



ROOTS, RECOVERY, AND REGENERATION:

CULTIVATING A CREATIVE LEGACY

2025 – 2027 POLICY AND ADVOCACY AGENDA



After 20 years, Arts for LA (AFLA) is still the only cross-sector and cross-discipline arts advocacy organization in Los Angeles County. We lead communities, artists, and organizations to advocate for an equitable, healthy, and vibrant LA through the arts.

PROGRESS FROM 2023-25 AGENDA

- ▶ In June 2023, LA County awarded over \$31M to arts and cultural organizations, following extensive advocacy efforts by the Arts for LA community.
- ▶ AFLA joined Austin Beutner's Prop 28 Implementation Advisory Council to address concerns about misappropriated funds and the decrease in community partnerships.
- ▶ In partnership with the Digital Equity LA Coalition, AFLA helped make the City of LA the first city in the nation to adopt a digital discrimination ordinance.
- ▶ AFLA presented key recommendations to the LA County Board of Supervisors as part of the Creative Jobs Collective, which included an increase for the County's Organizational Grant Program (OGP).
- ▶ AFLA mobilized advocates to send over 4,000 letters to LA City Council to preserve \$1M in funding for vacant positions at the Department of Cultural Affairs.
- ▶ AFLA co-produced 11 cultural convenings with LA Commons, Community Arts Resources, and LA County to increase regional preparedness and hear from arts and culture leaders about their priorities for the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

INTRODUCTION TO 2025-27 AGENDA

The creative economy in Los Angeles County stands at a critical juncture, shaped by long standing challenges and a series of recent crises. For decades, the nonprofit arts sector has struggled with historic undercapitalization, low wages and evasive employment have left many creatives without the financial security to sustain their practice or their livelihood, and the COVID-19 pandemic devastated the arts and culture landscape, forcing the closure of venues and an unprecedented decline in public engagement with the arts.

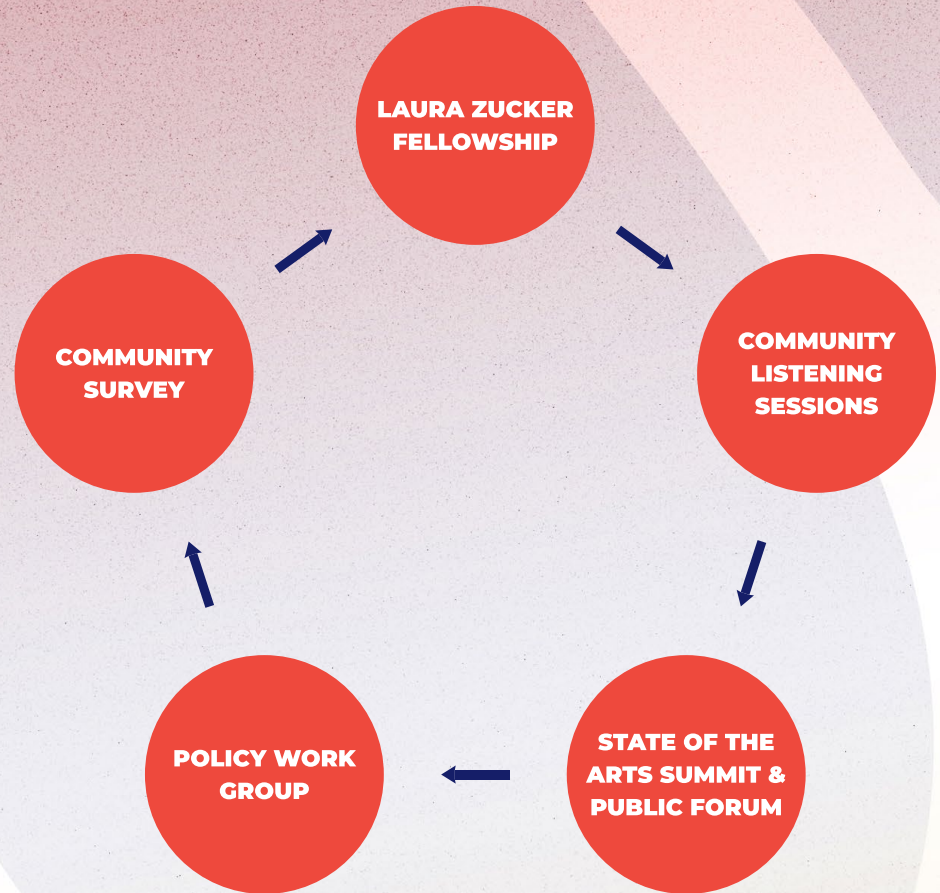
Today, the crisis has deepened. Recent wildfires across Los Angeles County have left a trail of destruction, burning homes, schools, and arts organizations to the ground. The moment calls for a return to our roots—community, resilience, and innovation—to build an arts sector that not only survives but thrives.

