



TEXANS FOR THE ARTS
The Official Arts Advocacy Organization for Texas

Legislative Talking Points for the 82nd Legislature

Why the Arts Matter

The arts enrich our lives. From the small-town high school musical that packs the auditorium with beaming family and friends, to the regional theater where groundbreaking new plays are brought to life, the arts enlighten us, bring us happiness and allow us to connect with each other more fully. Quite simply, the arts are essential to the vibrancy and fullness of American life.

Arts Use of Hotel Occupancy Tax

It is critical to protect the current provisions of the Texas Tax Code regarding the authorized use of municipal hotel occupancy tax for the encouragement, promotion and improvement of the arts in all its forms, including those disciplines referred to as the creative industries.

Funding for the Texas Commission on the Arts

TFA has long been a proponent of increased funding for the TCA – funding to equal at least the national average of state per capita spending -- \$1.00 per Texan. However, we are keenly aware of the current fiscal health of our state and the reality that all state agencies must sacrifice. We are, therefore grateful for the current level of funding present in HB & SB 1 that provides for continued investment in local arts organizations.

TFA also recognizes, however, that one small portion of the TCA budget that has been totally eliminated is the strategy that supports participation in arts and cultural events: most importantly funding for **cultural tourism grants** and marketing for **cultural tourism events**. TFA urges reinstatement of these funds for the following reasons:

- TCA works under an existing Memorandum Of Understanding with four other state agencies to promote Texas cities and towns as tourist destinations.
- This support, and Cultural District designations, strongly impact small businesses in many communities that lack a cohesive presence.
- Each of these cultural districts, which now number 12, demonstrates that the non-profit arts industry directly contributes to the community's economy. These non-profit arts organizations directly employ a substantial number of workers and generate more jobs indirectly through businesses that support the cultural districts. As these small businesses grow and prosper, and cultural tourism increases, more businesses are encouraged to start positively impacting the local economy and state sales tax revenue.
- A few examples of the impact of these funds:
 - The musical drama *TEXAS* brings an economic impact of more than 30 million dollars per season to the Panhandle area;
 - The Denton Art and Jazz Festival attracts more than 200,000 annually to Denton (population 109,561);
 - The James Dick Foundation for the Performing Arts summer international music festival, attracting an audience of more than 35,000 people to Round Top (population 77) and;
 - The International Latino Arts Festival and student arts competition benefiting more than 4,000 young people in El Paso and along the Texas/Mexico border.

The Arts in Texas Mean Business

- The creative sector fuels the Texas economy. A 2008 study commissioned by the Texas Cultural Trust and produced by Texas Perspectives found an undeniable connection between support for the arts, a vibrant creative sector and a strong economy.* The findings included these points:
 - Texas' creative sector employs nearly 675,000 workers, representing a 20% growth rate over the past five years.
 - Creative sector wages are, on average, 80.8% higher than non-creative industries, representing the real power behind the state's economy.
 - Creative sector employment will create 140,000 new jobs between 2006 and 2016. This labor force must have the appropriate skill sets, or Texas will risk losing these opportunities to other states.
 - Access to talented, creative people determines where companies choose to locate and grow.
- Non-profit organizations are a vital part of the quality-of-life infrastructure.
 - Attracting and retaining an innovative workforce is accomplished by focusing on three factors communities can directly influence: vitality and diversity of non-profit cultural arts, a well-rounded curriculum in public schools, and economic development emphasizing quality of place.
 - Young professionals consistently rank the availability of a strong arts and cultural sector as one of the top three factors in determining where to live.
- Arts, non-profit arts and cultural organizations combine to form the centerpiece around which large and small communities build successful cultural tourism programs.

Texas Must Lead in Supporting the Creative Arts in Schools

- According to the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, creativity, collaboration, critical thinking communication, innovation and problem-solving are essential to prepare our children for the future. The arts are the key component in teaching each of these skills in our schools.
- Multiple studies have found arts education strongly and positively impacts both academic and personal success across socioeconomic groups, especially among disadvantaged populations.
- Studies have also found a substantial overlap between the skills required for innovative occupations and the skills fostered by K-12 arts curriculum.

People who create in our companies – whether they be scientists, marketing experts or business strategists – benefit from exposure to the arts. People cannot create when they work in a culturally sterile environment. The economic benefits of the arts greatly transcend and outlive any of the normal cycle. That is why business invests in the arts – even when times are tough, and when there is increased pressure to manage money more carefully.

□ John D. Ong
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*"20 Reasons the Texas Economy Depends on the Arts and the Creative Sector" is available at txculturaltrust.org.