



City of  
**OAKLAND**  
California

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News from: **Economic & Workforce  
Development Department**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 15, 2021

**Cultural Strategists Sought for City Government Projects**

*Oakland, CA* – The Oakland Fund for Public Innovation, in partnership with the City of Oakland, invites qualified Oakland cultural practitioners to respond to a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a new round of the Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program. The strategists will bring new perspectives and creative thinking to help City staff address some of the greatest problems faced by Oakland’s diverse communities. The RFQ submission deadline is 5 p.m. on December 16, 2021. Interested individuals may access the guidelines and application at <https://bit.ly/3F1H5wH>.

“We need new perspectives in all corners of our City government to help find creative solutions to our most pressing challenges,” said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. “Engaging creative thinkers who are rooted in a broad range of communities will help us build the sense of belonging among all Oaklanders.”

Continuing to advance its Cultural Development Plan “Belonging in Oakland,” the Cultural Affairs Division of the City of Oakland partnered with The Oakland Fund for Public Innovation to secure a multi-year grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to promote equity, belonging and well-being for all communities of Oakland. These grant funds will support the Cultural Strategist-in-Government (CSIG) Program. The CSIG Program seeks to discover new ways of fulfilling the City’s aspirations by working with strategists from communities most impacted by inequities and who can bring a new lens to the work of building a just city.

“The Oakland Fund for Public Innovation is excited to support the expansion of the Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program,” said Juma Crawford, the nonprofit’s Chief Executive Officer. “We believe that innovation comes from the inherent talent and people who are from—and live in—the communities of Oakland. This program will advance the critical work of ensuring that, as a city, we continue to put people first and strive for equity and belonging for all Oaklanders.”

Nine different placements for Cultural Strategists-in-Government within the City have been identified. They are:

- African American Museum & Library at Oakland, Oakland Public Library
- Citywide Communications, Office of the City Administrator
- Community Homeless Services, Human Services Department
- Public Art Program, Cultural Affairs Division, Economic & Workforce Development Department

(more)

- Environmental Services Division, Oakland Public Works Department
- Office of the Mayor
- Planning Bureau, Planning & Building Department
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Violence Prevention

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Cultural strategists are meant to play roles different from typical artists-in-

residence. There is no expectation that CSIGs will create an artistic product. CSIGs can be artists, or people who consider themselves cultural workers, creative entrepreneurs, traditional culture bearers, community historians or others who are knowledgeable of culturally specific practices, history or heritage relevant to communities in Oakland. CSIGs should be interested in serving the community and believe that City government can and should work effectively for all Oaklanders. **Applicants to this program must be residents of Oakland.**

The City of Oakland will host an **informational webinar on Thursday, November 18, 2021 at noon** to outline the CSIG Program and to explain how to apply. Individuals interested in attending the webinar should R.S.V.P. to [riglesias@oaklandca.gov](mailto:riglesias@oaklandca.gov). Applicants who are unable to attend the webinar should contact Raquel Iglesias at [riglesias@oaklandca.gov](mailto:riglesias@oaklandca.gov) for additional information.

Cultural Strategist applications received by the December 16<sup>th</sup> deadline will be reviewed by City and CSIG Program staff and finalists will be interviewed in January 2022. Up to nine professional service contracts, not to exceed \$48,000 each, will be awarded. Notification of awards is anticipated in January 2022 with contracts beginning in February. Most of the CSIG placements are anticipated to last for 12 months, however, applicants can suggest different timing in their RFQ responses.

For more information about this opportunity, visit <https://bit.ly/3F1H5wH> or contact Raquel Iglesias at [riglesias@oaklandca.gov](mailto:riglesias@oaklandca.gov) or (510) 238-2212.

#### ***About the Cultural Affairs Division***

The Cultural Affairs Division is housed in the City's Economic & Workforce Development Department. The division includes the City's cultural funding program, which provides approximately \$1.5 million in grants to support the arts in Oakland; the public art program, which has more than \$1 million in funds currently dedicated for public art installations across Oakland and staff working on special events and film production permitting.

The Cultural Funding Program relies on a competitive panel process to determine award recipients and funding allocations. Grant recommendations must be approved by the Funding Advisory Committee and City Council before contracts are awarded.

#### ***About the Oakland Fund for Public Innovation***

The Oakland Fund for Public Innovation reaches across the city, engaging private partners to innovate, test and scale ideas that enhance Oakland. The Fund strives to improve the prosperity, safety and quality of life for all Oaklanders with projects that:

(more)

- Build a more trustworthy and responsive government
- Allow Oaklanders to stay rooted and thrive in our city
- Create a more vibrant and connected Oakland for all who live, work and play here.

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#### ***About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation***

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through their grants, they seek to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive.

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