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To: County of Ventura , Board of Supervisors
800 S. Victoria Ave. #1920
Ventura, CA 93009

From: TOArts, Board of Directors
2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

Dear Chair Long and Supervisors,

The TOArts Board wishes to commend the County on the creation of the Arts and Culture Investment Fund. The action taken by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on November 7th to create a grant program to specifically provide assistance to the numerous arts organizations and independent working artists throughout the County will provide critical financial support to this integral field.

County staff thoughtfully crafted a grant program to provide meaningful support through a fair and equitable process for the vast number of arts organizations and artists who call Ventura County "Home." We understand that \$500,000 of the \$1,000,000 proposal was designated by the County to two organizations. Without questioning the great work of these organizations, we ask that you consider increasing the total amount of allocation to \$1,500,000 to provide the original request for \$1,000,000 to be available by application by all arts organizations.

The Arts have a profound impact on our community. Arts and Culture programs grow and reinforce community, by bringing us together, elevating our quality of life through shared experiences. At TOArts, our vision is to be a place *Where the Arts Thrive for All*. Many arts programs in our community provide exposure and education programs for students, affordable art programs for seniors, and programs geared toward arts experiences for at-risk youth or under-represented communities. Investment in the arts strengthens the fabric of our society and can lead to exponential growth in the local economy.

During the height of the pandemic, the Arts, Culture, and Entertainment endured prolonged hardship due to the restrictions and limitations on gathering. Even after restrictions were lifted, many arts organizations had to contend with staffing shortages, increased costs, and apprehensive audiences which were still concerned about gathering too soon. The ripple effects of this continue to cause hardship in the arts community.

We encourage you to add funding to this grant program to restore the original \$1,000,000, as was designed and presented by County staff, in order to support the artists and organizations working to build and strengthen our communities. With a vast amount of artists and arts organizations in Ventura County, the full funding would provide deeper resource to those needing assistance. We appreciate the County's commitment to supporting the incredible work of Arts and Culture and investing in our creative economy.

With appreciation,

David Mead

David Mead
Chair, TOArts Board of Directors