



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 29, 2018

**Two Pilot Cultural Funding Initiatives Launched**  
***Applications for Cultural Strategists-in-Government,  
Neighborhood Voices being accepted through Jan. 7***

*Oakland, CA* – As part of the first steps in implementing the new Cultural Plan, the City of Oakland announced two new pilot Cultural Funding initiatives today that will advance cultural equity, belonging and well-being for all the communities of Oakland. The **Cultural Strategists-in-Government Pilot Program** will fund five artist-in-residence slots in City departments to infuse City policy-making and practices with new creative and culturally-competent thinking and problem-solving to promote civic belonging and well-being. The **pilot Neighborhood Voices: Belonging in Oakland Grant Program** seeks to lift up seldom-heard voices of Oakland’s neighborhoods by supporting the expression, recognition and understanding of an array of diverse communities. Both initiatives are accepting application through January 7, 2019. Details and links to the online applications can be found at <http://bit.ly/PilotInitiatives>.

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“All bureaucracies need more artists and story-tellers,” said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf. “In Oakland, we want creative minds in all corners of our city government to help us develop new solutions to old problems. The Cultural Strategists and Neighborhood Voices pilot programs are two ways we can all move closer together as a community, and remind all residents that in Oakland, everyone belongs.”

**How-to-Submit Workshops**

The City of Oakland will host a series of information workshops to introduce the two new initiatives and to explain how to submit applications for each.

Three workshops on how to apply for the **Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program** will be held in Hearing Room 2 at Oakland City Hall, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza on:

- Tuesday, December 4 at Noon
- Tuesday, December 4 at 6pm
- Friday, December 7 at Noon

Two workshops on how to apply for the **Neighborhood Voices Grant Program** will be held on:

- Saturday, December 8 at Noon at the East Oakland Youth Development Center, 8200 International Boulevard
- Monday, December 10 at Noon in Hearing Room 2 at Oakland City Hall, 1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza

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**Details on the Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program**

In the pilot phase of the Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program, the Cultural Funding Division has partnered with five City departments to address an issue unique to their mission or vision.

- The Human Services Department is looking to engage an artist to employ ways of creatively promoting resilience for their clients as well as their staff.
- The Mayor's Office for Housing Security seeks help exploring how to creatively address the challenges of creating Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), and then, how to communicate effectively with property owners who could create ADUs successfully.
- The Planning & Building Department seeks assistance to establish ongoing means of communicating, ideating and documenting concepts that capture value and increase support from a broader swath of Oakland's diverse constituents to enhance our capacity to plan together.
- The Department of Race and Equity wants to engage an artist to build awareness of how anti-black bias and anti-black racism operate structurally in order to advance the dismantling of inequitable systems.
- The Department of Transportation will engage a cultural strategist to help reclaim a share of the public right-of-way for the express purpose of prioritizing community building in a public space through gatherings, public activities and local commerce.

Rather than pre-described tasks, the engagement is left for the artists to define in their proposals for FY2019-2020 activity that advances the desired outcomes.

Submitted Cultural Strategist applications will be reviewed by Cultural Affairs staff together with the partnering department. Depending on the number and quality of submissions, up to 10 finalists may be interviewed by a combination of staff from the Cultural Affairs Division and partnering department as well as community stakeholders.

Between three and five professional service contracts, not to exceed \$10,000 each, will be awarded in the pilot phase of the Cultural Strategists-in-Government Program. Notification of Award is anticipated to be made in April 2019.

**Details on the Neighborhood Voices: Belonging in Oakland Grant Program**

The Neighborhood Voices: Belonging in Oakland Grant Pilot Program is meant to highlight and support community-based cultural expressions, stories, histories and heritages of the many communities in Oakland's neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Voices pilot seeks applications from culture-centered partnerships between community builders and cultural practitioners that are focused on building neighborhood vibrancy and community cohesion. For example, a social service organization may partner with a storyteller to create participatory research into the history of a neighborhood.

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Applicants from the following are encouraged to apply for a Neighborhood Voices grant:

- Cultural groups that have received little or no support from the City of Oakland;
- Racial/ethnic-specific communities or other types of communities that are under-recognized or lack visibility in Oakland generally;
- Neighborhoods with few formal cultural resources (e.g., cultural centers, performance venues, art galleries, cultural education programs, etc.);
- Partners who are deeply grounded and engaged in the neighborhood where the project is based.

Following the deadline, applications for the Neighborhood Voices Pilot will go through a grant application review process. Review panels comprised of Bay Area community representatives and arts administrators will rank the submissions. These rankings will then be forwarded to the Funding Advisory Committee (FAC) which is charged with allocation of the seven grants totaling \$70,000 in the pilot phase. FAC's recommendations will then advance to the Life Enrichment Committee and full City Council for grant approval via resolution adoption. Given this timeline, Neighborhood Voices award notifications are anticipated to be made in May 2019 for a grant period running from May 2019 to January 15, 2020.

Funding for the two initiatives comes from General Purpose Fund allocation as outlined in the City's FY 2016-18 Biennial Budget and voter-approved Measure C which added a Transient Occupancy Tax surcharge.

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***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 \$1.1 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, film production permitting and a walking tours program.