

Central Valley Youth Drum Corps is formally appealing the panel's decision to not recommend our emerging project for Measure P Grant funding based on the appeals criteria 1 for a clerical or technical error on the panel's part.

The first error is that in the feedback it was claimed "*The **budget lacks detail, specifically missing a breakdown of lead instructor fees, instrument costs, and transportation expenses for drum workshops.***" All this information is clearly laid out the budget sheet and it is clearly broken down in section 3C (budget notes).

The second error is regarding the following panel feedback "*Could there be a culminating performance? It would be nice if there was more collaboration with other drummers, instructors, organizations.*" It is clearly explained that there would be collaboration with Live Again Fresno, an existing non-profit, to provide transportation and practice space. This collaboration is named in sections 1D, 1E, 2C, and 3C, as well as in the budget sheet. It was also provided in section 2C that Central Valley Youth Drum Corps would seek collaboration with the following existing non-profits and organizations: Casita Feliz, Dulce Upfront, and The Labyrinth Art Collective. And a culminating performance(s) are planned, and it is mentioned in sections 1F, 2B and 2C. One feedback comment from a panelist read as follows "*The Central Valley Youth Drum Corps engages Central Valley youth in learning various aspects of **drumming**, culminating in a **showcase performance** to highlight their progress*" so here one panelist reads our intention to have a showcase performance, while another completely missed it.

Another error is found in the following feedback comments: "*The **timeline** could benefit from **additional phases or clearer milestones** to better convey how the project will be executed from start to finish.*" and "*Timeline as outlined is not clear, cultural plan goals also needs clarity and expansion*" while in other comments, we are commended on our projects plan goals and clarity in the following comments: "*I enjoyed reading this thought-out proposal and I appreciated you directly linking your proposal to the goals, recommendations, and strategies in the cultural arts plan*" and "*The project offers a **strong cultural connection** for youth and aligns well with the **goals of Measure P funding.***"

Upon review, we noted several discrepancies within the panel's evaluation. In several cases, panelists indicated that specific information was missing or insufficient; however, this information was clearly provided in multiple sections of our application, as well as within the budget sheet and accompanying budget notes. Furthermore, we

observed notable inconsistencies in the feedback regarding whether our project aligns with the strategic goals and whether the timeline was presented with sufficient clarity.

We respectfully request that the panel reconsider our application in light of these clarifications. We greatly appreciate the time and effort that goes into the review process and thank you for your attention to this appeal.

Best regards,

Emily Ramos, Central Valley Youth Drum Corps

**From:** Lilia Gonzales Chavez  
**Sent:** Friday, August 22, 2025 1:57 PM  
**To:** Sine Chan  
**Cc:** EAAC Grants; Lopez Ome; Andrea Mele  
**Subject:** RE: Grant Ineligibility Follow-Up

Hello Sine,

I appreciate your follow through regarding this issue because you are in a pool with over 200 applicants that we processed this year, each with its own nuance.

Unfortunately, after careful consideration of the application you submitted it is clear that your collective is not Fresno based.

The guidelines state, under **Eligibility : Who Can't Apply for Emerging Organization Project Specific Support? Ineligible Organizations** first bullet – **Organizations without a principal place of business in the City of Fresno.** It also states under **Funding Use: You can't use the grant money for these things:** first bullet- **Activities occurring outside of the City of Fresno.** Lastly the guidelines state under **Funding Restrictions: All activities funded with EAAC funds must take place in the City of Fresno including rehearsals, performances, and presentations. Consideration will be given to activities that take place in the City of Fresno.**

From the application you submitted it is clear that the members of your collective may come to the City of Fresno for the final rehearsal and performance, but your principal place of business is not in the City of Fresno. Your online collaborative meetings which is how the group comes together to work is not an eligible use of these funds since the participants would not be in the City of Fresno.

I applaud the work you are doing and wish Fresno had a theater/comedy company like this. Your project history demonstrates success, and, in the future, you may want to consider establishing yourself as a Fresno based non-profit. At this time however you did not demonstrate eligibility for the EAAC grant.

