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# CREATIVE PULSE

A Baseline Study of Contra Costa County's  
Arts and Culture Sector

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COMMISSIONED BY

Dean & Margaret  
Leshner Foundation

The Zellerbach  
Family Foundation

PHOTO CREDIT: Visit Concord



# Table of Contents

Letter from the Funders.....	3
Executive Summary .....	5
Introduction .....	9
Approach.....	14
Characteristics of the Arts and Culture Sector in Contra Costa County.....	16
Learnings from the Community Engagement Process.....	18
Recommendations .....	24
Appendix 1: Contra Costa County Arts and Culture Sector in Numbers.....	28
Appendix 2: List of Arts and Culture Organizations .....	30
Appendix 3: List of Community Stakeholders .....	36
Appendix 4: Methodology .....	37



# Letter from the Funders

Dear Community,

We believe that arts and culture is the fabric that makes the Bay Area vibrant, inclusive, and unique. Not limited to self-expression, the arts bring joy, expand our sense of possibility and belonging, foster collective healing, and inspire new perspectives. Yet, access to and funding for the arts is inconsistent across the Bay Area, and particularly in Contra Costa County. As one of the largest counties in the Bay Area, Contra Costa County has also seen the most change, experiencing an influx of Black, Latinx, and immigrant residents moving east from neighboring Alameda and San Francisco counties. These shifts contribute to the richness and diversity of the county, and offer extraordinary opportunities for investment, particularly in arts and culture.

We at The Zellerbach Family Foundation and the Dean & Margaret Leshner Foundation sought to gain a deeper understanding of arts and culture organizations and projects in Contra Costa County and how we, as funders, can better support the brilliance and imagination of the region, and be responsive to the needs of the sector. What we ultimately uncovered was an ecosystem of incredible organizations that were doing great and important work, but weren't visible to receive the resources they needed to thrive. We learned that the arts and culture work here was organic, rooted in community, and, even in drastic shifts such as the pandemic, ever-responsive to community needs. We discovered that Contra Costa County arts and culture were being creatively and strategically deployed and integrated in other sectors to support communities amid these seismic shifts, including in areas like mental health, education, and immigrant rights. We were reminded that, even with recent demographic shifts, there are deep and abiding Black roots and culture here that impact and shape communities across the county.

This report aims to celebrate creators, dreamers, and doers, and hold their work up to the light. We hope that this research provides Contra Costa County arts and culture makers with more visibility to funders, elected officials, policymakers, and



our communities. Our region has the resources to build connections and make our communities stronger. We can leverage what's already happening in Contra Costa County to direct how funding is allocated for arts and culture work, and influence decisions that are made within cities and philanthropic institutions like ours to support these organizations. As funders, we have an opportunity to be better partners and change how we fund the sector in a way that is responsive to what communities need.

In partnership,

**Devorah Levine**, Executive Director,  
Dean & Margaret Lesher Foundation

**Allison Magee**, Executive Director,  
The Zellerbach Family Foundation

PHOTO CREDIT: Grown Women Dance Collective





# Executive Summary

This groundbreaking digital inventory and report offer a comprehensive baseline understanding of arts and culture organizations and projects across Contra Costa County. Its purpose is to illuminate opportunities for strengthening the arts and culture network and optimizing the use of county resources. The report also highlights the unique assets, strengths, and challenges within the county's arts and culture sector.

Despite being the third most populous county in the San Francisco Bay Area, Contra Costa County has long faced significant disparities in funding. These challenges, combined with the county's size and diverse demographics, have made it difficult to efficiently allocate resources and investments across various geographies, organizations, and disciplines. The report's key findings and recommendations stem from in-depth identification, engagement, and connection with underrepresented and underfunded communities within Contra Costa County's vibrant arts and culture landscape.

PHOTO CREDIT:  
Dave Millar, Los Cenzontles  
Cultural Arts Academy



# Key Findings

- 1.** Arts and culture organizations in Walnut Creek, Richmond, and Concord make up 40% of the 315 organizations identified for this project.
- 2.** Organizations with annual budgets below \$25,000 make up 47% of the 185 organizations that provided organizational budgets.
- 3.** The geographic range and diversity of Contra Costa County has resulted in multiple micro arts ecosystems, each with their own unique characteristics, communities, and challenges.
- 4.** The movement of population and the geographic spread of the county resulted in a varying sense of connection with, and belonging to, the communities in Contra Costa County.
- 5.** The economic disparities and racial segregation that characterize Contra Costa County resulted in inter-communal racial dynamics that disproportionately impact Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) artists and communities of color.



# Recommendations

- 1.** Provide a holistic framework of resources to Contra Costa County arts and culture sector including the following resources:
  - General operating support grants for arts and culture organizations
  - Technical assistance to increase organizational capacity, mentorship, and professional development for emerging arts leaders
  - Project funding to support artists to create work across the county and in their own communities
  - Intentional funding for artists and arts organizations working in BIPOC communities
  - Continuing engagement with arts communities throughout the county to understand emergent needs
  
- 2.** Invest in county-wide infrastructure to support artists and arts and culture organizations
  - A website that highlights artists, arts organizations, and arts and culture events throughout the county
  - A marketing and branding strategy for arts in Contra Costa County
  - A calendar of events and intentional spaces to bring arts and culture workers together
  - Investment in fiscal sponsors/arts intermediaries based in Contra Costa County
  - Programming to elevate individual artists - e.g. county poet laureate

### 3. Invest in local creative placekeeping at the county, city and community level

- Create cultural districts that aim to preserve and promote cultural communities throughout the county
- Work with artists and arts organizations to create community engagement tools for revitalization projects
- Strengthen the county's infrastructure to enable communities to experience arts and culture, e.g. create transportation routes to cultural hubs, redesign sidewalks to enable arts walks and street arts events, etc.

### 4. Embed arts and culture in social infrastructure development

- Include the creation of arts venues and funding for local arts organizations as part of new development community benefits
- Support the creation and preservation of arts venues in all communities
- Include artists from historically marginalized communities in the county's affordable housing strategy





# Introduction

The arts and culture community in Contra Costa County varies widely; some parts of the county are well-resourced and have active private arts institutions, while others rely on underfunded grassroots community- and neighborhood-centered organizations and collectives. For many years, Contra Costa County has not had an effective arts and culture infrastructure to identify who is working, and where, and how the needs vary across distinct parts of the region. This report seeks to begin the revelation of the vibrant and vital artists and arts and culture organizations living and working in this unique county.

Contra Costa County is one of nine counties located in the broader Bay Area Metropolitan area. With 1.146 million residents, it is the third largest county in the area in terms of population. Between 2000 and 2020, the population of Contra Costa County grew by 23%, making it the fastest growing Bay Area county due to new immigrants and migration from other counties in the region. As the county population grew, it also became increasingly more diverse. Contra Costa County's population changes are indicative of the movement of the population within the nine Bay Area counties, driven by affordability challenges which have impacted the whole region. Most notably, the last 20 years marked the movement of Black populations from San Francisco to Oakland to West Contra Costa County and into East Contra Costa County. The research from the Bay Area Equity Atlas showed that since the 2010 census, the Black population in Antioch grew by 36%, while the historic centers of the Black community, such as Oakland and Richmond, both saw a decline in Black populations. Other parts of Contra Costa County have seen an influx of affluent white and Asian populations moving into the suburbs, and new immigrants from Latin America and Asia. White, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino are three populations experiencing the highest growth in Contra Costa County in the 2020 census.