This agenda aims to (1) deepen connections that strengthen capacity, (2) share knowledge and learnings from the field that build regional preparedness, and (3) lead grassroots and grasstops organizing to drive policy change for equity and recovery in the sector. The “roadmap” is designed to be measurable, actionable, and realistic. Through strategic investment and collective action, we aim to ensure that the arts remain a cornerstone of Los Angeles’ economy, local communities, and shared humanity.

AGENDA DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

AFLA's four advocacy areas (affordable space, arts education, creative jobs, resources & capital) serve as pillars for year-round engagement which culminates in a formal agenda development process in which hundreds of artists and arts workers contribute their insights on policy priorities for the next two years.

This process is ongoing and builds upon the efforts and outcomes of previous years. Below is an overview of the unique elements in this iterative process.



LEARNINGS FROM THE FIELD

The top priorities for respondents were increased funding, sustainable wages and benefits, and affordable workspaces/venues.

The top three funding challenges were:

- ▶ **A LACK OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOUNDATIONS AND PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS**
- ▶ **A LACK OF MULTI-YEAR FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**
- ▶ **COMPLEX GRANT APPLICATIONS REQUIRING EXTENSIVE DOCUMENTATION.**

The priorities that emerged from conversations with the arts and culture community include:

CONNECT

- ▶ **BRIDGE THE DIVIDE BETWEEN LARGE, MID, AND SMALL-BUDGET ORGANIZATIONS.**
- ▶ **ENCOURAGE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.**
- ▶ **INCREASE ACCESS TO EXISTING AFFORDABLE SPACES.**

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- ▶ **2028 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES.**
- ▶ **GRANT PROCESSES AND REQUIREMENTS.**
- ▶ **ARTIST DEVELOPMENT FEES AND PUBLIC FUNDING.**

LEAD

- ▶ **INCREASED PUBLIC/PRIVATE FUNDING.**
- ▶ **EXPANDED SOCIAL SERVICES FOR FREELANCE ARTISTS.**
- ▶ **STREAMLINED GRANT PROCESSES.**

LA COUNTY INVESTMENT

Los Angeles County is
**THE NATION'S TOP-RANKING REGION
 FOR ARTS PROVIDERS PER CAPITA.**

#72

IN ARTS DOLLARS

#230

**IN PUBLIC SUPPORT
 OF THE ARTS**

Per capita arts funding in

LA COUNTY

SAN DIEGO

SAN FRANCISCO

\$1.77

\$11.05

\$33.22

Factoring in legacy funding for prominent institutions and venues, Los Angeles' per capita investment only rises to **\$9.45**, still trailing behind comparable regions.

TO MATCH SAN DIEGO'S TOTAL INVESTMENT, LOS ANGELES WOULD REQUIRE AN ADDITIONAL \$15.8 MILLION IN ARTS FUNDING.

These disparities are most keenly felt by artists, arts workers, and organizations from historically underrepresented communities.