Wishing you the very best,  
Lilia

*Lilia González Chávez, D.F.A.*

*She/her/ella*

Executive Director  
Fresno Arts Council

*Enriching people's lives through the arts!*

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to formally appeal on behalf of my EAAC Emerging Organization Project Specific Support grant application for Hib Hib: A Hmong American Sketch Comedy Show.

**This appeal is based primarily on the grounds of *incorrect processing* for the following reasons, all of which occurred after LOI acceptance:**

- 1) *Our initial reason for ineligibility was never an existing requirement*
  - a) *"Project Staff as applicants are not current City of Fresno residents" was cited for initial ineligibility.*
    - i) *This requirement does not exist in EAAC guidelines.*
- 2) *The reason for our ineligibility was changed after asking for proof of the requirement*
- 3) *Our new reason for ineligibility cites 2 requirements, generally claiming "it is clear that your collective is not Fresno based"*
  - a) *The requirement of a "Principal place of business in the City of Fresno" is cited,*
    - i) *Our application meets this criteria.*
  - b) *"Online collaborative meetings" being cited as ineligible use of funds.*
    - i) *This requirement does not exist in EAAC guidelines.*

*To address each of these reasons for ineligibility, I would like to provide the following information:*

***In regards to "Project Staff as applicants are not current City of Fresno residents" as the initial reason for ineligibility:***

- No part of the EAAC application has a dedicated section where artists and/or Project Staff can enter their addresses or provide proof of residency.
- FAC has still not been able to reference any section or specific language in the guidelines that suggests this requirement exists.
- I personally checked all provided EAAC and Measure P related materials, and found no language referencing this requirement. This includes the Emerging Organization Project Specific Support Application, LOI Guidelines, EAAC Policy Recommendations, Request for Proposals, the Measure P Ordinance, and keyword searches including "Fresno", "resident"/"residency", "Project Staff", and "applicants".

*In regards to the claim "it is clear that your organization is not Fresno-based", the following quotes are direct from the submitted application prove our collective is Fresno-based:*

*Organization Mission/Purpose:*

- "The ARTsonists was formed to fill a void in Fresno's art community. On a decade-long journey to find and cultivate Hmong performing artists within his hometown, Daniel Lee connected with Jasmine Vang, Chamang Yang, and Rich Thao to form The ARTsonists in 2022."

*1B. Who is/are your target audience(s), and how will you engage them? (age, ethnicity, income level, geography, etc.):*

- "With sketch comedy inspired by the Hmong American experience and written by the The ARTsonists, a group of Hmong American artists from Fresno, CA, Hib Hib is created each year with the intention of representing the Fresno community, particularly those in the Southeast Fresno, 93702 and 93727 area."

*2A. How does your work align with the Cultural Plan?:*

- "...Created by Fresno-based artists for the greater Fresno and Hmong American community... Not only is Hib Hib the epitome of unique existing performances and cultural events in Fresno, but with The ARTsonists excited to implement educational, theatre arts workshops for the Fresno community, these theatre professionals are ready to share their knowledge and inspire the next generation of Fresno-based artists."

*In addition to these direct quotes from our application, I would like to provide the following information that was not as directly stated:*

- 1) Our artist collective, The ARTsonists, was created by Hmong artists from Fresno to specifically serve and represent Fresno's Hmong American community.
- 2) Our collective specifically refers to itself as Fresno-based on our social media and promotional materials [REDACTED]
- 3) No previous rehearsals or performances in the organization's history have ever occurred outside of Fresno. The artists have only ever produced Hib Hib at 1) The Labyrinth and 2) The Vista Theatre, both in Fresno's Tower District.
- 4) No funded activities were described in the application as occurring anywhere other than Fresno.
- 5) No addresses outside of Fresno were ever referenced in the application.
- 6) An official statement from Daniel Lee, founder of The ARTsonists, is included on pg. 7