Despite these population movements, Contra Costa County is also characterized with a high level of racial segregation. The Othering and Belonging Institute at University of California Berkeley defines racial segregation as “the separation of people from each other on the basis of race” and racial residential segregation as “the separation of people on the basis of race in terms of residence, rather than some other form, such as occupational or educational segregation, or the segregation of public accommodations, such as buses, trains, or theaters.”<sup>1</sup>

Research from the Institute shows that San Pablo and Richmond are two Contra Costa County cities with extremely high concentrations of Black and Latino populations compared to the regional Bay Area, while Lafayette and Orinda are two Contra Costa County cities with the highest concentration of white residents; in these two cities more than 60% of the population is white, in a county where white-identifying people make up approximately 40% of the overall population.

In addition to, or perhaps due to this segregation, we also observe a high level of income discrepancy within the county. The difference in median household income between the cities with the highest median household income (Orinda and Alamo) at \$250,000/year and the lowest median household income (Richmond) at \$86,000/year is a staggering \$164,000. Lastly, while not the biggest county in the Bay area in terms of size, Contra Costa County covers 715.94 square miles. El Cerrito, the most western city of Contra Costa County, and Brentwood, the almost-most Eastern city, are 50 miles apart, a 46-minute drive (without traffic) and more than two hours on public transportation.

The size, geographic range, and demographic variance across the county has made it difficult to ensure that investments and resources are equitably distributed and best leveraged across geography, organizations, and disciplines. Despite being the third largest county in terms of population, Contra Costa County’s arts and culture sector has historically experienced acute discrepancies in funding. This is also why Contra Costa County’s vibrant arts and culture sector is largely invisible outside of the county and remains excluded from many funder databases. SMU DataArts, which collects information on arts and culture organizations through funder applications across the United States, reported only 35 arts organizations from Contra Costa County in its

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<sup>1</sup> Most Segregated cities in Bay Area 2020 <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/most-segregated-cities-bay-area-2020>



database, compared to 249 organizations from San Francisco. In the last five years, the California Arts Council awarded grants to 18 Contra Costa County arts and culture organizations for a total amount of \$1.2 million. For comparison, in the same time period, San Francisco county received \$8.8 million and Alameda county received \$5.4 million.

**TABLE 1: ARTS FUNDING COMPARISON, CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL**

COUNTY	# RECIPIENTS	# GRANTS	AMOUNT OF GRANT
Alameda	122	295	\$5.4 million
San Francisco	158	503	\$8.8 million
Contra Costa County	18	62	\$1.2 million

*California Arts Council Funding 2019-2023*

The CAC is not an anomaly. Data from the Candid Foundation Directory shows a similar trend. In the time frame between 2019 and 2024, Contra Costa County received 1,869 grants compared to 18,156 in San Francisco County and 7,397 in Alameda County.

**TABLE 2: ARTS FUNDING COMPARISON, CANDID FOUNDATION DIRECTORY**

COUNTY	# RECIPIENTS	# GRANTS	AMOUNT OF GRANT
Alameda	1,046	7,397	\$2.1 billion
San Francisco	1,192	18,156	\$1.4 billion
Contra Costa County	305	1,869	\$97 million

*Candid Foundation Directory: Funding 2019-2024<sup>2</sup>*

The Dean & Margaret Leshner Foundation is one of the few funders who has historically invested in Contra Costa County and is committed to it being a premier arts and

<sup>2</sup> The Candid Foundation Directory is a tool that allows the user to search for grants given by funder/recipient or other characteristics such as geographic area where the recipients and funders are located. These numbers are based on a search for all grants awarded to organizations located in these three counties between 2019 and present, with arts and culture as subject areas.



PHOTO CREDIT: California Shakespeare Theater

culture center providing access to the arts for all in the East Bay region. The changes in the county’s demographics in the last decade has also raised the interest of other funders, such as The Zellerbach Family Foundation, which believes that arts and culture belong at the center of a thriving region and that great work is created by artists working with, in, and for their communities. Both foundations seek to encourage funders to adopt intentional investment strategies to support the long-term vitality and stability of the arts and culture sector in Contra Costa County.

In November of 2020, Contra Costa County passed Measure X which, among other priorities, directed much needed funds toward the restructuring of and increased investment in the Contra Costa County Arts Commission. This was followed by the dissolution of the existing county arts commission and a year-long facilitated community engagement process to re-envision the role the local arts agency would play. The visioning process culminated in the development of the county’s Arts & Culture Strategic Plan and the selection of ARTSCCC as the new county arts agency in December 2023.

These developments provide an exceptional context for the decision to undertake this project. This groundbreaking digital inventory and report offer a comprehensive



baseline understanding of arts and culture organizations and projects across Contra Costa County. Its purpose is to illuminate opportunities for strengthening the arts and culture network and optimizing the use of county resources. The report also highlights the unique assets, strengths, and challenges within the county's arts and culture sector.

While there are many questions this report seeks to answer, including “what are the key characteristics of Contra Costa County’s arts and culture ecosystem and how has affordability and the COVID-19 pandemic affected the sector’s sustainability,” one of the main goals is to make visible strategies and tools that will best support the existing grassroots arts and culture organizations led by and serving Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in Contra Costa County. In centering the voices and leadership of the communities that have historically been excluded from decision making processes and with a lens of humility, we encourage the readers to build long-term relationships with these artists and arts organizations, and to see this project as the beginning of a conversation that will continue far into the future.



PHOTO CREDIT: Amanda Eicher, Nurturing Independence Through Artistic Development (NIAD) Art Center



# Approach

The approach to this project was executed in three phases:

- Identification of Contra Costa County's arts and culture organizations using publicly available data
- An online “Get on the Map” campaign to engage arts and culture stakeholders and collect more data about the organizations that were identified
- A robust community engagement process to collect qualitative data about the strengths, challenges and needs of the sector

Creative Equity Research Partners employs an equitable framework for research and evaluation where we prioritize participation from historically oppressed communities throughout the research process. Our research goal is to support the communities that are part of the research with valuable data and insights that they can use for their own work and advocacy while minimizing the burden of participation.

The research team began by gathering publicly available and accessible data sources about the arts and culture organizations in Contra Costa County, including organization name and location, website and social media contact, primary discipline, community served, and organization size. These data sources include DataArts/SMU, IRS filings, and data from the Dean & Margaret Lesher Foundation and The Zellerbach Family Foundation. This process allows researchers to avoid burdening the community with basic information gathering in the first phase and identify gaps in existing data. This initial analysis led to the identification of 315 arts and

PHOTO CREDIT: Lesher Center for the Arts



culture organizations with a registered address in Contra Costa County. Of these organizations, 275 were able to be mapped using a street address.

Phase two launched an online campaign to encourage Contra Costa County arts and culture organizations to engage with the data through an interactive map. The map is located on a simple, accessible website which also contains a form to allow new organizations to register information to be included on the map. Organizations already on the map use the form to provide updated information, including address and more information about audiences and artistic disciplines, which provides additional insights into the sector since the data gathered in phase one are restricted to location and high-level financial information.

## GET ON THE MAP! 📍


The Map the Arts Project is working to connect and strengthen Contra Costa County's arts and culture communities.

