

## CITY OF OAKLAND

**Cultural Affairs Commission  
Regular Meeting Agenda  
Monday, October 28, 2024  
5:30 – 8:30 PM**

Please note that all meetings of the Cultural Affairs Commission will be conducted in person at:

**Oakland City Hall  
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Hearing Room 2 (First Floor),  
Oakland, CA 94612**

### **How to Make a Comment:**

There are two opportunities for the public to address the Cultural Affairs Commission and City staff. The first opportunity is during the "Public Comment" period. The second opportunity is during the "Open Forum" period. Dialogue during the meeting with Commissioners, City staff, or its guest speakers is not permitted outside of the two comment periods. **Zoom participation is for viewing only. Comments will no longer be accepted via Zoom or telephone.**

### **RE: ZOOM PARTICIPATION + COMMENT PERIODS**

All Cultural Affairs Commission meetings will be conducted in person. The Cultural Affairs Commission is no longer accepting public comments via Zoom or telephone. Therefore, live comments must be made in-person. You can choose to submit a written comment by 5:00 PM BEFORE the meeting starts to [riglesias@oaklandca.gov](mailto:riglesias@oaklandca.gov). Any comments received via email during the duration or after the meeting may not be entered into public record but will be shared with the Commission and City staff later.

### **Please click the link below to join the webinar:**

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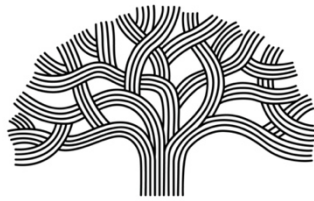
Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

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**CITY OF OAKLAND**

**Cultural Affairs Commission  
Regular Meeting Agenda  
Monday, October 28, 2024  
5:30 – 8:30 PM**

**AGENDA**

- I. Welcome/ Roll Call / Call to Order**
- II. Land Acknowledgement + Official City of Oakland Love Life Acknowledgement**
- III. Action Item:**
  - a. Adopt Minutes from the July 22, 2024 Cultural Affairs Commission Meeting**
- IV. Commission Celebrates Cultural Affairs Manager Roberto Bedoya’s service**
- V. Artist Spotlight: Mama Celeste of Oaklash**
- VI. Informational Presentation: Draft Film Rebate Program Regulations, Presenter: Kat Torio, Special Event & Film Office Coordinator, Economic & Workforce Development Dept.**
- VII. Public Comment**
- VIII. Action Item:**
  - a. Vice Chair Election**
- IX. Informational Item: Cultural Affairs Division Update**
  - a. Cultural Affairs Division Staffing Updates**
  - b. Cultural Funding Program Updates**
  - c. Public Art Program Updates**
- X. Cultural Affairs Commission Chair’s Update**
- XI. Commission Ad Hoc Teams**
- XII. Open Forum**
- XIII. Announcements & Acknowledgements**
- XIV. Adjournment**

**Next regular meeting: Monday January 27, 2025 at 5:30 – 8:30 PM  
at Oakland City Hall -1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza Oakland, CA 94612**

Oakland Cultural Affairs Commission, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 9th fl. Oakland, CA  
94612 [www.oaklandculturalarts.org](http://www.oaklandculturalarts.org)

Oakland Cultural Affairs Division of the Economic & Workforce Development Department  
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 9th fl. Oakland, CA 94612  
[www.oaklandculturalarts.org](http://www.oaklandculturalarts.org)

This meeting location is wheelchair accessible. To request disability-related accommodations or to request American Sign Language (ASL), Cantonese, Mandarin, or Spanish language interpreter, please email [riglesias@oaklandca.gov](mailto:riglesias@oaklandca.gov) or call (510) 238-2212 Or 711 (for Relay Service) at least five (5) business days before the meeting. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting as a courtesy to attendees with chemical sensitivities.

Esta reunión es accesible para sillas de ruedas. Si desea solicitar adaptaciones relacionadas con discapacidades, o para pedir un intérprete de en español, Cantonés, mandarín o de lenguaje de señas (ASL) por favor envíe un correo electrónico a [riglesias@oaklandca.gov](mailto:riglesias@oaklandca.gov) o llame al (510) 238-2212 o al 711 para servicio de retransmisión (Relay service) por lo menos cinco días hábiles antes de la reunión. Se le pide de favor que no use perfumes a esta reunión como cortesía para los que tienen sensibilidad a los productos químicos. Gracias.

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Địa điểm tổ chức cuộc họp có đường dành riêng cho xe lăn. Để yêu cầu các phương tiện hỗ trợ phục vụ người khuyết tật hoặc yêu cầu thông dịch viên ASL, tiếng Quảng Đông, tiếng Quan Thoại hoặc tiếng Tây Ban Nha, vui lòng gửi email đến địa chỉ [riglesias@oaklandca.gov](mailto:riglesias@oaklandca.gov) hoặc gọi đến số (510) 238-2212 hoặc 711 (với Dịch vụ Tiếp âm) ít nhất năm (5) ngày làm việc trước khi cuộc họp diễn ra. Vui lòng không sử dụng các sản phẩm có mùi thơm khi tham gia cuộc họp này như một phép lịch sự đối với những người tham dự nhạy cảm đối với các chất hóa học.

**Cultural Affairs Division - Economic & Workforce Development Department**  
**Cultural Affairs Commission Contact – Raquel Iglesias, Cultural Funding Coordinator**  
Email: [riglesias@oaklandca.gov](mailto:riglesias@oaklandca.gov)  
Phone: (510) 238-2212  
Telecommunications Relay Service: 711

# Land Acknowledgement

**On behalf of the Cultural Affairs Commission & Public Art Advisory Committee:**

**We want to take a moment to honor the traditions and territory we are a part of. Those of us on the land we now know as Oakland and lands all the way up to Albany are in Huichin (*Hooch-yoon*), the unceded territory of the Chochenyo (*Cho-Chen-yo*)-speaking Confederated Villages of Lisjan (*Lih-Shawn*) Ohlone. We stand with the Lisjan people and their right to legal recognition and benefits from the US Government.**

## LOVE LIFE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge "Love Life" as our motto as we denounce violence in all forms and the conditions that create violence. We commit to working against these conditions to create a safe space for all to operate in Love and Peace on our streets.

We acknowledge that when we demonstrate love we also manifest qualities of respect, kindness, grace, truth, understanding, humbleness, and forgiveness towards each other. We commit to acts of love as an intentional force to generate tangible solutions, in regards to all policies, declarations, recommendations, resolutions, appointments, and actions.

We recognize as leaders, we must set an example and precedent for those who have entrusted us with these duties. We accept the responsibility to make our city and community a better place by bringing inspiration instead of insults, contributions instead of complaints, constructive feedback instead of criticism, and even in our passion for all issues no matter how difficult, we lead with the guiding principle of love.

We ask that you share with us in this commitment and practice of exhibiting love, good faith, positive energy, and respect in how you comment, present information, report out, or inform. We appreciate all contributions to this space and even when expressing hurt, harm, disappointment, dispute, or disagreement, we request that we lead with love in your heart.