*In regards to a "Principal place of business in the City of Fresno" being met:*

**All locations/addresses referenced in our application are in the City of Fresno, including:**

- 1) (from our application submission) **Official Business Address:**  
[REDACTED] Fresno, CA 93704
  - a) Dulce Upfront (fiscal sponsor): As an artistic collective with no permanent address, *all EAAC business and funds will be processed through our fiscal sponsor at their permanent address.*
- 2) Applicant Address (myself): My personal permanent address used for the Submittable account is [REDACTED] (93704)
- 3) California Arts Academy (venue): Our planned venue for all rehearsals, educational workshops, and performances are planned to occur at the Severance Building [REDACTED] (93728)

*In regards to the claim "Your online collaborative meetings which is how the group comes together to work is not an eligible use of these funds since the participants would not be in the City of Fresno.":*

- Remote meetings are never considered "funded activities" in our application, and were not included in any portion of our budget/use of EAAC funds.
  - From 3A. How does your organization intend to make use of Project- Specific Support funds if awarded?:  
"Awarded funds will largely go to venue rental and artist compensation."
- As described in our application, **all rehearsals, workshops, and performances are intended to occur at California Arts Academy's Severance building, in the City of Fresno.**
- Additionally, **no section from EAAC materials states online/zoom meetings would make one ineligible**, nor was it mentioned in any FAC workshops or official guidelines.

*Below is a full timeline with all correspondence regarding the EAAC grant, with referenced emails attached below. Included are specific details and reasoning supporting our eligibility.*

*Application Timeline for Hib Hib: A Hmong American Sketch Comedy Show*

*4/3/25 LOI is submitted by the Fresno Arts Council*

*4/25/25 LOI approved by the Fresno Arts Council:*

- The submittable email notification stated “Your Letter of Intent Submission has been reviewed and is determined to be ready to move on to complete the full EAAC Application for Emerging Organization Project Specific Support.”

*5/2/25 I attended FAC’s EEAC Applicant Workshop at Fresno City Hall:*

- FAC’s announcement email states the “**Workshop will cover guidelines**, narrative questions, and budget development.”
- Many “warnings” were given to applicants about the guidelines; **Nothing was mentioned regarding disqualification for zoom meetings or residency requirements** for artists.

*6/10/25 Final EAAC application submitted for Emerging Organization Project Specific Support*

*7/30/25 (Submittable Update) Application determined ineligible by the FAC*

- Submittable email notification received stating “**Your application was determined to be ineligible because Project Staff as applicants are not current City of Fresno residents** (stated in the application narrative) as required by the Ordinance... **Please reach out to Executive Director, Lilia Gonzales Chavez**”
- An artist residency requirement is not present in any EAAC-related materials including the Emerging Organization Project Specific Support Application, LOI Guidelines, EAAC Policy Recommendations, Request for Proposals, the Measure P Ordinance.

*7/31/25 (Email 1) I reached out to Lilia Gonzales Chavez via the provided email.*

- Using direct quotes from EAAC materials (sourced from all searches for keywords including Fresno, resident/residency, Project Staff, and applicants), I provided explanations for our project’s eligibility, I explained in depth **how the application followed all guidelines and requirements**. This includes our place of **business/fiscal sponsor’s address (in Fresno)**, **my personal address as the applicant (in Fresno)**, **our venue’s address (in Fresno)**, and **how the Fresno-born artists involved represent the local Hmong population**.

8/7/25 (**Email 2**) I emailed Lilia Gonzales Chavez a follow-up, cc'ing [REDACTED]

- I asked if my previous email had been received also stating **"I would like to appeal this decision as it is not stated in any of the EAAC (or related) materials. I am also open to any advice or feedback you have for myself or my application."**

8/11/25 (**Phone Call**) After almost two weeks with no response, I called Lilia Gonzales Chavez during FAC business hours to see if she had received any of my emails.

