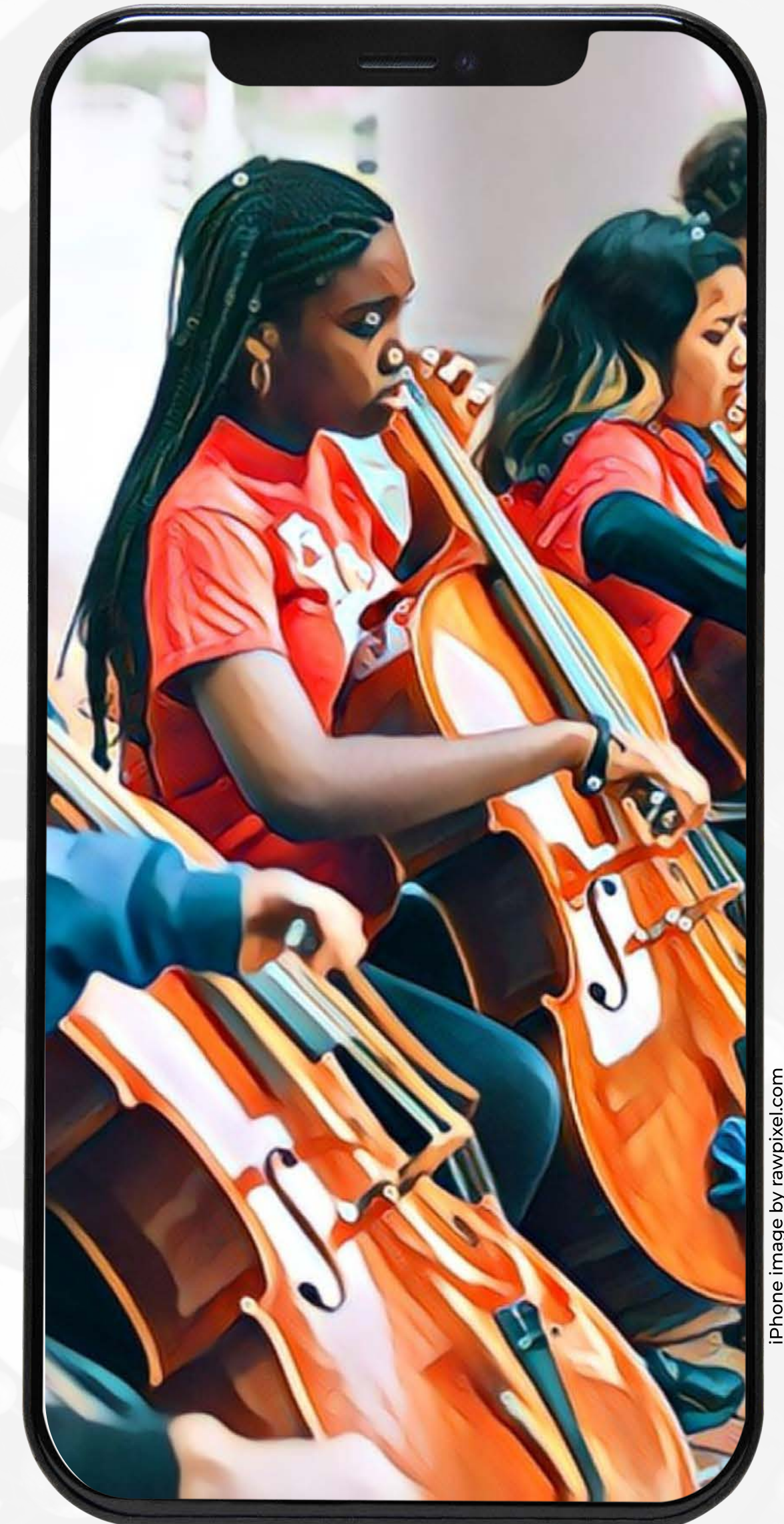
Lead a coalition of regional arts ed stakeholders to ensure equitable implementation of **Proposition 28 funds** by:

- 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 MORE²](#)