We acknowledge Love in practice even when there are differences in opinions, strategies, procedures, and process, and we will seek to find common ground, and tangible solutions that demonstrate love for our city, its residents, our community, and all constituents.

We acknowledge and recognize that when we model this practice of love, it will establish a norm that will resonate and be exemplified throughout our city and create the change we all wish to see in our communities.

We acknowledge that when we lead with love we are able to uplift a thriving city rooted in equity, equality, justice, inclusion, and opportunity for all regardless of race, gender, age, class, socio economic status, nationality, religion, sexual preference, housing status, or political affiliation.

We acknowledge that when we uplift love, we uplift those impacted by violence of all and any kind. We acknowledge that when we uplift love we uplift traditions of our ancestors, our arts, our culture, our businesses, our educators, our unhoused, our civic servants, and all who contribute to the fabric and well being of our community.

We commit to the action of "Love Life" as our motto and mantra.

## **LIFE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT (abridged version)**

We acknowledge that in service to our beloved city of Oakland, and all its citizens, adhering to the city of Oakland's official motto, "Oakland Love Life" we enter into this space committed to embody love as our guiding principle.

We acknowledge Love Life as our motto as we denounce violence in all forms and the conditions that create it.

We acknowledge that when we demonstrate love, we also exhibit respect and kindness towards each other.

We commit to acts of love as an intentional force to generate tangible solutions, in regards to all of our actions.

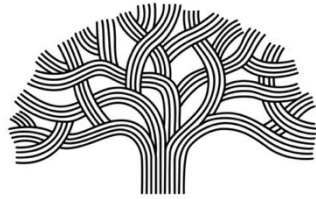
We recognize as leaders, we must set an example and precedent for those in community who have entrusted us with these duties.

We welcome and appreciate all contributions to this space, and even when expressing disagreement, we request that we lead with love in your heart.

We seek to find common ground, and tangible solutions that demonstrate love for our city, its residents, and all constituents.

We acknowledge that when we lead with love we are able to uplift a thriving city rooted in equity, equality, justice, inclusion, and opportunity for all.

We commit to the action of "Love Life" as our motto and mantra.



CITY OF OAKLAND

**Cultural Affairs Commission  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Monday, July 22, 2024  
6:00 – 8:30 PM**

**Members in Attendance:** Vanessa Whang (Chair), Kev Choice (Vice Chair), Olaywa K. Austin, Jennifer Easton, Ilana Lipsett, Mandolyn “Mystic” Ludlum, Candi Martinez

**Members Absent:** Ebhodaghe Esoimeme, Michelle Mush Lee, Jim Santi Owen

**Staff in Attendance:** Roberto Bedoya, Raquel Iglesias, Kristen Zarembo, Josie de Mira

**Guest Speaker:** Ashleigh Kanat, Director of the Economic and Workforce Development Department

**Roll Call/Call to Order**

DRAFT

**1. Welcome**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Vanessa Whang at 6:05 PM.

**2. Land Acknowledgement + Official City of Oakland Love Life Acknowledgement**

Commissioner Martinez read the Land Acknowledgement.

Chair Whang thanked Vice Chair Choice for his service as he nears the end of his term. Vice Chair read the City’s [Love Life Acknowledgement](#).

**3. Action Item: Approval of the Minutes for January 22, 2024 and June 13, 2024**

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from January 22, 2024 and June 13, 2024 made by Commissioner Jennifer Easton; seconded by Commissioner Olaywa Austin

- Choice     AYE
- Easton     AYE
- Lee        Absent
- Lipsett    AYE
- Santi Owen Absent
- Whang     AYE
- Austin     AYE
- Esoimeme Absent
- Ludlum    AYE

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Martinez AYE

The motion passed.

**4. Action Item: Postpone Vice Chair election until October 28, 2024**

Chair Whang asked the Commission to postpone the Vice Chair election, which typically happens in July, until the next meeting to give new commissioners time to consider the opportunity. Vice Chair Choice offered to answer questions new commissioners may have about serving as Vice Chair. Chair Whang noted that this timing would better align with commissioner terms.

Motion to approve the postponement of the Vice Chair election until October 28, 2024 was made by Commissioner Easton; seconded by Commissioner Austin.

Choice	AYE
Easton	AYE
Lee	Absent
Lipsett	AYE
Santi Owen	Absent
Whang	AYE
Austin	AYE
Esoimeme	Absent
Ludlum	AYE
Martinez	AYE

DRAFT

The motion passed.

**5. Cultural Affairs Division Manager’s Update**

Manager Roberto Bedoya welcomed Ashleigh Kanat, the Director of Economic Workforce Development (EWD) to introduce herself to the Commission. Kanat shared information on her personal and professional background. Prior to joining EWD in April 2024, she was at the Economic and Planning Systems, a real estate and land use consulting firm, for 17 years where she worked on projects related to land use, entitlement negotiations of public private partnerships, economic development strategies, and fiscal sustainability. She explained that EWD manages seven different areas: traditional business development and workforce development, all real estate functions (disposition of surplus land, negotiation of leases and licensing, special activities and permits), as well as fiscal and administrative components.

Kanat expressed her appreciation for the Cultural Affairs staff and value of the Division within the Department. She thanked the Commission for their volunteer service and shared her commitment to thinking long-term and strategically about the work of the Division.

Vice Chair Choice welcomed Kanat and expressed that the Commission was there to be advocates for and support Cultural Affairs and the Department and welcomed the opportunity to connect.



Chair Whang thanked Kanat for her hard work during a challenging time. She asked how the Commission could engage others in EWD regarding how culture relates to their work. Chair Whang asked if Kanat how the Commission can hold the bigger picture for how culture fits into the EWD's as well as offered the Commission's support.

Kanat stated that a goal of hers was to keep Senior Managers, like Bedoya, abreast of one another's work and think strategically about EWD's goals. Kanat shared that oversight of some cultural facilities had been transferred to EWD as part of the mid-cycle budget. She stated that they are thinking through where this fits within the department and how to best steward the facilities and relationships in a holistic way.

Bedoya noted that this was a recent development as of a month ago. He referred to the work of one of the Commission's Ad Hoc committees that related to cultural spaces and cultural facilities and that the Commission's engagement in this work is in alignment with its objectives. He shared that he had spoken with Bill Gilchrist from the Planning Department about the need for a focused cultural assets strategy in terms of land use policy and how to integrate them more fully into the City's work. Kanat expressed the need for additional resources and staff to support these additional responsibilities.

Chair Whang asked if Kanat had any requests of the Commission. Kanat asked that the Commission continue supporting Division staff and welcomed Commissioners to connect with her directly.

Bedoya thanked Kanat for her leadership and for attending the Commission meeting.