8/7/25 (**Email 3**) I emailed Lilia Gonzales Chavez a follow-up after our phone call, recapping the conversation we had, as to document all correspondence regarding the EAAC grants.

- It was stated my correspondence was received, but my grant submission would not be reviewed until after panels were complete.
- It was reiterated during the phone call that artists involved (not just the applicant) were required to be Fresno residents. There was no reference to any specific language or section from any Measure P or EAAC-related materials dictating this residency requirement for artists.

8/22/25 (**FAC Response**) Here, Lilia Gonzales Chavez responds to my application concerns directly and restates that our application is ineligible, for different reasons than originally stated.

- The initial reason for our ineligibility was changed from artists not being "current city of Fresno applicants", to the claim **"it is clear that your collective is not Fresno based."**
- The requirement of a "principal place of business in the City of Fresno" was referenced.
  - As *"a collective of artists applying under a fiscal sponsor"*, **Dulce Upfront's business address was used, meeting this requirement.**
  - *Our planned venue, California Arts Academy, is in the City of Fresno.*
  - *My personal address (as the applicant) is also in the City of Fresno.*
- The funding restriction "All activities funded with EAAC funds must take place in the City of Fresno including rehearsals, performances, and presentations." was referenced as a reason for our ineligibility.
  - *As described in our application, all rehearsals, workshops, and performances were intended to occur at California Arts Academy's Severance building, in the City of Fresno, thus fulfilling this requirement.*
  - *No activities in the application were stated to take place anywhere besides the City of Fresno, as Hib Hib was created for the Fresno Hmong Community.*



- In regards to the claim "Your online collaborative meetings which is how the group comes together to work is not an eligible use of these funds since the participants would not be in the City of Fresno."
  - *Remote meetings are never considered "funded activities" in our application, and were not included in any portion of our budget/use of EAAC funds.*
  - *Additionally, no section from EAAC materials states online/zoom meetings would make one ineligible, nor was it mentioned in any FAC workshops or official guidelines.*

*8/22/25 (Intent To Award) Here, FAC had released a document on Submittable sharing intended grants and outlining the appeal process.*

## Founder Statement



### THE ARTSONISTS COLLECTIVE

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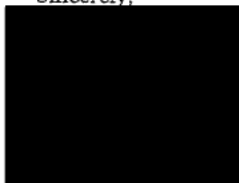
#### A Statement From The Founder:

"The ARTsonists—and by extension, our sketch comedy show Hib Hib—stands uniquely positioned to provide our own flavor of entertainment to the community in Fresno. Standing proud as the second-largest (and formerly, the centralized hub of) Hmong community in the United States and host to the largest Hmong New Year celebration in the world, we wrote a love letter to our home the best way we can — through art.

Within the time of our existence, we've sold out all our shows and have created revenue streams for arts venues such as The LABYrinth Art Collective and the Fresno Music Academy, and have opened the door for our community to embrace different forms of entertainment. Our mission is and always has been to bring industry-level entertainment and education back to the community. We've presented workshops at Fresno State for the past two years, and some of us have come up through Fresno's theater scene, including Fresno City College's Opera Workshop and the Rogue Festival. Two of our members are currently studying for their MFA programs, and another two are actively working in the entertainment industry in Southern California, in between returning to Fresno for our work as a collective.

We're so incredibly proud of what we and Fresno have created together, and we're excited for what comes next."

Sincerely,



Daniel Lee,  
Founder, The ARTsonists



Sine Chan-Golston  
Company Manager, *The ARTsonists*

**Audience Quotes from 2024 Feedback Survey (included in application materials)**  
“...showcasing of our local community and talent”

## **Direct from our audience:**

“I would highly recommend this show. Hmong people are so funny and we don't quite have anything like this in the Hmong community.”

“Thank you for the meaningful, hilarious work yall bring to the Hmong community! It shows we can pursue creative routes and that we can be comedians, too :) Yall are inspos!”