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ARTS EDUCATION

PROGRESS

- Arts for LA staff **joined** Austin Beutner's **Prop 28 Implementation Advisory Council** and the **Digital Equity LA Coalition**.
- We supported a **motion passed** by the LA County Board of Supervisors **elevating public messaging** around **the value of the arts** and expanded funding for the Arts Education Collective.
- In collaboration with Create CA, The Music Center, and other nonprofit partners, we **engaged over 400 members of the public**, including families and students, through educational webinars and events **regarding Prop 28**.
- In partnership with regional arts organizations and cultural partners, we are advocating for expanded pathways to teaching credentials and certifications for aspiring educators to fulfill the promise of Prop 28.
 - Governor Newsom recently directed the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to introduce an **Elementary Arts and Music Education authorization** for Career Technical Education teachers.
- In partnership with the Digital Equity LA Coalition, we participated in numerous **advocacy actions to hold Internet Service Providers accountable for digital discrimination**.
 - As a result of this collective effort, a historic **motion passed through LA City Council unanimously**. This motion opens the door for residents to file complaints with the City based on perceived discrimination, which the City must then investigate.



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](#)³



³ SMU Data Arts, 2019, LA County Department of Arts and Culture Workforce Demographic Study Results, https://www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/lacounty_2019_workforcedemographicstudy_final.pdf.



CREATIVE JOBS

PROGRESS

- We **secured unanimous support** from the **LA County Board of Supervisors** for a motion prioritizing **Arts for LA's CJCII**.
- We regularly convened a **Steering Committee of 19 cross sectoral partners**.
- We established **4 working groups** for CJCII on Nonprofit and For Profit Systems Change, Arts Education, and Pathways & Pipelines.
- We released a **commissioned report** by CVL Economics: **Center Stage**, which highlights that in 2021 alone, the state's Performing Arts sector lost a decade's worth of job growth.
- **We joined LA28's Local Hiring Work Group.**
- We drafted a joint letter to LA City Councilwoman Traci Park on the **LA28 Olympics and the Cultural Olympiad** with input from our organizational members.
 - ✎ Highlights include a need for increased awareness, information sharing, meaningful participation in planning, access to opportunities and funding, and amplifying the cultural heritage and legacy of Los Angeles.



2023-2024 Creative infrastructure agenda

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

[READ MORE](#)⁴

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



⁴SMU DataArts, Cultural Data Project, proprietary data available upon request, <https://www.culturaldata.org/what-we-do/for-researchers-advocates>, 2017



RESOURCES & CAPITAL PROGRESS

- We drafted a **joint letter** for arts service organizations **to the California Arts Council** calling on them **to reconsider a proposed end to the Statewide & Regional Networks grant program.**
- We **co-facilitated a workshop on data and storytelling** with the LA County Department of Arts and Culture utilizing their **needs assessment.**
- We hosted a **webinar on how to offer public comment** in support of or opposition to local policies being discussed in City Council and Board meetings.
- We redesigned and reintroduced the **Laura Zucker Fellowship for Policy and Research** and released the **Undocreatives** report, authored by **Erika Hirugami, MA., MAAB.**
- We mobilized Angelenos in support of SB1116, which helped secure **\$11.5 million for The Equitable Payroll Fund.**
 - 🔑 Codifies a 25% small business goal for state procurement and enhances the ability of state agencies to include small and underserved businesses in state contracting.
 - 🔑 Allows non-profit theaters and radio stations to sell alcoholic beverages during live events.
 - 🔑 Establishes a grant program to support the performing arts through payroll reimbursements.

**“ARTS FOR LA CONTINUES TO
SHOWCASE ITS IMPORTANCE TO THE
CULTURE SECTOR OF LOS ANGELES.
ITS STEADFAST AND PROVEN
PROGRAMS GENERATE THE FUTURE
ADVOCATES OF OUR REGION.”**

– Joshua Lamont, ACTIVATE Alumni & Artist.





THANK YOU!

Thank you for your ongoing advocacy and contributions to the arts and culture ecosystem of Los Angeles.

Please sign up for our newsletter to get regular updates on our progress, regional wins, and opportunities to participate in advocacy actions.

Want to learn more about how we intend to fulfill the promise of our 2023-24 Creative Infrastructure Agenda? Stay tuned for our 2024 Action Plan.