Bedoya thanked staff for their work in navigating the budgeting process and various scenarios. He shared that the budget presented is predicated on the sale of the Coliseum. If the sale does not go through, the Division could face budget cuts. He reiterated the challenges with the lack of staffing as the department is down 2.5 positions. He thanked Raquel Iglesias for her work in processing contracts and facilitating payments to grantees. Bedoya reflected the strain that these activities had put on staff capacity and thanked Iglesias, Kristen Zaremba and Josie deMira for their work.

Bedoya stated that the Cultural Affairs Division (CAD) doesn't have any new partnerships but existing partnerships include the Just Cities Fund and the Cultural Strategists-in-Government program. He shared that the report on the second year of the CSIG program had been released and received positive feedback.

Raquel Iglesias reviewed the Cultural Funding Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget. She shared a contingency budget plan pending the sale of the Coliseum. If the sale does not go through, the General Fund allocation to the department would decrease by approximately \$300,000 and funds from the Transit Occupancy Tax (TOT) would remain at approximately \$246,744. Iglesias shared that the department has made efforts to be transparent with community members about the possible implications to funding if the funding to the Cultural Affairs program decreased and that they were moving forward with a more conservative budget. General Operating grantees were alerted that the second year of their grants could possibly be reduced

by 30% and festival grant applicants were instructed to apply for up to \$14,000 (instead of the normal \$20,000).

Iglesias noted that the Festival Program grant was open and that the informational session had taken place. She shared one change to the program was a requirement that festivals happen within 2025 (January to December 2025) to ensure Council approves and the contracting process is initiated before festivals take place. Iglesias also noted that anyone receiving funds from the City needs to be in compliance with state agencies like the Attorney General's Office and California Business Search, which may have implications on who applies.

Iglesias updated the Commission on the status of delayed contracts sharing that all but one had been paid. Network of Care contracts, supporting teaching artists, were also being processed.

Kristen Zaremba shared that the Public Art team had launched its Public Art Prequalified Roster and had conducted a webinar. She noted that summary documents and video from their work with the Cultural Strategist had also been posted to the website. Zaremba thanked Josie deMira for her work on getting those resources live on the website. She shared the success of the SlideRoom platform, which is more accessible and simplified the credential requirements for applying to the roster in acknowledgement of the range in scale of upcoming capital improvement funded projects. She noted that the Public Art Department needs to grapple with state requirements regarding public improvement contracts and necessary licenses. She shared that the team is working on how to navigate these requirements while still creating opportunities for emerging artists who reflect Oakland. Zaremba stated that the roster could also be leveraged to connect Council members with artists for the mural funds that are still available. She shared that the prequalified roster was still open for another month and encouraged Commissioners to share with their networks. She closed by sharing that a public mural project had been completed at Ancora Place on International Boulevard as part of an affordable housing development. The project was completed by Civic Design Studio and local artist Leslie Lopez. Other projects coming up include Prologis, which is exploring options for its public art requirement, as well as Oakland Roots' development of the Malibu site which will be generating public art requirements. Smaller project sites include Wood Street by Raimondi Park where Eric Powell will be installing a work. She closed by saying that the team will be working on bringing the public art plan to City Council in the fall in alignment with the finalization with the City budget.

Bedoya thanked Zaremba. He shared that one thing the CAD team does is respond to community requests. For example, one issue the community is facing is around access to space and performing arts venues. In response, Iglesias has been speaking with the group managing the Holy Names theater space and trying to arrange a site visit for performing arts companies to tour it. He shared that as an example for how the department is a facilitator. Iglesias invited Commissioners to share. She explained that the space has a 400-person theater, a black box theater and an inactive chapel all of which could be performance spaces.

Bedoya opened it up for questions. Commissioner Easton asked the Public Art team about capital funding levels. Zaremba responded that it was challenging to forecast and that the team was focused on projects already on the books and those underway. She shared that there are

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some larger, exciting projects with committed funding coming up like the Lincoln Recreation Center and Fire Station. Zaremba explained that the team also has funds dedicated to looking at their open proposals program that would be more aligned with the Cultural Plan. She noted that she is in conversation with the Department of Transportation to clarify when the public art requirement does and does not apply.

Commissioner Ludlum acknowledged and thanked the public art team for its activity on social media. She noted that it helps Commissioners amplify opportunities and reach other parts of the community, like emerging artists. Zaremba thanked Commissioner Ludlum and explained that there is no dedicated staff dedicated to promoting the department's work and that all promotion of programs was led by staff.

Commissioner Lipsett asked how many artists had expressed interest in the pre-qualified roster, how many the public art team was hoping to get and how the Commission could support them in reaching their goal. Zaremba shared that 75 people had either completed or started an application and that the team hoped a few hundred would apply, acknowledging some may not be eligible. She asked Commissioners to help spread the word and that they would be promoting the roster over the next month.

Vice Chair Choice thanked fellow Commissioners for their advocacy efforts around the budget. He expressed dissatisfaction with where the budget landed. He asked Bedoya to expand on budget scenarios that would have dissolved the CAD. He asked to clarify what percentage of the budget had been cut this year under the scenario in which the Coliseum sale does go through. He reiterated the need for the Commission to do to long-term advocacy for the CAD. He shared the impact of the lack of funding opportunities has on Oakland artists. Vice Chair Choice asked if there are other ways Cultural Affairs supports artists who are not funded.

Bedoya responded that this is part of an ongoing leadership challenge. Bedoya expressed the need for CAD to assert its value and identify different revenue streams. He shared that other municipalities like Seattle and Denver have other sources that support their cultural grantmaking. He encouraged the Commission to explore what other revenue streams could be given the capacity constraints on staff.

Chair Whang asked about the status of the frozen position. Bedoya responded that the decision lies with the City Administrator but confirmed that the candidate was still interested in the role. In response to Vice Chair Choice's question about funding levels, Chair Whang explained that last year was a high year in the grantmaking budget due to rollovers (approximately \$1.5M), which are now gone. The current budget (with the Coliseum deal) is at \$1.1M. She noted that the last time the Department had been at that high \$1.5M level in grantmaking was in 1999, which would be \$3M today. She thanked Iglesias for her persistence on working with Finance to get contracts paid. Chair Whang asked Zaremba when the Commission could see the Public Art Plan draft. Zaremba responded that she could share the draft plan with the Commission.

Commissioner Ludlum echoed Vice Chair Choice's question regarding types of assistance for applicants and those not awarded grants. Iglesias responded that applicants can speak to panelists during the review, which is unique to the program and can have a big impact on the outcome. She noted that due to the level of funds available last year, the program only declined

four applicants from the festival program in contrast to prior years where the decline rate was over 50%. The program also provides feedback to applicants after the review panels as well as offers to discuss their application with staff. She shared that funding cuts were happening across the cultural sector, making it challenging to recommend other sources of funding to artists. She did identify Zellerbach's community events program which has a cycle every four months as an example of a resource for applicants. She also shared that she provides letters of recommendation for applicants.

