

**RACC**  
**ADVOCACY**  
**PACK**

2023 EDITION 1

## ***INTRODUCTION to RACC ADVOCACY***

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**ADVOCACY** is about building and encouraging support for a strong arts and culture community and ecosystem. Embedded into RACC, we actively promote increased arts funding at all levels, rekindling, and encouraging more private sector giving; connecting artists to opportunities, and organizations to artists and creatives, through an equitable lens.

- Reduce and eliminate barriers to access and promote equity in the arts and culture through support
- Promote arts and culture access and support among city, state, and federal officials
- Encourage the expansion of the role of arts in community services, especially in health and recovery
- Foster, build, and grow partnerships and collaborations with community leadership
- Partner with national arts and culture councils, commissions, and committees
- Initiate and support calls to action including local, state, and national legislative initiatives

Each season, **Advocacy & Engagement** liaises between city and all tri-county local government offices to provide information and seek endorsement on impactful legislation affecting arts and culture in our region. Through community support, partnerships, and fostering relationships, RACC regularly participates and researches the impact of the arts and culture in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties. For example, starting in May 2022 through May 2023 RACC partnered with Americans for the Arts with the start of the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 study, surveying the impact of the arts on adjacent economic sectors. Through the past three years we have continuously advocated for support for our community still experiencing the impacts from COVID-19 in the tri-county area. As the recipient of two National Endowment for the Arts grants: the first *Our Town* placemaking grant in Portland's Midway-Division Street corridor, explores points of connection, intersection, and pride between diverse residents. The second is a regrantsing program to further invest in the arts and culture of Washington and Clackamas counties, stimulating localized development and support. Advocacy also serves on the Planning Management Team for the regional cultural plan, "Our Creative Futures," set forth by the City of Portland. Advocacy provides a community-based and equity lens with over 25 years' worth of arts and culture knowledge and expertise to this endeavor.

## RACC's EQUITY STATEMENT

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*Approved by the RACC Board of Directors February 25, 2015*

**We believe** that the arts have the power to change hearts and minds, and to inspire social change. Prejudice and privilege have created barriers that RACC must dismantle systematically and strategically, until everyone in our community has equitable access to arts and culture.

**We acknowledge** that there is no one perfect way to achieve equity, but we are willing to take risks because there is much work to do. We are thoughtfully researching and implementing new methods of thinking within our organizational culture, starting with an in-depth assessment of our services, policies and procedures. We are seeking out and listening to voices that have not been heard, and fully engaging under-represented populations in dialogue that will help us improve.

**We are committed** to the full scope of this work and will hold ourselves accountable along the way—anything less would prove a disservice to ourselves and the communities we serve. RACC strives to be an organization that values and celebrates everyone's life experiences, their voices, and their histories. RACC consistently brings new perspectives to the decision-making table, forming new relationships and alliances, and as we find new ways to support creativity, RACC will be a strong, equitable, and relevant organization. Throughout this process, we commit to humility, optimism, and respect.

## RACIAL EQUITY LENS

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**Objective:** By utilizing a racial equity lens, RACC aims to (a) provide a common vocabulary and protocol for evaluating policies, programs, practices, and decisions for racial equity and (b) produce policies, programs, practices, and decisions which result in more equitable outcomes.

**For any policy, program, practice, or decision, consider the following six questions:**

*RACC acknowledges that we have learned and borrowed from equity lenses made by Portland Public: Schools and the Salvation Army. For more information and context, please visit <https://racc.org/about/equity/>.*

1. Who are the racial/ethnic groups affected? What are the potential impacts on these groups?
2. Does this ignore or worsen existing disparities or produce other unintended consequences?
3. How have you intentionally involved stakeholders and shared decision-making with affected community members? Can you validate your assessments in (1) and (2)?
4. What are barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic, or managerial)

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5. How will you (a) mitigate the negative impacts and (b) address the barriers identified above?
6. How will you communicate the decision that was made and seek evaluation from affected stakeholders?

## VALUES

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- ADVOCATE** for equity, access, and inclusion for arts and culture in our communities
- EDUCATE** and inform our community through stories
- CREATE** space for others to have place and voice at the table
- PROVIDE** resources, support, and development opportunities, ensuring growth and sustainability for our creative ecosystem, including arts organizations and school districts
- CULTIVATE** lasting public-private partnerships shaping arts and culture in our community

## Legislation

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### Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon (CACO)

**Members of the CACO stand for ensuring that all Oregonians have the opportunity to access arts and culture in their communities.** As a member of CACO, RACC supports all efforts advocating for policies and funding that will create a thriving environment for arts, culture, history, heritage, and humanities across Oregon. Volunteers serve on our Board of Directors and include representatives from a membership of over 350 organizations across the state including tribes and cultural partners, to best represent the diverse mix of Oregon's cultural community.