Sine Chan-Golston  
Company Manager, *The ARTsonists*

### Submittable Update (Ineligibility Notice)

<b>FC</b>	<b>Fresno Arts Council</b>	7/20/25
	RE: [Fresno Arts Council] Hib Hib: A Hmong American...	11:52 AM
	To: Sine	

### Submittable

Good afternoon,

This letter is notify you that upon further review of your application, your application was determined to be ineligible because Project Staff as applicants are not current City of Fresno residents (stated in the application narrative) as required by the Ordinance. This information was not presented in your Letter of Intent, which is why you were provided the link to apply. Please reach out to Executive Director, Lilia Gonzales Chavez at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Fresno Arts Council

<a href="#">REPLY</a>	<a href="#">VIEW SUBMISSION</a>
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Submission ID: [REDACTED]

Sine Chan-Golston  
Company Manager, *The ARTsonists*

## Email 1

From: Sine Chan [REDACTED]  
Subject: Grant Ineligibility Follow-Up  
Date: July 31, 2025 at 7:40 PM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]

Dear Lita Gonzalez Chavez,

Thank you so much for your work on the EAAC grant process. I recently received an email stating my application for the Emerging Organization Project Specific Support application, *Hib Hib: A Hmong-American Sketch Comedy Show*, was ineligible. I would appreciate any insight or guidance into this decision, and I may be interested in submitting an appeal if necessary.

The reason for the rejection was explained as "...because Project Staff as applicants are not current City of Fresno residents (stated in the application narrative) as required by the Ordinance. This information was not presented in your Letter of Intent, which is why you were provided the link to apply." However, my LOI was accepted after assistance from the Fresno Arts Council, and when I received the official application no additional materials were supplied that stated this requirement. The application narrative did not reference this either, in any section.

In addition to having attended EAAC grant info sessions held by Fresno Arts Council and Duo2 Upfront, I have searched all related materials including the Emerging Organization Project Specific Support Application, LOI Guidelines, EAAC Policy Recommendations, Request for Proposals, the Measure P Ordinance and the copy of my grant submission from Submittable. Provided are explanations for our project's eligibility, with the following phrases from these materials as the only references relevant to my perceived ineligibility (including all searches for keywords including Fresno, resident/residency, Project Staff, and applicants):

**Under Eligible Organizations:** "A collective of individual artists applying under a Fiscal Sponsor"

- No artist residency requirements are mentioned, and our Fiscal Sponsor has a business address in Fresno.

**Under Ineligible Organizations:** "Organizations without a principal place of business in the City of Fresno"

- Duo2 Upfront (our fiscal sponsor) has a principal place of business in the City of Fresno.

- California Arts Academy (our venue) also has a principal place of business in the City of Fresno.

- Myself, the applicant, is applying as a Fresno resident.

**Under Funding Use:** "An Emerging Organization Project Specific Support grant budget is required for this application. Examples of eligible expenses for this funding include, but are not limited to: ... Artist or consultant fees, Personnel: staff time directly related to the project, Meeting Expenses, Participant Stipends"

- No artist residency requirements are mentioned, and no limitations are put on Artists/Consultant Fees, Personnel, or Participants as expenses.

"All activities funded with EAAC funds must take place in the City of Fresno, including rehearsals, performances, and presentations."

- All activities mentioned in my application occur in the City of Fresno. All rehearsals, performances, and workshops are set to take place at California Arts Academy's Severance Building, located in the Tower District.

"Applicant's Current Business Address in the City of Fresno"

- Myself (the applicant), Duo2 Upfront (our fiscal sponsor), and California Arts Academy (our venue) all have permanent addresses and work solely out of Fresno.

"Award allocations will be recommended by the PRAC with intent that these investments recognize, reflect, and support the cultural demographics, and geographic diversity of all parts of the City of Fresno."

"Project Specific Grants can be used to pay artists' honoraria, meals, and technical costs are additional sources of allowable expenses."

- Here, "Project Staff" is never referenced under this grant section, but "artists' honoraria" are mentioned with no limitations.