Iglesias indicated that CAD was looking for panelists for the festivals grant program. They are looking for panelists with experience producing festivals, community engagement and budget expertise. Ideally, most panelists would be based in Oakland. She noted that individuals don't need to have prior panel experience. There's a year-round application available on the website that Commissioners can direct prospective panelists to, but the deadline is August 9<sup>th</sup> for the festivals program.

Vice Chair Choice asked if Commissioners are eligible to serve as panelists. Iglesias responded that because panelists are paid, Commissioners are ineligible.

Commissioner Martinez asked why the Activate Oakland program was being run by the Tourism Bureau rather than Cultural Affairs. She asked if it is a recurring program whether it could move to CAD and serve as another source of revenue. Iglesias clarified that Activate Oakland was a one-time program initiated by Business Development, a department within the Division, funded by surplus marketing funds. She explained that she collaborated closely with colleagues on that program.

## **6. Public Comment**

Chair Whang opened the discussion for public comment.

Shreya Shankar, Community Engagement Manager with the Community Arts Stabilization Trust thanked the Commission for their work and offered support for problem solving around funding sources.

Tiara Amar, Director of Advocacy of Liberal Arts (a Richmond based organization) shared that they were organizing a network of musicians in partnership with the Musicians' Union. The network is organizing to ensure that public funding for the arts reaches artists to help keep artists in the Bay Area. They are also working on reimagining the live music ecosystem, noting that musician pay has not increased since 1985. They offered to collaborate with the Commission on issues regarding artist pay and sustainability for musicians.

Chair Whang explained that the public can reach out directly to Commissioners to partner or discuss issues.

Vice Chair Choice thanked Tiara for their work on organizing musicians and reiterated how fair pay and equity are perennial issues.

Commissioner Lipsett shared that she had recently met with an individual involved in passing a minimum wage ordinance for musicians in New Orleans, the second city after Austin.

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## 7. Cultural Affairs Commission Chair's Update

Chair Whang expressed that this was a very challenging and truncated budget season due to delays with the release of the Mayor's budget and sale of the Coliseum. She updated Commissioners that the \$600,000 for the Film Commission had gone through, \$100,000 of which is going to Visit Oakland to support the database for location scouts and marketing the initiative. The remaining \$500,000 would be administered by Special Activity Permits. She clarified that the rebate program would be administered by the City, not Visit Oakland. She expressed hope that this would be a revenue generating program.

Chair Whang provided an update on the bond measure originally worked on by Oakland Museum of California (OMCA), Chabot and Fairyland. She noted the negative community perception of the bond allocations amongst the organizations due to some organizations joining the measure late in the process. She expressed the need to look at cultural facilities more holistically and equitably.

Chair Whang noted that the Downtown Specific Plan was up for being approved. A constituent on the Community Advisory Group pointed out that Cultural Affairs is named as lead staff on several areas of implementation in the plan. Chair Whang expressed that while it was positive that culture keeping was named in the plan there are capacity implications for CAD.

She asked for input on how to best communicate with other Commissioners on fast-moving policy issues.

Commissioner Martinez asked about the Downtown Specific Plan. Chair Whang clarified it was managed by the Planning Bureau. Commissioner Easton explained that the plan was stopped mid-stream to allow for the cultural community to provide input. She expressed her concern that no staffing has been identified to manage implementation of the cultural elements of the plan.

Commissioner Lipsett thanked Chair Whang for her work. She asked about potential collaboration with Visit Oakland on marketing associated with the film initiative. Chair Whang explained that members from the East Bay Film Collective would be working with Visit Oakland on developing the database and conducting outreach and that they would be open to input from the Commission on marketing. Commissioner Lipsett pointed out the opportunity to share consistent messaging on the cultural narrative of Oakland with this initiative. Bedoya shared that the collective has a sense for the narrative and that while he has a relationship with Visit Oakland that there are capacity constraints in engaging with the initiative.

Chair Whang explained that after some advocacy they were able to secure a set aside for 10% of the funds to go to productions with budgets between \$50,000 and \$250,000, which would allow for filmmakers operating on budgets below the rebate threshold of \$125,000 (especially documentary filmmakers) to benefit from the program. She expressed the importance of supporting film projects that lift Oakland up and the potential to do so through reviewing the program guidelines.

Chair Whang invited Vice Chair Choice to discuss the Artist Spotlight. Vice Chair Choice explained that the intention was to have creative expression be part of Commission meetings. He expressed the challenge of not having funds to offer artists to present and the idea of inviting grantees to highlight their work. Iglesias shared that a grantee has expressed interest in engaging with the

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Commission and offered to follow up. Commissioner Ludlum suggested inviting the Youth Commission and others to present on the intersection of their work with culture to create connection and community. Commissioner Martinez offered to be a standby grantee artist. Bedoya reminded the Commission of their role as conveners.

## **8. Commission Ad Hoc Teams**

Commissioner Easton shared updates on behalf of the Policy Ad Hoc Committee. She shared that the group, with the support of a Goldman Fellow had worked to ensure that the General Plan included culture throughout. The group is considering how to work with government to advance the goals of Cultural Affairs and the larger arts and culture community. Chair Whang thanked Commissioner Easton for her work on policy and Commissioner Lipsett for her work on communications, which was instrumental in advocating for resources and connecting with the community.

Chair Whang invited Commissioner Lipsett to discuss whether it made sense to decouple communications from advocacy work. Commissioner Lipsett explained that communications began last year with a petition and newsletter primarily focused on advocating for resources for the department. The newsletters leveraged engagement from the community around budget advocacy and have been mostly informational. The committee is considering how to do pre-emptive advocacy given the uncertainty with the City budget. Commissioner Lipsett requested that staff and Commissioners share any ideas on or information they'd like included on the newsletter and the need to meet separately on the advocacy strategy. Commissioner Ludlum stressed the importance of engaging community outside of an immediate ask and how to have ongoing engagement. Chair Whang shared Commissioner Lipsett's idea of creating a newsletter focused on gratitude and education, including information on engaging elected officials and resources for artists outside of City programs.

Chair Whang voiced a need for a committee dedicated to researching more stable and sustainable revenue streams for the department. She asked Commissioners what they would be interested in given limited time and capacity on the Commission. Commissioner Easton suggested having an informal brainstorming meeting to think this through before establishing a committee.

Commissioner Austin clarified that not all committees are standing committees and can dissolve once they've completed their work. She stated that advocacy could be a standing committee given the perennial nature of that work. Chair Whang shared that standing committees need to be approved by City Council and potentially vetted by the City Attorney's office, which is why the Commission has established ad hoc committees. Iglesias shared that staff had investigated this and that the Commission can make amendments to its ordinance so that it can create standing committees and dissolve them without going to Council each time. Iglesias offered to support the Commission with this in the fall. Vice Chair Choice expressed that what has been effective with the ad hoc committees is having two to three people focused on specific tasks. He agreed that advocacy and revenue streams feel very important.