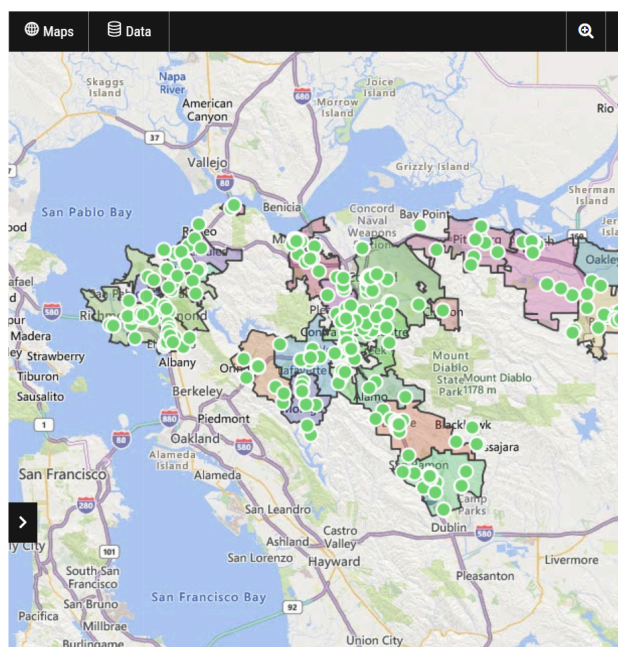
The goal is to bring more visibility, resources, and connection into the Contra Costa County arts and culture community—an expansive tapestry of vibrant, diverse organizations, projects, artists, and leaders deeply embedded in their communities.

This Project is a work in progress to create a first-ever comprehensive digital inventory of Contra Costa County arts and cultural organizations and projects.

If you represent an arts or cultural organization in Contra Costa County, we invite you to:

- Add yourself to the map so more people can find and support your work.
- Share this project with your collaborators and community partners to strengthen the arts community in Contra Costa County.

 GET ON THE MAP NOW

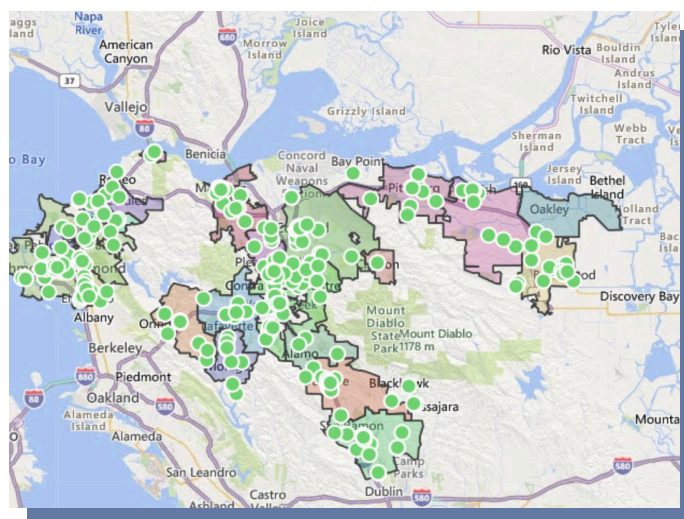


Once the mapping process was underway, the focus of the research turned to qualitative data. More than knowing who was part of the sector, there needs to be greater understanding of how different organizations operate, who they're engaging, what is working and what remains a challenge. In order to gather qualitative data to provide that missing context, the research team conducted four focus groups with artists and representatives of arts organizations in Antioch, Concord, Richmond, and the San Ramon/Danville area. To do this most effectively, researchers identified Community Connectors who were engaged as representatives of existing networks to support organizing and facilitating conversations among different populations in the county.

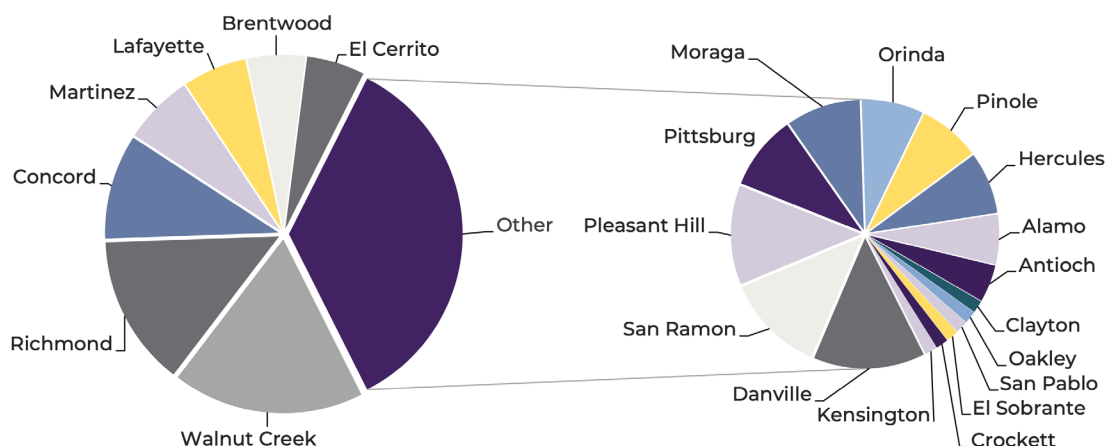
Engaging with Community Connectors is part of the project’s intentional strategy to build long term relationships with the communities in Contra Costa County through partnering with organizations and individuals that reflect the diverse landscape of the arts and culture sector. The project intentionally includes groups and organizations that have not always participated in countywide conversations about arts and culture. (To learn more about how the equity framework informs our community engagement process, please refer to Appendix 4.)

## Characteristics of the Arts and Culture Sector in Contra Costa County

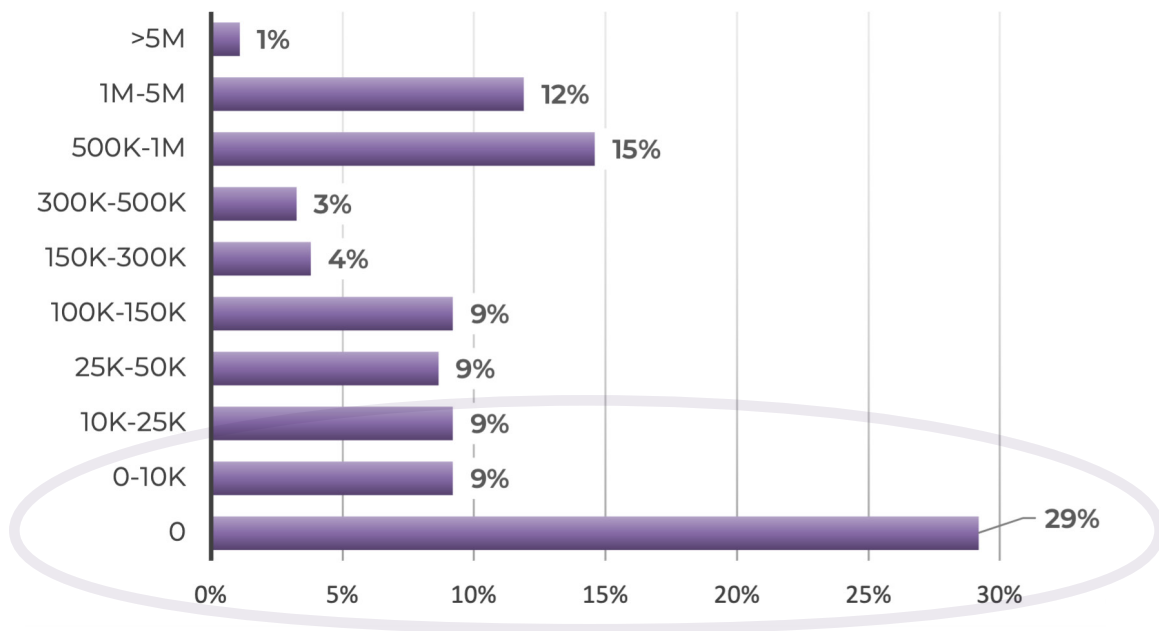
While arts and culture organizations can be found across Contra Costa County, findings showed significant concentrations in Walnut Creek and Concord in central Contra Costa County and Richmond in West Contra Costa County. These three cities have the highest number of organizations represented and together make up 40% of all organizations identified in the report.