2024 SMU Data Arts Vibrancy Index <https://culturaldata.org/arts-vibrancy-2024/executive-summary/>

Americans for the Arts' Profile of Local Arts Agencies <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/networks-and-councils/local-arts-network/facts-and-figures/profile-of-local-arts-agencies/2020-profile-of-local-arts-agencies>



CONNECT

THE VISION

ARTS FOR LA WILL FOSTER EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE CULTURES, AIMING TO BUILD CROSS-SECTORAL COLLABORATION THAT STRENGTHENS ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE.

THE ROADMAP

- ▶ Re-introduce an annual Advocacy Day at Los Angeles City Hall where arts advocates can network, gain advocacy tools, and directly engage local elected officials.
- ▶ Coordinate collaborative networking channels where arts organizations of all budget sizes can connect to identify shared challenges, explore equitable funding strategies, and establish actionable outcomes for space-sharing, project development, and mutual aid support.
- ▶ Convene philanthropic partners and nonprofit arts organizations to address urgent recovery and capacity needs and build long-term financial and operational sustainability across the sector.

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THE VISION

ARTS FOR LA WILL GROUND ITS ACTIONS IN LEARNINGS FROM THE FIELD AND SHARE THOSE LEARNINGS EXTERNALLY TO BUILD REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

THE ROADMAP

- ▶ Develop an online community hub, where artists, arts workers, and organizations can interact, share mutual aid resources, and access educational materials on topics like tax deductions, digital equity, and permissible nonprofit advocacy (including rapid response tools for a changing political landscape).
- ▶ Disseminate critical information on the planning of the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games and connect arts organizations, artists, and arts workers to opportunities to participate.

THE VISION

ARTS FOR LA WILL ENGAGE IN ONGOING POLICY ADVOCACY AND GRASSROOTS AND GRASSTOPS ORGANIZING TO IMPLEMENT CRISIS-RESPONSE STRATEGIES AND BUILD SECTOR-WIDE MODELS THAT PRIORITIZE PEOPLE AND CREATE SUSTAINABLE ARTS CAREERS AND ORGANIZATIONS



THE ROADMAP

- ▶ Advocate for increased and sustained County investment to: expand arts, media, and entertainment apprenticeships; strengthen the Entertainment Business Interruption Fund with robust \$25,000 grants for small businesses and nonprofits serving the entertainment sector; and elevate the Organizational Grant Program to match arts spending among comparable regions.
- ▶ Advocate for streamlined city grant applications that remove complex documentation requirements and provide up-front payments to build sustainability.
- ▶ Advocate for the development and enhancement of a countywide needs assessment map to catalog and maximize the use of public spaces (libraries, museums, parks, and community centers) for arts and cultural activities.
- ▶ Increase opportunities for arts educators by advocating for VAPA to be designated as a shortage field and by partnering with local agencies and funders to create subsidized credentialing pathways (including CTE and supplementary authorizations for those with a background in the arts).
- ▶ Strengthen Prop 28 implementation by advocating for a statewide oversight and advisory committee made up of students, families, practitioners, and other community stakeholders, while promoting meaningful inclusion of community-based organizations in funding allocation to sustain their school and district partnerships.
- ▶ Advocate at the state level to advance the goals of AFLA's Creative Jobs Collective by extending health and safety protections, unemployment insurance, and paid leave to freelance arts and entertainment workers.
- ▶ Develop an employer toolkit that sets measurable standards for AFLA's Creative Jobs Collective and centers inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. The toolkit should outline sustainable and transparent living wage criteria, inclusive hiring, culturally responsive organizational practices, and wellness programs.
- ▶ Secure commitments from a diverse group of employers to support AFLA's Creative Jobs Collective, placing at least 1,500 arts and culture workers from historically underrepresented communities in jobs with a minimum living wage of \$26 per hour.



**WANT TO GET INVOLVED AND TAKE ACTION
TO ADVANCE THIS AGENDA?**

SIGN UP FOR AN ACCOUNT IN OUR ACTION CENTER.

ARTSFORLA.ORG