Vice Chair Choice reminded the Commission that there was an East Oakland Arts and Culture committee that lost momentum after losing two Commissioners from that district and the need to pick that work back up. He provided context for new Commissioners that that committee



grew from concern voiced by Council members about ensuring granting opportunities for constituents in their districts. The committee focused on partnering with the Black Cultural Zone on that work. He voiced a need to bridge the gap between City Hall and deep East Oakland and support artists there. He asked if there were any Commissioners from Districts 6 and 7. Chair Whang responded that she was in District 6 but that there were no Commissioners from Districts 5 or 7 currently. Vice Chair Choice suggested discussing the makeup of the Commission during Open Forum. Chair Whang also noted that Commissioners could encourage Council Members to consider this in their recommendations for Commissioners.

Commissioner Austin asked if anyone was aware of the City's search for Neighborhood Services Coordinators and if the Commission was in communication with any of those individuals. Zaremba stated that these coordinators conduct outreach within specific communities and that Public Art has worked with them. Commissioner Austin suggested that the Commission could engage coordinators working in Districts 6 and 7. Commissioner Ludlum suggested an ad hoc committee focused on ensuring engagement with all districts. Chair Whang clarified that ad hoc committees could invite outside participants and that this could possibly create a pipeline.

Chair Whang stated that she would create a list of ad hoc committee ideas that Commissioners could choose from based on their interest and expertise, noting that there shouldn't be more than three committees given the Commission's size.

Bedoya thanked Vice Chair Choice for voicing the issue of supporting Districts 6 and 7. He shared that he is in active conversation with Council Member Reid. He stated that a way for the Department to address this issue is through the Cultural Strategists-in-Government program, which is supported through outside funds. He added that the Network of Care Grants, which supports teaching artists, had strong representation from Districts 6 and 7. He noted that CAD provides detailed Agenda Reports on how it is addressing questions of equity especially in regards to geography.

Vice Chair Choice asked if there was a report from the new cohort of Cultural Strategists. Bedoya responded that they are halfway through their contracts. He shared that there are plans to have a convening of some kind with current and past Cultural Strategist cohorts. Bedoya reported out on the current cohort stating that the Strategist working with Council Member Reed, Charles Johnson, is a media artist focused on exploring the rich legacy of East Oakland. Council Member Fife is working on an array of activities related to naturally occurring cultural districts in her neighborhood, reinforcing the idea that rather than cultural districts, Oakland has cultural hubs that anchor neighborhoods. Cristy Johnston Limón in EWD is working with a Cultural Strategist on connecting small businesses with government. Another Cultural Strategist is working with Communications to engage a group of young Oakland residents on what City government does. Chair Whang suggested that the Commission request presentations from the current cohort of Cultural Strategists. Vice Chair Choice thanked Bedoya for sharing. Bedoya expressed that he was proud that the Cultural Strategist program had come from the Cultural Plan and was now in its third round. Chair Whang shared that the report on the second cohort was on the CAD website.

Chair Whang asked for input on Commission meetings or the agendas to ensure that Commission is hearing from the community. She offered that Lori Fogarty from OMCA had reached out to suggest the Commission focus a meeting on the withdrawal of funding sources from the cultural sector. Zaremba encouraged the Commission to align the work of ad hoc committees with City priorities to be more effective and strategic. As an example, she offered that the Commission could leverage the Downtown Specific Plan's naming of culture as a tool to advance the Commission's goals related to that work.

Commissioner Martinez suggested inviting representatives from Unity Council to speak about Día de los Muertos at the October 28<sup>th</sup> meeting and engage with them on how to ensure representation from their district. Commissioner Martinez offered to reach out to them.

Commissioner Lipsett suggested the idea of a "hackathon" event focused on generating ideas around revenue streams. The ad hoc committee event could include grantees, funders and city representatives. This could help engage individuals who have valuable ideas but might not be able to commit to serving on a committee. Chair Whang shared that she was especially interested in exploring dedicated revenue streams in the City given the parcel tax passing for the Oakland Zoo or the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth.

Commissioner Martinez asked staff if individuals join an ad hoc committee but are not a Commissioner if they are eligible to receive grant funding or payments for serving as a panelist. Iglesias responded that she didn't think serving on ad hoc committees would impact an individual's eligibility. Chair Whang echoed this response.

## **9. Open Forum**

Vice Chair Choice reflected that the Commission hadn't done an event in a long time. He expressed that an event could be an opportunity to engage community in a more expansive conversation on what culture looks like in Oakland.

Bedoya echoed his prior comment about the Commission having agency to serve as conveners. He shared that he and Chair Whang had been on a panel hosted by Oaklandside and that they could be a good partner.

Bedoya shared that the remaining Cultural Strategist was working with the Vice Mayor on school retention.

Chair Whang offered that the cultural plan also takes an expansive view on culture. She noted the potential to collaborate with various departments in EWD.

Commissioner Ludlum echoed that a conversation on culture, who creates culture, what cultures are valued would be a great way to meet and bring in community from across Oakland.

Bedoya shared that the cultural plan was very intentional in its focus on culture as ways of living. He thanked Chair Whang for her work on the plan. He offered that this could be a good moment to revisit the plan, recalibrate, think again about cultural assets and defining culture in Oakland.



## 10. Announcement & Acknowledgements

Commissioner Austin acknowledged the passing of Kenzie Smith, an Oakland culture bearer and the Black LGBTQ+ community. Vice Chair Choice echoed Commissioner Austin's sentiments and noted Smith's advocacy around the lake and activism in the wake of the BBQ Becky incident. He noted Smith's involvement in Dope Era Magazine which uplifted artists in the community. He shared how he touched so many people and worked across many sectors. He offered his condolences to his family and community. Commissioner Ludlum echoed sentiments about Mr. Smith and expressed he was an everyday brilliant being and upstanding example of what it means to be a loving, supportive Oaklander.

Chair Whang thanked the Commissioners for their comments and offered her condolences. She acknowledged the passing of Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, who was a voice of freedom struggles, a researcher, singer, composer and activist.

Vice Chair Choice announced the "No Place Like the Town" event taking place on July 27<sup>th</sup> at Frank Ogawa Plaza. Hodari Davis and a former Cultural Strategist Candice Antique Wicks-Davis are having a general assembly conversation and performance with Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Ian Kelly, Kev Choice, Ryan Nicole and other community activists. The event is happening in tandem with similar events in twelve other cities.

Bedoya added that the Levitt Foundation gave the Black Cultural Zone funds to activate San Antonio Park so there will be a celebration later in the day. He thanked Kanat for attending the meeting.

## 11. Adjournment

A motion to end the meeting was made by Vice Chair Choice, seconded by Commissioner Easton.

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.

