



**COUNTY of VENTURA**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

**Sevet Johnson, PsyD**  
County Executive Officer

**Mike Pettit**  
Assistant County Executive Officer

**Kaye Mand**  
County Chief Financial Officer

**Shawn Atin**  
Assistant County Executive  
Officer/  
Human Resources Director  
Labor Relations

July 25, 2023

Board of Supervisors  
County of Ventura  
800 S. Victoria Avenue  
Ventura, CA 93009

**SUBJECT: Receive and File a Report for the Proposed Use of Arts Community Funds Designated By Your Board on October 11, 2022 in the Amount of \$1,000,000; Authorization for the County Executive Office to Implement the Three Proposed Arts Community Programs Identified in the Report; Approval of, and Authorization for the County Executive Officer or Designee to Negotiate and Execute Agreements with the Ventura County Community Foundation and Other Vendors in a Total Cumulative Amount Not to Exceed \$100,000 to Support the Administration and Implementation of These Programs.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. It is recommended that your Board receive and file a report for the proposed use of arts community funds designated by your board on October 11, 2022, in the amount of \$1,000,000.
2. Authorize the County Executive Office to implement the three proposed arts community programs identified in the report.
3. Approval of, and authorization for the County Executive Officer or designee to negotiate and execute agreements with the Ventura County Community Foundation and other vendors in a total cumulative amount not to exceed \$100,000 to support the administration and implementation of these programs.

**FISCAL/MANDATES IMPACT:**

Mandatory:	No
Source of Funding:	General Fund – Fund Balance Assigned to Fiscal Recovery Projects
Funding Match Required:	No
Impact on Other Departments:	None

**Summary of Revenues and Costs:**

	<b><u>FY 2023-24</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2024-25</u></b>
Revenues:	\$ 0	\$ 0
Costs:		
Direct	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 0
Indirect-Dept	\$ 0	\$ 0
Indirect-County CAP	\$ 0	\$ 0
Total Cost	<u>\$ 1,000,000</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
Net County Cost	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 0
Recovered Indirect Costs	\$ 0	\$ 0

**FY 2023-24 Budget Projections:**

<b>FY 2023-24 Budget Projection for County Executive Office – Division 1050</b>				
	Adopted Budget	Adjusted Budget	Projected Budget	Estimated Savings/(Deficit)
Appropriations	\$ 34,727,259	\$ 34,727,259	\$ 34,727,259	\$ 0
Revenue	\$ 18,560,539	\$ 18,560,539	\$ 18,560,539	\$ 0
Net Cost	\$ 16,166,720	\$ 16,166,720	\$ 16,166,720	\$ 0

**BACKGROUND**

Like the rest of the nation, the arts community in Ventura County was hit particularly hard by COVID-19-related closures and shutdowns. These actions disrupted programs and services across all sectors of the creative economy. Although some geographic locations and sectors of the creative economy have demonstrated a healthy recovery, recovery for others has either plateaued or seen a continued downtrend, especially in the fine and performing arts sectors.

The pandemic has also exposed disparities within the arts community. While many volunteer-led organizations, independent artists, gig workers, micro-businesses, and not-for-profit arts activities were severely affected by the pandemic, many were ineligible for previous support programs like the Payroll Protection Program and Shuttered Venues Operators Grant. Many of these entities serve as one of the few arts providers in the communities most impacted by the pandemic. Countywide public funding for arts and culture, combined with supportive technical assistance programs, will stimulate an equitable recovery across the sector and support a geographically disbursed, diverse, and vibrant arts community in the years to come.

**Discussion:**

On October 11, 2022, your Board allocated \$1,000,000 to the arts community as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Plan for the County to “provide services and resources in support of arts and culture organizations and projects, emphasizing

communities most impacted by the pandemic and activities that align with the County Economic Vitality Strategic Plan's focus on the creative economy."

On December 13, 2022, your Board approved the use of General Funds, instead of the ARPA allocations, to fund all the programs and projects previously identified as ARPA funded projects, which included the \$1,000,000 to support arts and culture organizations.

Today, we are presenting three programs that will invest in the arts community in Ventura County and support recovery across the sector.

The process for developing these programs included gathering input from the arts community and consultations with experts in the field, including professionals experienced in grant-making, leading municipal arts agencies, and arts advocacy efforts, as well as arts proponents providing street-level programming. It also included research, analysis, and comparison of contemporary local government grantmaking practices to support arts and culture. A total of six different funding models were initially considered and vetted via internal consultations and further consultation with experts in the field.

While each of the six models had their respective merits, one was deemed the best option based on the immediate needs of the arts community, project timelines, and overall feasibility.

The model being presented today was developed and refined from a draft concept and includes three programs that were developed to align with the project description of the funding plan and to best serve the arts community. These programs are anticipated to:

1. Accelerate both the near-term and long-term recovery of the arts community by supporting activities aligned with the County's Economic Vitality Strategic Plan.
2. Emphasize recovery in communities most impacted by the pandemic.
3. Support the entire spectrum of the arts community, with funding tiers that support the activities of individual artists, small to medium arts organizations, and arts organizations with budgets of \$1,000,000 or more.
4. Increase the overall impact of the funding through an expeditious distribution process and a matching grant requirement for awards \$20,000 and above.

The first program area is in partnership with the Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF), which is proposed to serve as the administrator of the grant program. The second area will support the costs associated with providing technical assistance for the grantees and the costs associated with administering the funds. The third program area will set aside funds on a contingency basis to support future grant match requests in support of the arts community.