CACO now has a (c)(3), non-profit organization to support their work. CACO serves as not only our lobbying agent, but advocates at the state level for our cultural communities. We hope in doing so, they can increase membership to be fully representational of our diverse statewide arts and culture community.

**As a member of CACO, Mario Mesquita, Manager of Advocacy & Engagement sits on the Board representing RACC, we are able to stay abreast of initiatives and policy that may impact the arts and culture community in our region. In 2023, RACC has endorsed two house bills through letters of support to legislators:**

1. **HB 2459: \$50 million in recovery funding for the arts and cultural sector.** Oregon experienced some of

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the longest pandemic-related shutdowns, which was felt deeply by the arts and culture sector. Impacts have included fewer people willing to attend in-person events, lower concessions sales at performances, canceled performances due to COVID impacting the performers, and a drop-off in long-time, regular attendees. Many patrons will not return to live performances due to age or other vulnerability. Some of our major venues are seeing ticket sales at 18% of what they were before the pandemic. The need is great.

2. **HB 2498: \$200 million In long-term funding for the corpus of the Oregon Cultural Trust.** The original concept of the Oregon Cultural Trust was that in addition to a tax credit for Oregonians who donate to the Trust, the sale of public lands would fill the Trust coffers. No public land has been sold, yet Oregonians have contributed nearly \$30 million to date through the tax credit.

## RACC's Legislative Priorities, Support, and Endorsement

**You too can support, request, and endorse** – As a supporter and patron of arts and culture in Oregon, your endorsement and encouragement of others is critical for these initiatives to pass in this legislative session. RACC has sent two letters of endorsement to Salem in support of HB 2459 and HB 2498.

### TEMPLATE LETTER OF SUPPORT & ENDORSEMENT

Good Day **XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX**,

It is with deep appreciation that RACC's Co-Executive Directors Carol Tatch (Chief of External) Operations and Della Rae (Chief of Internal Operations), that Mario and I share the attached report with you.

As you begin the 2023 Oregon legislative session, we know you will be reviewing many bills which will be introduced by your colleagues. We would love for you to take into consideration those that help our creative economy grow, support working artists, and increase access to arts and culture across our state. We understand that the weight of the last few years, while navigating through the global pandemic has disproportionately affected our most vulnerable residents and we hope you will consider the impact of trauma and how the arts can uplift, guide and be a mechanism for discussion and healing as we head into this upcoming year.

RACC is a non-profit that works in partnership and in collaboration with the City of Portland, Metro, and Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington Counties to advocate for and support arts and culture creatives and organizations. This includes arts educators in schools, local community-based and social service organizations as well. We want to direct your attention in particular to the relaunch and rebrand we will be doing with Arts for All in the coming months and our continued expansion of artlook<sup>®</sup>oregon. For 50 years, the evolution of RACC has served the Portland Metro region as the place where artists and creatives have a voice and a role in helping to support our local economy and lifestyles.

The Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC) or **identify yourself** endorsed **HB XXXX** encourage you to join **us/me**. We understand the impact this will have on our community in Oregon and the rest of the nation. We hope you will see the joy and the promise of equity in **identify a point in the HB or impact of the HB that speaks to you or**

is relatable to you and/or your work.

Best,

## Legislative Priorities

*Distributed by CACO*

### These are critical priorities for 2023:

3. **HB 2459: \$50 million in recovery funding for the arts and cultural sector.** This bill provides \$50 million in general funds to be distributed through direct allocations to larger arts/culture entities, plus a list of independent venues, with remaining funds (roughly half) distributed by the county and tribal coalitions through a grant program modeled on the CARES process that worked so well.
4. **Cultural Resource Economic Funds (CREF) Capital Projects.** A strong arts and culture sector impacts livability, economic activity, and social attachment to communities. Expanding access to the arts is crucial for our state's continued growth and community development. The economic impacts are significant including jobs, spending by arts and culture organizations, local, and state government revenues and an average of \$42.59 being spent per person per event outside of ticket price (meals, lodging and transportation).