## Artist Spotlight: Mama Celeste of Oaklash



**Mama Celeste is the co-founder and Executive Director of Oaklash, a nonprofit arts organization that hosts events, facilitates mutual aid, and provides mentorship to emerging queer and trans artists. The annual Oaklash Festival draws thousands of people to the streets of Oakland, California for a sickening celebration of the Bay Area’s Drag and queer performance community. Celeste is an Oakland-based Drag performer, event producer, DJ, and multidisciplinary artist who has toured nationally in New York, Virginia, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Nevada, and across California.**

### **Oaklash:**

Oaklash hosts a weekend-long festival of drag and other queer performance that takes place annually in Oakland, California.

Founded by Beatrix LaHaine and Mama Celeste in 2018, Oaklash has featured hundreds of queer performers from the Bay Area and all around the world.

Oaklash is dedicated to building new and ever-expanding stages to showcase & elevate Bay Area queer talent. Our programming aims to create safe and accessible environments that celebrate the queer community, especially queer and trans people of color. Our organization was created to showcase performances that are boundary pushing, provocative, and unique to the sensibility of the Bay Area. We aim to stay true to the history of Oakland as a home to creative renaissance rooted in diversity. We hope that by amplifying and supporting the queer art community in the Bay Area, we can emphasize the need for investment in the arts in the face of systemic racism, growing economic disparities, and the Bay Area housing crisis.



# MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Cultural Affairs Commission                      **FROM:** Kat Torio, Economic and Workforce Development Department

**SUBJECT:** Draft Film Rebate Program Regulations                      **DATE:** October 21, 2024

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On July 16, 2024 the Oakland City Council adopted [Ordinance No. 13808 C.M.S.](#), which established a Film Rebate Program for film productions in the City of Oakland (City). The Film Rebate Program is codified in Section 5.24.190 of the Oakland Municipal Code (O.M.C.). The purpose of the Film Rebate Program is to increase the number of film productions occurring within the City to generate local employment and business opportunities, attract new tax revenues to support City services, and provide outlets for artistic expression. Furthermore, [Ordinance No. 13808 C.M.S.](#) authorized the City Administrator to develop regulations outlining the application process and how to qualify for a rebate (See O.M.C. § 5.24.190.G.).

Accordingly, staff has authored the attached draft Film Rebate Program Regulations. Prior to finalizing the regulations, staff is presenting the regulations to the Cultural Affairs Commission and the Oakland Workforce Development Board for public review and comment. After receiving public feedback, staff intends on finalizing the regulations and initiating the Film Rebate Program this fall.

Respectfully submitted,

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KAT TORIO  
Special Event and Film Office Coordinator  
Economic and Workforce  
Development Department

ATTACHMENT A: Draft Film Rebate Program Regulations

## CITY OF OAKLAND

### FILM REBATE PROGRAM REGULATIONS

#### Draft for Consideration by the Cultural Affairs Commission

#### I. Introduction

On July 16, 2024 the Oakland City Council adopted [Ordinance No. 13808 C.M.S.](#), which established a Film Rebate Program for film productions in the City of Oakland (City). The Film Rebate Program is codified in Section 5.24.190 of the Oakland Municipal Code (O.M.C.). The purpose of the Film Rebate Program is to increase the number of film productions occurring within the City to generate local employment and business opportunities, attract new tax revenues to support City services, and provide outlets for artistic expression. Furthermore, [Ordinance No. 13808 C.M.S.](#) authorized the City Administrator to develop regulations outlining the application process and how to qualify for a rebate (See O.M.C. § 5.24.190.G.). Accordingly, below please find the City’s Film Rebate Program Regulations. Please note that the definitions provided in the Film Permitting Ordinance, [Oakland Municipal Code 5.24](#), apply to the below regulations.

#### II. Definitions

- a. “Commercial Advertising” means a Filming Activity for the purposes of dissemination of promotional messages with the primary intent to encourage the purchase, use, or endorsement of goods, services, or brands.

- b. “Expenditure” means the portion of production costs that are incurred within the City of Oakland, including wages for crew and staff who reside in the City of Oakland.
- c. “Filming Activity” has the same meaning as provided in O.M.C. Section 5.24.020 and means the staging, shooting, filming, videotaping, photographing, or other similar process conducted for the making of still photographs, motion pictures, television programs, commercial, and nontheatrical film productions.
- d. “Rebate Pre-Approval Application” means an application submitted by a person or entity who intends to conduct Filming Activity pursuant to a City of Oakland Film Permit that provides an informed estimate of expenditures and qualified expenses for the Filming Activity, which shall be used by the City of Oakland to reserve available funds for rebate purposes.
- e. “Rebate Reimbursement Request” means a form submitted by a film permittee after filming activities to the City of Oakland that provides documentation of actual expenditures and qualified expenses and requests a rebate up to but not exceeding the amount previously conditionally approved by the City in response to a Rebate Pre-Approval Application.
- f. “Waitlist” means the ordered list of film permittees who have submitted a Rebate Pre-Approval Application and are otherwise eligible for a rebate pending the availability of funds for the Film Rebate Program.

### **III. Eligibility Criteria**

The City of Oakland Film Rebate Program provides a rebate of eligible expenses for qualified film activities and productions thereof filmed in Oakland by qualified applicants who complete a Rebate Pre-Approval Application and subsequently submit a Rebate Reimbursement Request.

#### **a. Who Qualifies for a Film Rebate**

*O.M.C. § 5.24.190.C.*

- i. Only applicants who will obtain a film permit for Filming Activity in the City (herein “film permittees”) are eligible for a rebate under the Film Rebate program. As described in Section V, Rebate Application Process, an applicant shall apply for rebate pre-approval ahead of receiving their film permit.
- ii. In order to receive a rebate, film permittees must provide film skills and training to Oakland residents. The film skills and training shall comply with the standards outlined in the City of Oakland’s Film Rebate Skills and Training Guidelines.

#### **b. What Filming Activities Qualify for a Film Rebate**

*O.M.C. § 5.24.190.C.*

- i. A Filming Activity and production thereof must have a minimum aggregate expenditure of \$250,000 to be eligible for a rebate under the Film Rebate Program. All filming activities which receive a film permit

qualify, regardless of production type or content, so long as the minimum aggregate expenditure is met.

- ii. Notwithstanding the above, each fiscal year the City Administrator is authorized to make no less than ten percent of Film Rebate Program funds available to filming activities and production thereof for purposes other than commercial advertising with a minimum aggregate expenditure of at least \$50,000 and not more than \$250,000.
  1. Eligible filming activities and production thereof include the following categories: Feature, Series, Television, Music Video, Short Subject, Still Photography, Student Projects, and Public Service Announcements.
  2. Through these regulations, the City Administrator establishes that the funds available for these smaller aggregate expenditure filming activities shall be set at ten percent of the Film Rebate Program funds available each fiscal year. If a higher percentage is to be utilized for smaller aggregate expenditure filming activities, it shall be stated within these regulations.

**c. What Expenses Qualify for a Film Rebate**

*O.M.C. § 5.24.190.D.*

The following expenses are eligible for rebates in the amounts described in Section IV below. The City of Oakland has sole discretion in determining whether

a budgeted expense identified in a Rebate Pre-Approval Application qualifies under the categories below.