Budget information was obtained from the IRS database or directly from the organization through the Get on the Map campaign for 185 of 315 organizations that have been identified. Where budget information was provided from both sources, we prioritized self reported data in our analysis.



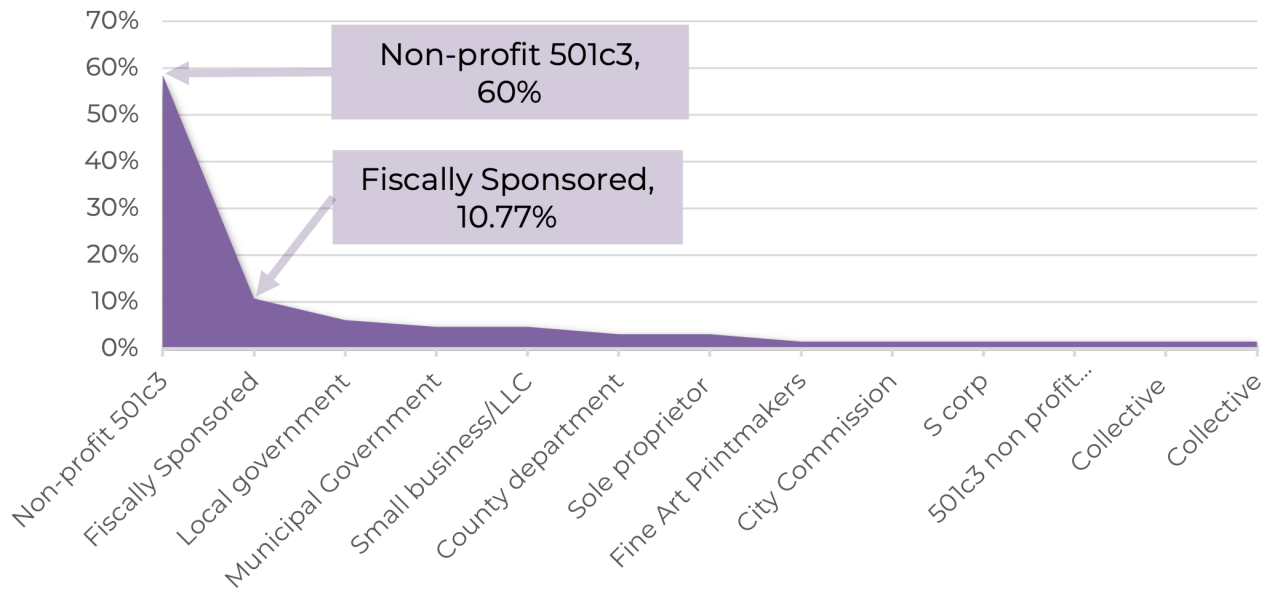




Of the organizations in the data set that provided budget information, 47% have an annual organization budget between \$0 and \$25,000. Scholars Amy Kitchener and Ann Markusen have argued that these smaller organizations are often least visible, perpetually undercounted, and therefore consistently under-resourced. They are also more likely to be embedded in historically marginalized communities and function as key anchor organizations for those communities.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the high percentage of very low budget organizations across the county, the organizations responding to the Get on the Map campaign demonstrate a multifaceted infrastructure behind the sector. Of the 97 organizations that responded, 60% are 501c3 nonprofit organizations and more than 10% are fiscally sponsored individuals, organizations, collectives or groups. Other respondents are a mix of for-profit structures, local and county government entities, and non-fiscally sponsored individual artists. An organization’s business structure often determines the types of funding that they can get. For example, most private and public funders only give out grants to organizations that are 501c3. Since our research could not confirm the business structure for two third of the organizations identified as part of this project, additional research into the business structure of the sector would provide valuable information on the potential sources of funding and the long-term sustainability of the sector.

<sup>3</sup> Kitchener, Amy and Markusen Ann. Working with Small Arts Organizations, GIA Reader, Vol 23, No 2, 2012 <https://www.giarts.org/article/working-small-arts-organizations>



## Learnings from Community Engagement Process

The four focus groups allowed the research team to gain access to four specific, varied communities in Contra Costa County and to understand the strengths, challenges and needs of the county’s arts sector as a whole. In considering the location and communities to engage with, we were mindful to avoid duplication and repetition with the visioning sessions the County organized as part of the recent arts and culture strategic planning process. We purposefully prioritized leaders, communities, and practitioners from historically marginalized communities.

In Antioch, Richmond, and the San Ramon/Danville area, we worked with Community Connectors, each a part of an emerging collective and hub that demonstrates the uniqueness and deep history of their geographic area and also highlights the recent changes in the arts and culture landscape of Contra Costa County.

In Richmond, Community Connector BK Williams is partnering with the City of Richmond and leading an effort to establish the first-ever Richmond Arts Corridor to bring visibility and resources to the rich tapestry of arts and culture in Richmond. In Antioch, we worked with Jose Cordon, who is starting Grassroots Poetry Collective, which organizes open mics and poetry events in Antioch’s Lynn House Gallery to elevate poetry and the local arts community. In San Ramon/Danville, we worked with



James Daly, who is a part of the San Ramon Valley Performing Arts Collective, which consists of arts leaders, representatives from the school district, and parents and students who are meeting monthly to advocate for collaboration and resources for performing arts in the Tri-Valley area.

In Concord, the research team took a different approach due to scheduling challenges with the initial Community Connector. We selected a diverse group of respondents who had expressed interest in further engagement through the Get on the Map campaign. The participants in the focus group in Concord brought a range of different perspectives due to their variety of levels of connection to the arts community in Concord, organization type, and demographic identity.

Together, the focus groups and our conversations with Community Connectors allowed the research team to gather a rich picture of Contra Costa County's arts and culture ecosystem from the perspective of folks who live, work, and create arts and culture in Contra Costa County on a day to day basis.

One of the key learnings from our community engagement process is that the geographic range and diversity of Contra Costa County has resulted in multiple micro arts ecosystems. Each has its own unique characteristics, community identity, and set of challenges but all demonstrate a sense of entrepreneurship and resiliency, and an ongoing commitment to make arts and culture in their community thrive.



While affordability is a regional issue, it shows up in different ways in different communities in Contra Costa County. In Richmond, for example, participants discussed how the cost of studio space and other arts spaces have become increasingly less affordable in the city and across the county. The high cost of living forces many artists to sacrifice their work space or even their arts practice altogether. Internal migration within the county forces artists to move further away from their home communities. This movement has resulted in arts organizations and schools in areas with the highest cost of living struggling to employ artists and arts educators who have to travel from further away.

**“There is a big difference in funding depending on school systems and also where teaching artists are. In San Ramon, they cannot hire teaching artists because no teaching artists can afford to live here and cannot commute for over an hour for the pay they receive.”**

*– A Project Participant from San Ramon*

Despite these challenges, throughout the conversations, our participants highlight all the work artists and arts organizations are creating on a daily basis. Stakeholders in Richmond emphasize how arts organizations don't just offer free programs, but also bring much needed resources like food to the community at their events.

