



TEXANS FOR THE ARTS
The Official Arts Advocacy Organization for Texas

2011/2012 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Executive Summary

Texans for the Arts will advocate for the development and implementation of statewide public policy that supports strong and vibrant arts, cultural and creative industries.

Our legislative priorities for the 82nd legislative session are:

1. Protect existing authorized funding level and uses of municipal hotel occupancy tax for the development, support and promotion of the arts.
2. Understand that the current version of HB1 and SB1 (82R), as introduced, allows the TCA to continue to make investments that support arts education programming and provide core support to cultural institutions statewide.
3. Advocate for reinstatement of TCA funding for cultural tourism programming. These funds spark economic development in local communities and provide jobs for small businesses while preserving our Texan culture for future generations.

Texans for the Arts will support other legislative actions that have a direct impact on the state's arts industry. Our organization has identified the following secondary priorities for our advocacy efforts:

1. Monitor and oppose any legislation that would further reduce arts funding beyond that outlined in HB1.
2. Monitor and oppose any legislation that would remove the current requirements for high school graduation that include one credit during middle school and one credit at the secondary school level.
3. Monitor legislative action that impacts the nonprofit sector, such as tax exemptions, regulatory efforts, etc.

PRIORITY: MUNICIPAL HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX USE FOR THE ARTS

PROPOSAL: To protect the current provisions of the Texas Tax Code regarding the authorized use of municipal hotel occupancy tax for the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts, in all its forms, as well as those disciplines referred to as the creative industries

BACKGROUND: Since the adoption of the "Lalor Law" in 1977, Chapter 351 of the Texas Tax Code has specifically permitted the use of the municipal hotel occupancy tax for the encouragement, promotion, improvement and application of the arts. The allocation of these funds is decided by local, municipal governments who are best suited to determine the appropriate uses of the local portion of the tax. Changes to the tax law since the Lalor Law was passed in 1977 have significantly restricted the ability of municipalities to spend the HOT revenue they collect. Further restrictions to the existing provisions will be detrimental to the arts industry of the state.

ACTION: To support all efforts during the 82nd Legislative Session to maintain the local government's ability to utilize the Hotel Occupancy Tax for the promotion of the arts in Texas.

IMPACT: Local governments can continue to allocate municipal hotel occupancy tax to promote and encourage the arts and further Texas' economic creative industries and national reputation as a lively cultural tourism destination.

PRIORITY: REINSTATE TCA FUNDING FOR CULTURAL TOURISM

PROPOSAL: Work to restore strategies to HB1 that provide investments in cultural tourism marketing and programming.

BACKGROUND: Funding for cultural tourism programming dramatically impacts small businesses in smaller Texas communities by focusing on those things that attract tourism dollars. It is well documented that cultural tourists spend more and stay longer than average in a community, thus adding to the local and state tax revenue

ACTION: TFA and its lobbyists will work with legislative leaders to explore ways to reinstate cultural tourism funding to the original TCA request level.

IMPACT: The reinstatement of these funds will have a two or three fold affect on the recipient communities by sustaining small businesses, allowing them to grow and attract other businesses to the community.