- i. Any item or service purchased or rented from a business located within the City for purposes of use toward the Filming Activity, including pre- or post-production, and including but not limited to the following:
  1. Hotel bills (short term residential rentals, those that have lengths of stay of less than 30 days, are not eligible as they are not permissible within the City of Oakland).
  2. Facility rentals, studio rentals, and auxiliary location costs.
  3. Catering services.
  4. Equipment rentals.
  5. Production operation costs such as safety, construction, and wardrobe.
  6. Post production costs directly pertaining to editorial, post-production lab and facilities, post-production sound, music, visual effects, and color grade and finishing, but not including post production travel expenses.
- ii. The hourly pay (wages) or salaries of City residents employed or contracted by the film permittee, or a subcontractor of the film permittee, performing work for the Filming Activity or post-production. Eligible wages and salaries are based on the Oakland residency of the worker, not on the location of the employer.



iii. The following expenses are not eligible for rebate:

1. City of Oakland permitting fees, including film permitting, parking reservation fees, and costs for city personnel services and reimbursements.
2. City of Oakland business taxes.

#### IV. Rebate Amounts

*O.M.C. § 5.24.190.E.*

a. Film permittees meeting the eligibility criteria described above in Section III. are eligible to receive rebates in the following amounts:

- i. A ten percent (10%) rebate on all eligible expenses as identified in the Rebate Pre-Approval Application; and
- ii. An additional two and a half percent (2.5%) rebate on those identified eligible expenses which are hourly pay or salaries of Oakland residents whose principal residence is located within the [Oakland zip codes](#) 94621, 94603, 94605, 94601, or 94607.
- iii. An additional two and a half percent (2.5%) rebate on those identified eligible expenses which are items or services purchased from businesses located in [Oakland zip codes](#) 94621, 94603, 94605, 94601, or 94607.
- iv. An additional two and a half percent (2.5%) rebate on expenses which are items or services purchased from worker-owned cooperative businesses.

1. To qualify as a worker-owned cooperative, a business must consist of a corporation, formed under California Corporations Code Title 1, Division 3, Part 2 and be organized and operated by the persons who perform the labor for that enterprise. Consistent with California Corporations Code Section 12253.5, at least 51 percent of the workers shall be worker-members or candidates. To qualify, a worker-owned cooperative business must be currently registered with the California Secretary of State as a General Cooperative entity type.

**V. Rebate Application Process**

*O.M.C. § 5.24.190.G.*

- a. The City will process Rebate Pre-Approval Applications from qualifying film permittees with anticipated eligible expenses on a rolling basis until funds are no longer available. The City will process Rebate Reimbursement Requests consistent with those Rebate Pre-Approval Applications and will verify that the film permittees actual expenditures meet the minimum requirements identified in Section III.B.
  - i. The City will reserve ten percent of the total amount of film rebate program funds available on an annual basis exclusively available to non-commercial advertising film permittees with expenditures of between fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) and two-hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000).

- b. Each film permittee may only submit one Rebate Pre-Approval Application per production.
- c. Permittees must submit a Rebate Pre-Approval Application, receive an approval from the City as described below, and subsequently submit a Rebate Reimbursement Request in accordance with the timing provided below in order to receive a rebate. Where a film permittee who received conditional approval of their Rebate Pre-Approval Application fails to timely submit a Rebate Reimbursement Request, the funds conditionally committed to that film permittee shall be released and made available to film permittees on the Waitlist. In such circumstances, the film permittee may request and if requested the City shall place the film permittee at the end of the Waitlist.
- d. City staff will review Rebate Pre-Approval Applications and notify film permittees whether their application is incomplete or conditionally approved and for what rebate amount. The conditionally approved amount shall be based on the 10% baseline of eligible expenditures as well as the additional 2.5% bonuses based on the reasonable estimates and documentation provided by the film permittee.
  - i. The Rebate Pre-Approval Application shall be made on the form provided by the City and the expenditures shall be supported by reasonable estimates of time, location, and costs, with a level of documentation as reasonable based on how soon the filming is scheduled to occur. Whether the costs are reasonable estimates shall be solely at the discretion of the City, and the City reserves the right to request further


information on how the film permittee calculated the estimated expenditures.

- ii. If the film permittee is seeking rebates beyond the 10% baseline of eligible expenditures, the reasonable estimates shall specify the amounts that are eligible for those additional rebates.
  - iii. If all available rebate funding has been committed for Rebate Pre-Approval Applications already submitted, the City will place subsequent conditionally approved Rebate Pre-Approval Applications on a rebate Waitlist and the City will inform the film permittee of their waitlist position.
- e. Once conditionally approved, film permittees must apply for and obtain a City film permit, and must commence Filming Activity within one-hundred and eighty (180) days after the City approves the Rebate Pre-Approval Application.
- i. Concurrent with submitting the film permit application, the film permittee shall provide all available documentation, such as any contracts and invoices received to date, that supports the estimates and shall revise downward the expenditures if appropriate based on documentation. The total expenditures must continue to exceed the qualifying expenditure threshold identified in Section III.B in order to remain eligible. No rebates will be issued to film permittees who cannot substantiate meeting the qualifying expenditure threshold.

- ii. A film permittee may receive one thirty (30) day extension if they submit an extension application prior to the end of the one-hundred and eighty (180) day period that provides one of the following justifications:
  - 1. Force majeure events (e.g. a pandemic, natural disaster, etc.); or
  - 2. Unforeseen production delays (e.g. equipment failure, industry strikes); or
  - 3. Administrative or legal complication (e.g. permit delays, contract dispute); or
  - 4. Financial challenges (e.g. funding delays).
- f. Within one hundred and eighty (180) days from the last day of Filming Activity as stated in the film permit, film permittees must submit a Rebate Reimbursement Request to the City.
  - i. In order to receive a rebate, film permittees must submit a complete Rebate Reimbursement Request, including but not limited to the following:
    - 1. Receipts and proof of payment documenting expenses by categories requested;
    - 2. Residency and demographic information of Oakland residents hired;
    - 3. Proof of meeting skills and training requirement.
  - ii. Oakland Residency shall be established through a minimum of two of the following current records evidencing one year of current residency:

1. California driver's record;
  2. California identification card record;
  3. Property tax billing and payments from the current or previous year;
  4. Verified copies of state or federal income tax returns from the current or previous year where an Oakland address is listed as a primary address;
  5. School, medical, or banking records from the current year and including both the Oakland resident's name and address;
  6. Utility, cable, or internet company billing records from the current year and including both the Oakland resident's name and address.
- iii. If the requirements above are not met, including if the film permittee did not have expenditures exceeding the qualifying expenditure threshold identified in Section III.B, then no rebate will be issued.
- iv. The City shall not issue a rebate that exceeds the amount stated in the Rebate Pre-Approval Application. Notwithstanding the above, where a request for a rebate on qualifying expenditures exceeds the amount stated in the Rebate Pre-Approval Application, the request for the portion of the rebate up to the amount stated in the Rebate Pre-Approval Application will be processed in accordance with the process described in these regulations while the request for the portion in excess of the

amount stated in the Rebate Pre-Approval Application will be placed at the end of the Waitlist and will be processed only if funds are available.