**“One thing I've noticed about Richmond is that the arts community steps up to the plate here to get it done.”**

*– A Project Participant from Richmond*

In Antioch, artists share how they started hosting Open Mic events at a local cafe and the Lynn House Gallery, events that draw more than a hundred artists and audiences from the community. Participants also discuss how they come together to share resources and offer support to each other.

**“Artists can do a lot with limited resources. [...] As artists, we dig deep. We know how to work with nothing.”**

*– A Project Participant from Concord*

In all our conversations, our stakeholders emphasize the limited infrastructure that prevents the arts sector in Contra Costa County from effectively organizing, coordinating, and collaborating. Without that infrastructure, arts organizations remain in competition for audiences and have difficulty reaching new audiences. Greater coordination and collaboration between and among arts organizations will help lift all the arts organizations to greater visibility and offer opportunities for partnership. Participants also highlighted the lack of branding at the county level, which results in Contra Costa County being, as one cultural worker described it,

**"The best arts community that no one has ever heard of."**

*– A Project Participant from Richmond*

While this report identifies investing in arts infrastructure - like a county-wide website to share arts activities and shared marketing - as a key need, participants also highlight the need for programs that elevate artists, and resources for professional development for artists and arts leaders.

**“We know many artists who didn’t go to art school, are self taught, but they’re making art. They’re selling art. They are professional by any other name and what they need is information. They need help. They need mentorship, they need professional development.”**

*– A Project Participant from Antioch*

The movement of population and the geographic spread of the county creates a feeling of lack of connection with and belonging to other communities across Contra Costa County. One participant emphasizes the east - west divide, where arts communities in east and west Contra Costa County have little understanding of and knowledge about each other’s work. For some of the community members, their sense of belonging is deeply connected to their city. One of our key stakeholders in Richmond grew up in the city, went to the local college to get a degree in arts, and remained in Richmond to run an organization and give back to the community. Many artists in Richmond have a similar journey with artistic practices that are deeply connected to the local community. As affordability continues to be a challenge, these artists are fighting to stay in the community to live and work.

**“Moving out of Richmond [for me] means stopping being an artist.”**

*– A Project Participant from Richmond*

For newcomers to the county, especially those migrating from within the Bay Area, the lack of a centralized hub where one can easily find out about arts and cultural activities makes it difficult to find connections with existing cultural networks in their new home communities. For example, some participants admit that after



having lived in Concord for more than three years, they still look to Oakland for arts and cultural activities even if it means they need to travel further. The feeling of being disconnected from the local arts and culture scene impacts their sense of identification with the local community, which in turn impacts their sense of belonging in Contra Costa County. With the rapid changes and growth in population in the county, there is an opportunity through the tool of arts and culture for more community building and creating connection between the existing residents and those who are new to Contra Costa County.

Lastly, economic disparity and racial segregation that characterizes Contra Costa County also results in intercommunal dynamics that disproportionately impact artists and communities of color. Performing arts venues are limited throughout the county, but are significantly lacking in areas with the highest concentration of BIPOC communities.

As a result, performing artists from those communities often have to travel long distances to engage their practice. One participant mentioned that in east Contra Costa County, the location of affordable venues often force artists to hold performances in predominantly white communities that do not feel safe or welcoming for BIPOC artists and audiences.

At the same time, arts organizations from areas with large BIPOC populations, like Richmond and Antioch, are impacted by the outdated and race-based reputations about their cities, which equates predominantly BIPOC communities with lack of safety. These biases pose a challenge to arts organizations trying to reach new audiences and bring artists in from outside the community. Participants also point out that lack of basic investments in spaces around arts venues - such as inadequate street lighting, sidewalks, or parking - also prevent them from elevating their work and make arts and culture more accessible to the local community.



PHOTO CREDIT: Residents of Antioch

# Recommendations

## 1. Provide a holistic framework of resources to Contra Costa County arts and culture sector

Historic systemic inequities in arts funding have resulted in the underfunding of the Contra Costa County arts and culture sector and has disproportionately impacted smaller arts organizations embedded in local communities. Chronic lack of resources coupled with ongoing, increasing affordability challenges poses a threat to the entire arts and culture sector and impacts the wellbeing of all communities in Contra Costa County. A comprehensive funding structure for Contra Costa County arts and culture would involve the following resources:

- General operating support grants for arts organizations
- Technical assistance to increase organizational capacity, mentorship, and professional development for emerging arts leaders
- Project funding to support artists to create work across the county and in their own community
- Intentional funding for artists and arts organizations working by, for, and with BIPOC communities
- Continuing engagement with arts communities throughout the county to understand emergent needs



## 2. Invest in county-wide arts infrastructure to support artists and arts organizations

The geography and diversity within Contra Costa County has made it difficult for the arts sector to connect and collaborate, which in turn limits collective impact. Due to varying levels of resources at the city and communal level, the lack of county-wide infrastructure has a disproportionate impact on arts organizations which are deeply embedded in cities with higher concentration of BIPOC and low-income communities. The selection of ARTSCCC as the new county arts entity provides a unique opportunity to create a platform to elevate and make visible arts and culture throughout the county and to outside audiences. This could involve the following

- A website that highlights artists, arts organizations, and arts and culture events throughout the county
- A marketing and branding strategy for arts in Contra Costa County
- A calendar of events and intentional spaces to bring arts and culture workers together
- Investment in fiscal sponsors/arts intermediaries based in Contra Costa County
- Programming to elevate individual artists - e.g. county poet laureate





### 3. Invest in local creative placekeeping at the county, city and community level

Affordability challenges threaten the sustainability of arts organizations, impact the practice and well-being of artists, and create barriers for audiences to access arts and culture in their own communities. Placekeeping frameworks build on existing cultural networks to find solutions to ongoing issues like maintaining affordable housing and artist workspaces, as well as preserving and strengthening existing arts and cultural hubs. Such strategy would involve:

- Create cultural districts that aim to preserve and promote cultural communities throughout the county
- Work with artists and arts organizations to create community engagement tools for revitalization projects
- Strengthen the county's infrastructure to enable communities to experience arts and culture, e.g. create transportation route to cultural hubs, redesign sidewalks to enable arts walks and street arts events, etc.