- The preceding General Operating Support section states: "Funds may be used to support any eligible expenses associated with the general operations of Cultural Arts Organizations, including... staff salaries incurred within the territorial limits of the City of Fresno."

- While I do not apply under this grant, staff salaries are referenced as acceptable use of funds when "incurred within the territorial limits of the City of Fresno."

- As myself (the applicant), Duo2 Upfront (our fiscal sponsor), and California Arts Academy (our venue) all have permanent addresses and work out of Fresno, all business would be appropriately "incurred within the territorial limits of the City of Fresno."

**Emerging Organization Project Specific Support Application:**

1. Project Details

Describe key project staff, exhibitors/presenters, artists, and other collaborators. In what ways will your support diverse personnel, artists, and/or cultural workers?

- This is the only time the term "Project Staff" is mentioned specifically in the application or any provided materials, and does not refer to any limitations or requirements "Project Staff" (including Fresno residency).

To the best of my ability, I have found no examples of Project Staff under Applications requiring a City of Fresno residency. While I understand the need to prioritize local Fresno artists, I also believe a Fresno residency requirement would greatly limit many artists without permanent addresses and/or who cannot afford permanent housing. I also would like to note that ALL artists involved were raised in Fresno, went to school in Fresno, return regularly for family events, and have made a consistent effort to produce art in Fresno when attending school and/or working outside of the City of Fresno. Two artists recently taught a workshop at Fresno State, two are Fresno State alumni, and *Hib Hib* has taken place solely at local Fresno venues. The artists involved (*The ARTsonists*) have performed exclusively in Fresno, so well. While I did not find a requirement for a Fresno residency, all artists clearly represent Fresno's unique Hmong-American culture and regularly contribute to Fresno's vibrant art scene.

I deeply appreciate this opportunity for the Fresno arts community, and I truly believe *Hib Hib: A Hmong-American Sketch Comedy Show* exemplifies the type of innovative, culturally diverse, artistic programming that the EAAC grants aim to support. Please feel free to reach out in whatever is most convenient, including the email address [sinechan@artsonists.com](mailto:sinechan@artsonists.com) or my personal phone (559)9000108. I would also be happy to come by the Fresno Arts Council office to speak about the project in person. I appreciate any and all feedback, as the Applicant and representative of these artists I hope to support these amazing artists as best I can.

Thank you again for your time.

Best,

Sine Chan-Golston

Company Manager, *The ARTsonists*  
Email: [REDACTED]  
Phone: [REDACTED]

Sine Chan-Golston  
Company Manager, The ARTsonists

## Email 2

From: Sine Chan [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Grant Ineligibility Follow-Up  
Date: August 7, 2025 at 4:58 PM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]

To Liza Gonzalez Chavez et al.

I wanted to reach out to see if you received my previous email regarding my grant's ineligibility. If possible, I would like to appeal this decision, as it is not stated in any of the EAAC (or related) materials. I am also open to any advice or feedback you have for myself or my application.

Feel free to contact me via phone or email.

Best,  
Sine Chan-Golston  
Company Manager, The ARTsonists  
[REDACTED]

On Tue, 2025-08-05 at 4:58 PM, Sine Chan <sinechan@artsonists.com> wrote:

Dear Liza Gonzalez Chavez,

Thank you so much for your work on the EAAC grant process. The email received in August stated my application for the Emerging Organization Project Specific Support application, Subtitle: A Young American Sketch Comedy Show, was ineligible. I would appreciate any advice or guidance into this decision, and I may be interested in submitting an appeal if necessary.

The reason for the rejection was explained as "1. because Project Staff or applicants are not current City of Fresno residents." I did not see this applicable "restriction" as required by the City of Fresno. This information was not presented in your letter of denial, which stated my application was ineligible for the "Emerging Organization Project Specific Support Application." I did not see this requirement in the official application or additional materials, which stated that stated the requirement. The application narrative did not reference this restriction in any section.