CACO conducted a statewide RFP process to prioritize the projects most ready for state capital investment. CACO just completed an intensive peer review of the proposed projects. This is the largest slate of projects CACO have proposed but with a funding level commensurate with what the legislature has allocated in the past biennium. The 2023-35 project slate proposes 17 projects totaling \$11.9 million representing large and small organizations all over the state including all kinds of arts, culture, historic preservation, and heritage sites. The amount requested is similar to what was appropriated last session but includes 7 more projects ranging for \$72,000 in need to \$3 million.

5. **HB 2498: \$200 million In long-term funding for the corpus of the Oregon Cultural Trust.** This bill allocates \$200 million to be invested through lottery bonding with earnings spent for grants to the 1600 eligible arts and culture nonprofits in Oregon. This will provide a sustainable future for the sector and move Oregon into the top national rankings for state support for arts, culture, heritage, and humanities. We call it Oregon's Culture Promise.
6. **\$10 million increase in Oregon Arts Commission grants budget for operations grants.** This is a priority of the OAC and was approved by the previous Governor. Oregon continues to lag other states in the support it gives to arts organizations and yet these organizations generate economic and social return for our

residents that shapes community livability and prosperity.

7. **Replacing OCT Administrative Cap with Percentage of Earnings.** This is a priority of the Oregon Cultural Trust and was approved by the previous Governor. The cap on administrative costs has not grown with the needs to support grants distribution and management. Course correction is needed.

## 2023 Legislative Session Deadlines

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- February 21** Measure Introduction Deadline
- March 17** Deadline for a Bill to be posted for a Work Session in its first chamber (does not apply to Rules, Revenue, or Joint Committees)
- April 4** Deadline for a Bill to hold a Work Session in its first chamber (does not apply to Rules, Revenue, or Joint Committees)
- May 5** Deadline for a Bill to be posted for a Work Session in its second chamber (does not apply to Rules, Revenue, or Joint Committees)
- May 19** Deadline for a Bill to hold a Work Session in its second chamber (does not apply to Rules, Revenue, or Joint Committees)
- June 25** Constitutional Sine Die

## Arts and Culture Caucus

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### Oregon Arts and Culture Caucus Launch Event

**Join us for an evening of celebration, performance and networking.**

*From the Oregon Cultural Trust:*

Recognizing the vital role arts and culture play in the livability and prosperity of Oregon communities – and in enriching the lives of Oregonians – nine members of the Oregon Legislature have come together in a bi-partisan fashion to form the state’s first-ever Arts and Culture Caucus. The public is invited to meet caucus members at a launch event scheduled from **5:30 to 7 p.m. on Monday, February. 27th, at the Elsinore Theatre (170 High St SE, Salem).**

Coordinated by Rep. Rob Nosse (D-Portland), the Arts and Culture Caucus’ inaugural membership includes Sen. Dick Anderson (R-Lincoln City); Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-Clackamas); Rep. Maxine Dexter (D-Portland); Rep. David Gomberg (D-Otis); Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athena); Rep. John Lively (D-Springfield); Rep. Pam Marsh (D-Ashland); and

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Sen. Deb Patterson (D-Salem). Caucus membership is expected to expand.

The caucus will serve as a resource to the Oregon Legislature on key issues affecting the arts and culture sector. Its members will work closely with stakeholders including the Oregon Arts Commission, the Oregon Cultural Trust (and its statewide partners), and the Cultural Advocacy Coalition of Oregon (CACO) to stay informed on the latest research and issues. It will also set an agenda on priorities for arts and culture legislation, including a sustainable and robust funding mechanism for arts and cultural initiatives.

Rep. Nosse and other members of the caucus were instrumental in designating more than \$100 million in coronavirus relief and American Rescue Plan funds to sustain Oregon arts, heritage, and humanities organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to a survey conducted by Business Oregon, Travel Oregon, and the Small Business Development Center Network, only the accommodation industry suffered greater losses. Large cultural organizations continue to feel the impact, with many reporting that ticket sales remain only about 50 percent of pre-pandemic levels.

Members of the Arts and Culture Caucus are considering legislative concepts and bills put forward by the Arts Commission, the Cultural Trust, and CACO.

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture sector contributed \$8 billion to Oregon's economy in 2020, representing 3.3 percent of the state's GDP; 60,994 jobs; and total compensation of \$4.8 billion. Oregon nonprofit cultural organizations alone contribute at least \$687 million and support 22,299 jobs. This adds \$53 million to local and state government revenue.

Springer collaborated with members of the Arts Commission Advancement Committee, including Chair Jenny Green, as well as Cultural Trust Chair Niki Price and Sue Hildick, senior advisor to CACO, to support formation of the Arts and Culture Caucus.

## CONTACT US

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