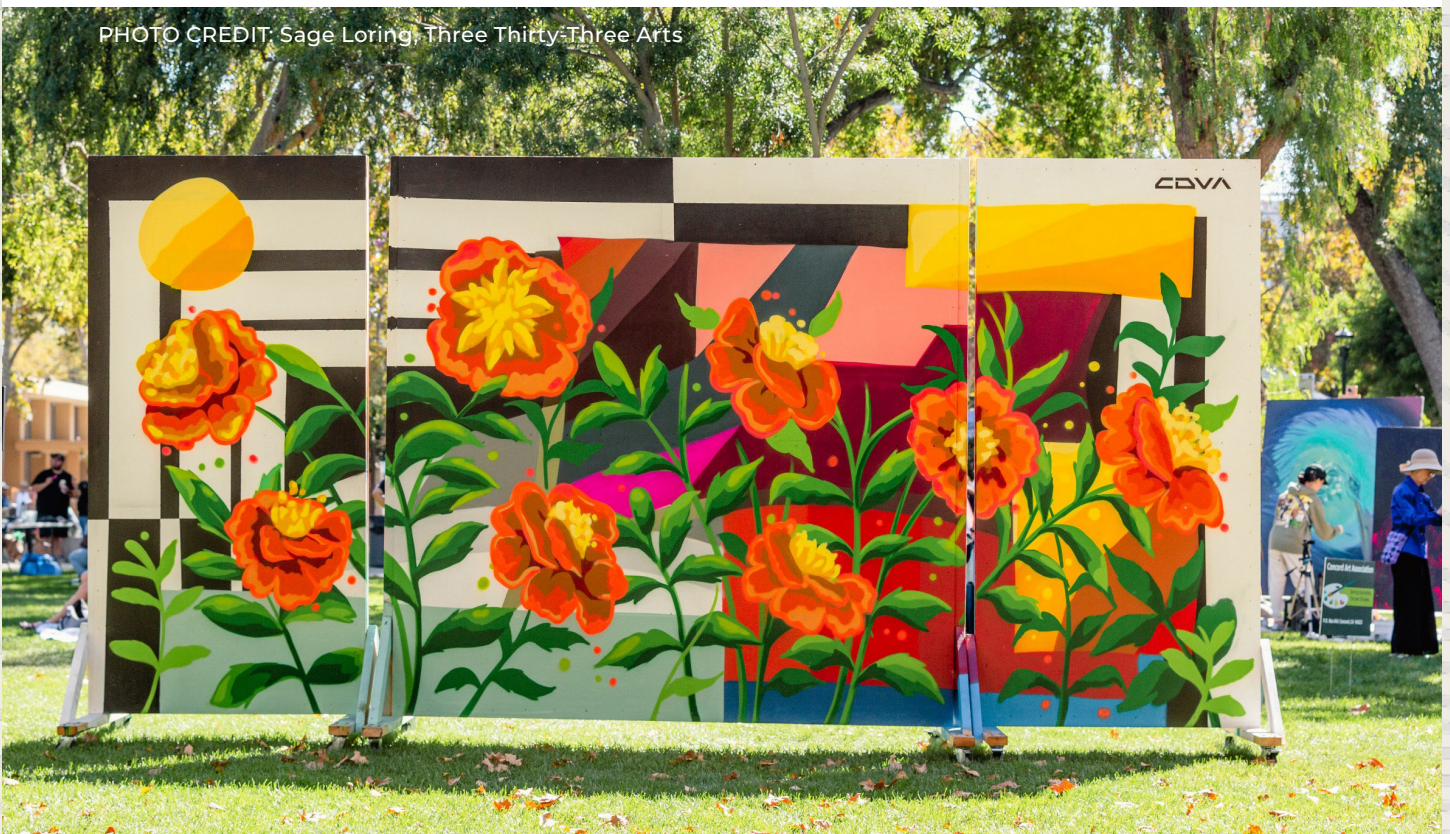




## 4. Embed arts and culture in social infrastructure development

Artists and arts organizations play a crucial role in creating social cohesion and a sense of community. Arts and culture are often used as a tool for economic and social development, though artists, culture workers, and arts organizations are often left out of conversations about infrastructure that directly impact them. Some successful strategies in the region involve including artists in economic empowerment solutions such as basic income, and the inclusion of arts organizations and artists in new development and strategies around affordable housing. Contra Costa County, and municipalities in the county, could support the sector through:

- Include the creation of arts venues and funding for local arts organizations as part of new development community benefits
- Support the creation and preservation of arts venues in all communities
- Include artists from historically marginalized communities in the county's affordable housing strategy

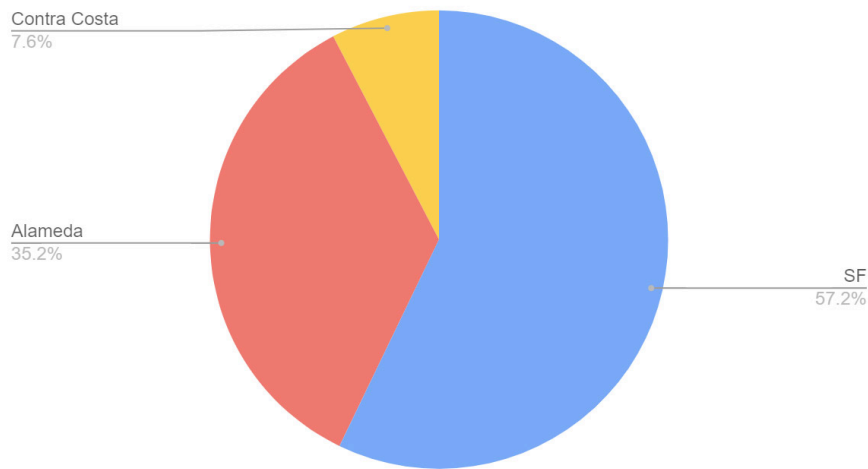


## Appendix 1

# Contra Costa County Arts and Culture in Numbers

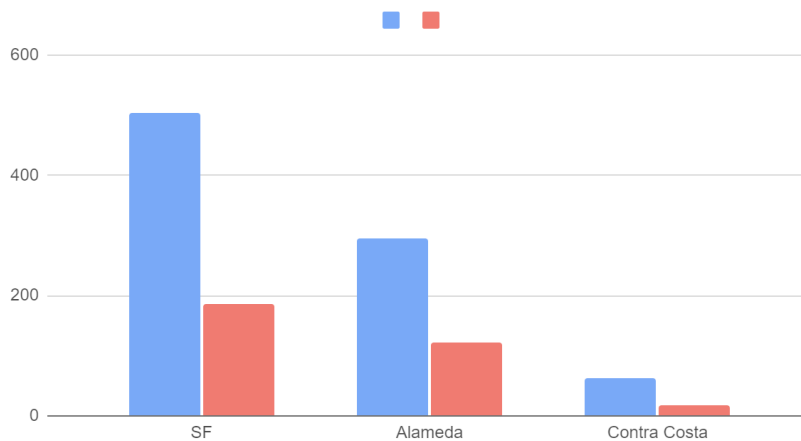
- # of identified organizations: 316
- # of organizations with budget information: 185
- % of organizations with budget <\$25,000: 47%

### CAC Grants: Grants Amount



*California Arts Council Funding 2019-2023*

### CAC Grants: # Grants and # Recipients



*California Arts Council Funding 2019-2023*



## Appendix 1: Contra Costa County Arts and Culture in Numbers (continued)

COUNTY/FUNDING INFORMATION	# RECIPIENTS	# GRANTS	AMOUNT OF GRANT
Alameda	1,046	7,397	\$2.1 billion
San Francisco	1,192	18,156	\$1.4 billion
Contra Costa County	305	1,869	\$97 million

*Candid Foundation Directory: Funding 2019-2024*



PHOTO CREDIT: Crown Women Dance Collective

## Appendix 2

# List of Identified Arts and Culture Organizations in Contra Costa County

Adams Music Boosters  
AF by Christopher Tandy  
Afghan Theatre TV Incorporated  
African Cultural Center USA  
Alamo-Danville Artists Society Inc  
Alena's Art  
Alhambra High School Arts Foundation  
American Alliance Of International Arts Cultures And Education  
American Artist Foundation  
American Cultural Association Inc  
Antioch Historical Museum  
Arm of Care  
aRT Cottage  
Art Guild of the Delta  
Art Movement Project  
Art Moves Project  
Artism Creativity Center  
Artists Embassy International  
Arts and Culture Commission El Cerrito  
Arts Education Alliance of the Bay Area  
Arts Media And Entertainment Institute Inc  
Ashmolean Singers  
Aspire Youth Engagement program  
Atlantic Arts Museum Inc  
B8 Theatre Company  
Bay Area Creative  
Bay Area Mind And Music Society  
Bay Area Native Theatre Artists (BANTA)  
BD Performing Arts  
Be The Star you are  
Beaux Arts  
Bedford Gallery  
Black Art Review  
Black Diamond Ballet  
Black Swan Arts & Media  
Blackhawk Chorus  
Blackhawk Museum  
Blue Devils Performing Arts  
Brentwood Arts Commission  
Brentwood Arts Society  
Brentwood Music Foundation  
Brentwood Teen Theater  
Bristow Music Booster  
Broadway Repertory Theater  
Building Blocks for Kids  
Cal Shakes  
California High School Music Boosters  
California Multicultural Arts Institute Inc  
California Shakespeare Theater  
California Symphony  
California Theater  
California Watercolor Association  
California Writers Club, Mt Diablo Branch