**Program Overview:**

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Arts and Culture Investment Fund Grant Program             | \$800,000 |
| 2. Technical Assistance to Grantees and Administrative Costs: | \$100,000 |
| 3. Matching Grant Contingency Fund                            | \$100,000 |

### **Program 1: Ventura County Arts and Culture Investment Fund**

This program will allocate \$800,000 to provide direct funding to arts organizations or projects. Grant tiers will range from \$5,000, \$10,000, and a \$20,000 to \$50,000 range over a one-year period. Applicants will self-select their requested funding amounts based on demonstrated organizational capacity, level of service provided to the community, and the scope of the proposal. Grant funds must be used to support arts and culture-related recovery efforts in one or more of the following areas:

- Community programs and events
- Arts education
- Creative placemaking
- Entrepreneurship and workforce development in the creative economy
- Promotion and marketing of arts events
- Operating costs for organizations already doing work in the above areas.

Fiscal sponsorship through a nonprofit 501(c)(3) will be allowed for artists and independent arts activities (fiscal sponsorship allows for these activities and projects to operate under the sponsoring organization's legal and tax-exempt status). Grant asks between \$20,000 - \$50,000 will require 1:1 matching funds from new revenue sources (including new grant awards, other government support, and private donations). Final eligibility criteria will be developed in consultation with the VCCF and will emphasize arts activities that serve communities in the lowest half of the Vulnerability Index as indicated in the Economic Development Collaborative's 2021 report: Profile of COVID-19 Community, Business, Nonprofit, & Worker Impacts (EXHIBIT 1). These include areas of Camarillo, El Rio, Fillmore, Nyland Acres, Ojai, Oxnard, Piru, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Ventura. Organizations that do not directly serve these areas but can demonstrate service to other disadvantaged communities in the county, will also be supported through this grant program.

#### **Anticipated Outcomes: Program 1\***

1. Stimulate the recovery of Ventura County arts community and those communities most impacted by the pandemic through the alignment with the County's Economic Vitality Strategic Plan.
2. Diversification and expansion of the capacity of the arts community via widespread support of both one-time projects and ongoing programs and operations.
3. Matching grant tiers will increase overall funding to the community, sustaining large arts organizations and the development of emerging organizations.
4. Strengthening the County's knowledge of, and relationships within, the arts community across Ventura County.

\*More specific outcomes will be included in the grant request proposals.

### **Program 2: Technical Assistance to Grantees and Administrative Costs**

This program area will allocate \$100,000 to support professional development for the arts community, community outreach efforts, and fund administration costs. The professional development activities will provide capacity-building services to grantees and will include training in fundraising, marketing, and audience development. It will also provide technical assistance to meet the new market demands like digital programming, virtual marketplaces, and other technologies to engage with audiences. Workshops will be provided by experts in the field, and selected by the County, in collaboration with the VCCF.

Funding for this program area will also support the Ventura County Community Foundation's estimated \$25,000 fee for administering the grant funds. This program area will also support an outreach and awareness campaign to ensure Countywide awareness of the funding opportunity for the arts community. The workshops and outreach campaigns will utilize the remaining \$75,000.

#### **Anticipated Outcomes: Program 2**

1. Increased project, program, or organization sustainability through participation in capacity-building workshops led by experienced professionals.
2. Full community awareness of the granting program, including the announcement of the funding opportunity, recognition of the awardees, and communication of program outcomes via a professional outreach campaign.
3. The Ventura County Community Foundation, in collaboration with County Executive Office staff, will provide professional grant administration for the entire process, including application development and review, grant awards and payment, and reports and evaluation.

### **Program 3: Contingency Fund for Grant Match Requests for the Arts Community**

This program area will reserve \$100,000 to support future matching grants or similar opportunities to support the arts community. Potential qualifying grant match requests include grants programs offered by the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, and private foundations. Grant match requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and subject to the approval of the County Executive Officer or her designee and in accordance with all County policies, with priority given to opportunities that support arts and culture organizations and projects that focus on the communities most impacted by the pandemic and activities that align with the County Economic Vitality Strategic Plan's focus on the creative economy. If this reserve is not fully utilized within one year, the remainder of the funds will be distributed through a second round of grant funding.

#### **Anticipated Outcomes: Program 3**

1. Expansion of the grant opportunities available to the arts community through this set-aside of dedicated matching funds.



2. Leveraging the Board allocated funding to bring in additional outside dollars to support arts and culture in Ventura County.
3. Overall development of the Ventura County arts community through supporting and funding grant match requests.

**Conclusion:**

The Ventura County Arts and Culture Investment Fund and associated programs represents a significant investment in the growth and sustainability of the Ventura County arts community. These programs will provide widespread services and resources to both artists and arts organizations, emphasizing arts and culture activities, programs, and operations that support the communities most impacted by the pandemic. These programs also align with the County's Economic Vitality Strategic Plan and its focus on the creative economy. By supporting a range of activities from independent artists to big-budget arts organizations, this investment will help to strengthen the creative economy and enhance the quality of life for residents of Ventura County. It also allows for the County to deepen its relationship with the arts community and gain a greater understanding of funding impact and needs for future programs. CEO staff will return to your Board with a final report on grant recipients, activities, and impact.

This Board letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, County Counsel and the Auditor-Controller's Office. If you have any questions, please contact David Yoshitomi, Arts and Culture Manager, at 805-662-6706.

Sincerely,



David Yoshitomi  
Arts and Culture Manager



Sevet Johnson, PsyD.  
County Executive Officer

**Attachment:**

EXHIBIT 1: EDC Report: Profile of COVID-19 Community, Business, Nonprofit, & Worker Impacts