- g. The City will issue reimbursement payments in accordance with the [City's Prompt Payment Ordinance \(O.M.C. Chapter 2.06\)](#).
- h. Film permittees who fail to submit a Rebate Reimbursement Request within one hundred and eighty (180) days of the last day of Filming Activity as stated in the film permit forfeit the rebate funds that the City pre-approved and the City will make those funds available to rebate applicants on the Waitlist.
- i. A film permittee who receives a rebate must provide the City with the following:
  1. Except where such credit is prohibited by the Children's Television Act or any other state or federal government policy, an onscreen credit that states, "Filmed with the support of the City of Oakland" and includes the following image:  

  2. High-resolution publicity stills of behind the scenes; and
  3. Artwork or posters; and

4. Press kit, such as clips and trailers.

**VI. Program Subject to Funding Availability**

- a. The above-described Film Rebate Program is only effective if funding is available within the Film Rebate Program.

**VII. Regulations Subject to Change Over Time**

- a. The City reserves the right to make adjustments to these regulations based on information gathered from implementation.

DRAFT



## **Jim Santi Owen**

293 Santa Clara Avenue, Oakland, CA 94610 USA / +1.415.793.1796

[www.jimsantiowen.com](http://www.jimsantiowen.com) / [jsantiowen@gmail.com](mailto:jsantiowen@gmail.com)

Jim Santi Owen is an American percussionist, educator, producer, and performer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Drumming since the age of eight, Owen began intensive training in the North Indian percussion instrument tabla in 1991, studying under Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri at the Ali Akbar College of Music, the California Institute of the Arts, and in India. In 1995, Owen began studying South Indian percussion instruments including mridangam, ghatam, kanjira, and morsing with master percussionist T.H. Subash Chandran, and the temple drum, thavil, with K. Sekar. At Cal Arts, Owen studied Jazz with Charlie Haden, James Newton, and Tootie Heath and African drumming and dance with the Ladzekpo Brothers. He studied North Indian music and tabla accompaniment from Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and the art of accompaniment for the North Indian dance known as Kathak from Pandit Chitresh Das. Owen holds a Bachelor's of Humanities from New College of California and a Master's degree in World Music from California Institute of the Arts. He served as the Music Director for the San Francisco World Music Festival from 2009 to 2014 and is on faculty at Dominican University, The California Jazz Conservatory, LINES Ballet School, the California Institute of the Arts, and the Ali Akbar College of Music. Owen served a 3-year term as a panelist on the Zellerbach Family Fund's Community Arts Panel, sits on arts panels for the San Francisco Arts Commission, and is Co-Chair of Development for the Swapan Chaudhuri Foundation. He served for six years as Chair of the Funding Advisory Committee for the Cultural Affairs Division of the City of Oakland and was recently appointed as a Cultural Affairs Commissioner by the Mayor of Oakland, California.

Owen's work as a composer/producer is featured on Meta's (Facebook's) Sound Collection which has released over 150 of his original and traditional world music tracks highlighting the classical music of North and South India, folk music of Rajasthan and Bengal, traditional music of Ghana, and classical traditions of Iran and the Middle East. As CEO of Jim Santi Owen Music, Inc., he managed a six hundred-thousand-dollar budget from Facebook to produce these tracks. His music has been used on Facebook and Instagram for over 16 million reels and other user-generated content.

Jim Santi Owen has performed extensively with world-class musicians from a myriad of cultural and musical backgrounds. These include his gurus, Pandit Swapan Chaudhuri, Subash Chandran, and K. Sekar with whom he performed both in India and the U.S. Other internationally renowned artists with whom Owen has performed include Pharoah Sanders, Hamza el Din, Shenkar (L. Shankar) Stanley Jordan, Pandit Chitresh Das, Steve Smith, Terry Riley, Yair Dalal, Alam Khan, Bikram Ghosh, Ganesh Kumar, George Brooks, Jai Uttal, Myra Melford, Alessandra Belloni, Gamelan Sekar Jaya, Kyaw Kyaw Naing, Rova Saxophone Quartet, and Omar Sosa.

As Music Director for the San Francisco World Music Festival, Owen directed a Youth World Music Orchestra and collaborated with master musicians from China, South Korea, Tibet, India, Spain, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Mali, Azerbaijan, and Burma, and indigenous musicians from the Thao culture of Taiwan and the Costanoan Rumsen Ohlone Tribe.

In 1999, Owen received a fellowship from the American Institute of Indian Studies (A.I.I.S.), which enabled him to spend two and a half years living in India conducting research on classical and folk percussion ensembles. During this time, Owen was based alternately in Kolkata and Chennai but traveled extensively throughout India to document drumming traditions in Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and West Bengal. In addition to the A.I.I.S. fellowship, Owen has received multiple grants from the Zellerbach Family Fund, a fellowship from The National Gugak Center of South Korea, an Isadora Duncan Award, a Black Box Award from the SF Weekly, and numerous grants to support his work as Music Director of the San Francisco World Music Festival.

As an educator, Owen has extensive experience working with students ranging in age from pre-school to the post-graduate level. Trained and certified in an approach to children's music and dance education known as Orff-Schulwerk, Owen has taught music to children in numerous schools throughout California and around the world including Synergy, the San Francisco School, Park Day School, Marin Country Day School, and the Greenwood School. He has taught master classes for youth and adults in Hong Kong, Spain, China, and India. Owen is on faculty at Dominican University, The California Jazz Conservatory, and the Ali Akbar College of Music.

Oakland Cultural Affairs Commission, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 9th fl. Oakland, CA 94612

[www.oaklandculturalarts.org](http://www.oaklandculturalarts.org)

**Selected Employment:**

2023-Present

Cultural Affairs Commissioner, Cultural Affairs Department, City of Oakland, Oakland, CA

2021

California Institute of the Arts, World Music Faculty, Valencia CA

2018-Present

Jim Santi Owen Music, Inc., President and CEO, Oakland, CA

2015-2018

Park Day School, Middle School Music Director, Oakland, CA

2009-2014

Music Director, San Francisco World Music Festival, San Francisco, CA

2010-Present

Faculty, The California Jazz Conservatory, Berkeley, CA

2006-Present

Dominican University, LINES BFA Program, San Rafael, CA

2001-Present

Ali Akbar College of Music, Faculty, San Rafael, CA

**Selected Education:**

2003-2005

California Institute of the Arts, MFA in World Music Performance, Valencia, CA

2002-2003

New College of California, BA in Humanities, San Francisco, CA

1991-Present

Ali Akbar College of Music, Ongoing Study of North Indian Classical Music, San Rafael, CA

1995-2001

Mills College, Orff-Schulwerk Certification, Oakland, CA