## **Appendix 2: List of Identified Arts and Culture Organizations in Contra Costa County (continued)**

Campolindo Choral Music Education	Contra Costa Comedy
CCCOE - Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)	Contra Costa County Historical Society
CCTV	Contra Costa Musical Theatre
Center For Arts And Technology Inc	Contra Costa Performing Arts Society
Center For Community Arts	Contra Costa School of Performing Arts
Center For Promotion Of Indian Sacred Culture	Contra Costa Television- CCTV
Center Repertory Company	Contra Costa Wind Symphony Inc
Central Eu California Cultural Institute	Create Peace Project
Chamber Musicians Of Northern California	Creekside Artists Guild
Chromatica Chorale	Crescent Moon Theater Productions
Circosphere LLC	Crockett Historical Society
City of El Cerrito Arts & Culture Commission	Culture To Culture Foundation Inc
City of Lafayette Public Art Committee	Curtains Up Youth Theatre
City of San Ramon Parks & Community Services	DA Dance Center
Clarinet Fusion	Dance Connection Performing Arts Centre
Claudygod Music & Ministries	Danville Arts Advisory Board
Clay Arts Guild	Danville Community Band
Clayton Theatre Company	Danville Girls Chorus
Clayton Valley Music Boosters	Davalos Dance Company
College Park Instrumental Music Boosters	Delta Childrens Ballet Theatre
College Park Visual Arts Boosters	Delta Education Group
Community Arts Foundation	Delta Gallery
Community Concern For Arts Music And Sports	Diablo Ballet
Concord Art Association	Diablo Choral Artists
Concord High School Instrumental Music Boosters	Diablo Japanese American Club
Contra Costa Ballet	Diablo Nippongo Gakuen
Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra	Diablo Regional Arts Association
Contra Costa Chorale	Diablo Symphony Orchestra
Contra Costa Civic Theatre	Diablo Taiko
	Diablo Theatre Company
	Diablo Valley College Performing Arts Center



## **Appendix 2: List of Identified Arts and Culture Organizations in Contra Costa County (continued)**

Diablo Valley Printmakers  
Diablo Valley Theater And Conference Center Inc  
Diablo Wind Symphony  
Diablo Women's Chorale  
Diaspora Arts Connection Inc  
Dougherty Valley Theater  
East Bay Artists Guild Las Juntas  
East Bay Center For The Performing Arts  
East Bay Hungarian Educational Group  
East County Performing Arts Center  
East County Performing Arts Foundation  
El Campanil Theatre Preservation Foundation  
Empowering Youth Through Music  
Engineers Alliance For The Arts  
Epperson Gallery  
Escuela de Tango de Buenos Aires  
Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House  
Expressions Dance Academy  
Festival Opera  
Festival Opera Association Inc  
Fiat Music  
Fil-Am Cultural Society Of Antioch  
Foundation For Global Arts  
Freedom Arts Booster  
Friction Performing Arts  
Friends Of Civic Arts Education Foundation  
Friends of Moraga Adobe  
Funny Bone Productions  
Gadung Kasturi Balinese Dance Andmusic  
General Music Education Foundation  
Ghostlight Theatre Ensemble  
Gill Theatre Arts Inc  
Gold Coast Chamber Players  
Golden Gate Collectors Fine Arts Museums Of San Francisco Fund  
Golden Hills Art Ministry  
Golestan Center For Language Immersion And Cultural Education  
Grant Street Tribe of Artists  
Grown Women Dance Collective  
Guang-Yu Chinese Culture & Art Center Inc  
Headfirst Arts & Media Inc  
Hearst Art Gallery  
Hercules Music Boosters Association  
Heritage Performing Arts Booster Club  
Hōtua'Ori  
Huichol Center For Cultural Survival And Traditional Arts  
I Can Do That! Performing Arts Center  
International Fellowship Of Rotarian Musicians  
Japanese American Religious And Cultural Center  
Julivanna Music Studio  
Kariktan Dance Company,  
Dance Connection Studio  
KlezCalifornia  
Lafayette Museum of Fine Art  
Lafayette Partners in Education  
Lafayette Public Art Committee  
Lamorinda Arts Alliance  
Lamorinda Arts Council  
Las Juntas – East Bay Artists Guild  
Las Lomas Performing Arts Foundation  
Les Amis De La Culture Francaise

## Appendix 2: List of Identified Arts and Culture Organizations in Contra Costa County (continued)

Leshner Center for the Arts	Martinez Music Mafia
Life's Blood Ensemble	Martinez Opera Contra Costa
Local Edition Creative (Creative Concord)	Martinez Unified School District Music Boosters
Los Cenzontles Cultural Arts Academy	Masquers Playhouse, Inc.
Los Medanos College Choral & Vocal	Masquers Theatre
Luo-Kenya Socio-Cultural Group	Medical Clown Project
Madina Papel, LLC	Monument Impact
Maharlika Cultural Troupe Inc	Moraga Art in Public Spaces Committee
Martinez Arts Association	Mount Diablo Music Education Foundation
Martinez Campbell Theater	Museum of San Ramon Valley
Martinez Chamber of Commerce	Music Research Institute
Martinez Historical Society	



PHOTO CREDIT: Three Thirty-Three Arts

## **Appendix 2: List of Identified Arts and Culture Organizations in Contra Costa County (continued)**

Music Teachers Association Of California	Point Richmond Jazz
Nava Dance Theatre	Point Richmond Music
Neto Community Network	Poison Apple Productions
NIAD Art Center	Rainbow Community Center
Nick Rodriguez Community Theatre	Red Ox Clay Studio
Noor Islamic & Cultural Community Center	Rich City Kids
Northgate Choral Music Boosters Inc	Richmond Art Center
Notoriety Variety	Richmond Arts & Culture Commission
Nurturing Independence Through Artistic Development	Richmond Community Foundation
Onstage Repertory Theater	Richmond Main Street
Orinda Arts in Public Places Commission	Richmond Main Street Initiative
Orinda Community Center	Richmond Museum Association, Inc.
Orinda Starlight Village Players	Richmond Museum of History
Orly Museum Of Hungarian Culture	Ridgeway Arts Inc
Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association	Rohan Murphy Irish Dance Academy
Palomarin Chamber Music Foundation	Role Players Actors Ensemble
Park Theater Trust	Rome Institute Of Liberal Arts Inc
Paufve   Dance	Rossmoor Arts Association
Philippine Cultural And Historical Association	Rossmoor Ceramic Arts Club
Pinole Art Center	Rossmoor Chamber Music Society
Pinole Artisans	Royal Chinese Cultural Academy
Pinole Community Players	Ruth Bancroft Garden & Nursery
Pittsburg Arts And Community Foundation	Ryse Center
Pittsburg California Theater	San Ramon Art & Wind Festival
Pittsburg Community Theatre	San Ramon Art Advisory Committee
Pittsburg Entertainment & Arts Hall Of Fame	San Ramon Arts Foundation
Pittsburg High School Creative Arts Building	San Ramon Chamber Ensemble
Plotline Theater Company	San Ramon Valley Theatre Boosters Association
Plotline Theater Company	School of Rock - San Ramon
Point Richmond Gateway Foundation	Sequoia Middle School Music Boosters
	Shahrazad Dance Academy



## **Appendix 2: List of Identified Arts and Culture Organizations in Contra Costa County (continued)**

Shensem Tsogpa Tibetan Culture Center  
Sherrie's Dance Studio  
Sierra Ensemble  
Silver Swans Ballet Club of Rossmoor  
Soaring High International Music Ministry  
Social Justice Sewing Academy  
Solo Opera  
Soundwall Music Camps Inc  
Sree Vijaya Ganapathi Cultural Center  
Sri Datta Sai Temple And Culture Center Inc  
Sri Karpaga Ganapathi Temple Cultural And Community Center  
Srvhs Instrumental Music Foundation  
Stage Right Conservatory Theater  
Studio 55 Martinez  
Sustainable Korean Culture Institute  
Synergy Theater  
Taere Tiai Polynesian Dance & Cultural Arts  
Taiwanese American Culture Center Of East Bay  
Teatr Skazka Russian Drama Club and Language Learning Center  
The Ballet School  
The Drama Factory  
The Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House  
The Fratello Marionettes  
The Kto Project  
The Latina Center  
The Quinan Street Project  
Theatre In Search  
Three Thirty Three Arts  
Tibet Art Studio  
Tibetan Art Music And Education  
Tibetan Association Of Northern California  
Todos Santos Business Association Arts Foundation Inc  
Town Hall Theatre Company Inc.  
Town of Danville-Village Theatre Art Gallery  
Triangle Works  
Unity Music Foundation  
Us-China Language & Culture Foundation  
Valley Stitchers And Fiber Artists Guild  
Veteran Comic Con  
Victory City Music  
Village Community Resource Center  
Village Theater  
Village Theatre & Art Gallery  
Visit Concord  
Visual Artists of Richmond  
Visual arts Society of San Ramon  
Viva La Musica  
Walnut Creek Arts Commission  
Walnut Creek Center for Community Arts  
Walnut Creek Concert Band  
Walnut Festival Association  
West Coast Theatre Film And Music Group  
WomenSing  
Worldoneradio  
Xiu Ning Culture Foundation  
Yelloh Joy Magazine  
Ygnacio Valley Instrumental Music Boosters  
Young Rep  
Zhi Yin Vocal Music Center Inc

## List of Community Stakeholders

### Community Connectors:

BK Williams

James Daly

Jose Cordon

### Focus Groups Participants:

Alex Fin

Amanda Bornstein

Arionna White

Bess Roces

Beth Javens

Bryan Alvarez

Catherine Hensiek

Chantille Tran

Chavonta Edington

Daniel Zarazua

Delfa Bell

Donte Clark

Elishes Cavness

Evelyn J Santos

Jeff Wright

Jenny Balisle

John Baker

Jose R Rivera

Juni Gains

Kathy Tran

Marabet Morales

Monique McCoy

Naina Shastri

Rebeca Garcia-Gonzalez

Roger Yee

Ruthie Dineen

Shayna Ronen

Sylvia Gonzalez

Toni Baker

Tonya Marie Amos

# Methodology

The approach to this project was executed in three phases:

- Identification of Contra Costa County arts and culture organizations using publicly available data
- An online “Get on the Map” campaign to engage arts and culture stakeholders and collect more data about the organizations that were identified
- A robust community engagement process to collect qualitative data about the strengths, challenges and needs of the sector

Creative Equity Research Partners employs an equitable framework for research and evaluation where we prioritize participation from historically oppressed communities throughout the research process. Our research goal is to support the communities that are part of the research with valuable data and insights that they can use for their own work and advocacy while minimizing the burden of participation.

The research team began by gathering publicly available and accessible data sources about the arts and culture organizations in Contra Costa County, including organization name and location, website and social media contact, primary discipline, community served, and organization size. These data sources include DataArts/SMU, IRS filings, and data from the Dean & Margaret Lesher Foundation and The Zellerbach Family Foundation. This process allows researchers to avoid burdening the community with basic information gathering in the first phase and identifies gaps in existing data. This initial analysis led to the identification of 315 arts and culture organizations with a registered address in Contra Costa County. Of these organizations, 275 were able to be mapped using a street address.

Phase two launched an online campaign to encourage Contra Costa County arts and culture organizations to engage with the data through an interactive map. The map was located on a simple, accessible website which also contains a form to allow new organizations to register information to be included on the map. Organizations already on the map use the form to provide updated information, including address and more information about audiences and artistic disciplines, which provides



## **Appendix 4: Methodology (continued)**

additional insights into the sector since the data gathered in phase one are restricted to location and high-level financial information.

This phase yielded 97 responses from arts organizations, about one third of which were new organizations not on the original list; public libraries made up 27 of the responses and were included in the budget analysis as one organization. More than half of the responses to the Get on the Map campaign contributed an updated address and/or updated budget information. The website also contains a link where community members can download the list of organizations identified in Contra Costa County through this project. The list is updated on a monthly basis and reflects the research team's principle that data provided by the community belongs to, and should benefit, the community. Upon the project's completion, this website will also house this report available for download, as well as other information useful to the arts ecosystem of Contra Costa County and beyond.

Once the mapping process was underway, the focus of the research turned to qualitative data. More than knowing who was part of the sector, there needed to be greater understanding of how different organizations operate, who they're engaging, what is working and what remains a challenge. In order to gather qualitative data to provide that missing context, the research team conducted four focus groups with artists and representatives of arts organizations in Antioch, Concord, Richmond, and the San Ramon/Danville area. To do this most effectively, researchers identified Community Connectors who were engaged as representatives of existing networks to support organizing and facilitating conversations among different populations in the county.

Partnering with Community Connectors is part of the project's intentional strategy to build long term relationships with the communities in Contra Costa County through engaging with organizations and individuals that reflect the diverse landscape of the arts and culture sector. The project intentionally includes groups and organizations that have not always participated in countywide conversations about arts and culture.

To mitigate the disparities in access throughout the county, we worked with community leaders to ensure the participation of a proportionate number of BIPOC arts and culture organizations/leaders to create a diverse group across discipline, business structure, and demography.

## Appendix 4: Methodology (continued)

The key components of an equity framework our approach are responsiveness, inclusivity, and culturally appropriateness. We worked with Community Connectors and stakeholders to ensure that engagement with communities remains mutually beneficial and is conducted with respect. All meetings were planned according to the needs of stakeholders and the following considerations supported our planning process:

- Met with people based on their schedules and needs: we offered evening hours, weekends, virtual meetings, and the option for the research team to join existing meetings where the majority of the stakeholders would already be present
- If the stakeholders preferred an in-person meeting, we worked with them to ensure the meeting took place in a location that was easily accessible to participants in their own community
- We provided child care assistance when needed
- We asked participants their preferred method of communication
- All questions asked during the focus group were shared with Community Connectors for feedback, and shared with participants ahead of the meeting



PHOTO CREDIT:  
Bay Area Children's Theatre



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