In addition to having spending EAAC grant into sections by Fresno Arts Council and Dulce Upright, I have searched all related documents including the Emerging Organization Project Specific Support Application, EAAC Guidelines, EAAC Policy, Budget Guidelines, Request for Proposals, the Mission & Documents and the copy of my grant application from Subtitle: Provided are explanations for our project's eligibility, with the following phrases from these materials as the only references relevant to my perceived ineligibility (including all searches for keywords including Fresno, resident/residency, Project Staff, and applicants):

"Eligible Organizations: Individuals and artists applying under a Project Sponsor"

No artist residency requirements are mentioned, and our Project Sponsor has a business address in Fresno.

Under eligible Organizations: "Organizations without a principal place of business in the City of Fresno"

- Dulce Upright (our fiscal sponsor) has a principal place of business in the City of Fresno.

- California Arts Academy (our venue) also has a principal place of business in the City of Fresno.

- Myself, the applicant, is applying as a Fresno resident.

Under Funding Use: "An Emerging Organization Project Specific Support grant budget is required for this application. Examples of eligible expenses for this funding include, but are not limited to: Artist or consultant fees, Personnel, and time directly related to the project, Meeting Expenses, Participant Stipends"

- Which artist residency requirements are mentioned? And for artists are paid an Artist Consulting Fee, Stipend, or Per Diem, as well as a travel fee.

"All activities funded with EAAC funds must take place in the City of Fresno, including rehearsals, performances, and presentations."

All activities mentioned in my application occur in the City of Fresno. All rehearsals, performances, and workshops are set to take place at California Arts Academy's Silver Phase Building located in the Tower District.

"Applicant's Current Business Address in the City of Fresno"

Myself (the applicant), Dulce Upright (our fiscal sponsor), and California Arts Academy (our venue) all have permanent addresses and work solely out of Fresno.

"Award allocation will be recommended by the PRAC with intent that it will be distributed evenly to the project and support the cultural development and geographic diversity of all parts of the City of Fresno."

"Project Specific Grants can be used to pay artist fees... venue, and technical costs are additional examples of allowable expenses."

- Here, "Project Staff" is never referenced under this grant section, but "artist fees" are mentioned with no limitations.

- The preceding General Operating Support section states "Funds may be used to support any eligible expenses associated with the general operations of Cultural Arts Organizations, including: staff salaries incurred within the territorial units of the City of Fresno."

While it did not apply under this grant, staff salaries are referenced as acceptable use of funds when "incurred within the territorial units of the City of Fresno."

- As a grant (the applicant), Dulce Upright (our fiscal sponsor), and California Arts Academy (our venue) all have permanent addresses and work out of Fresno. All our work would be attached to "incurred within the territorial units of the City of Fresno."

Emerging Organization Project Specific Support Application

1. Project Details

"1. Describe any project staff, artist or consultant fees, artist, and other expenses and in what ways will your support direct personnel, artists, artist consultant fees?"

- This is clearly within the term "Project Staff" (it is defined) Confirmed in the application or any associated materials, and thus not

Sine Chan-Golston  
Company Manager, *The ARTsonists*

### Email 3

From: Sine Chan [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Grant Ineligibility Follow-Up  
Date: August 19, 2025 at 2:41 PM  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED] Lopez Orme [REDACTED]

Dear Liza Gonzalez Chavez,

I am writing to follow up on the 9-minute phone conversation we had August 11, 2025 at 12:25pm. I have also cc'd my fiscal sponsor, as they have been providing advice during this process.

- During our conversation, you recognized you had not reviewed my grant submission and would be unable to until the review panels were complete.
- You reiterated artists involved (not just the applicant) must reside in Fresno, stating it's "clear in the application", and referencing a section that required artists from outside of Fresno be justified.
- You did not reference any specific language or section from any Measure P or EAAC related materials dictating this requirement.

At this time, I would also like to formally request the specific location (document, page number, section, etc) and language in any of the Measure P and/or EAAC related materials dictating our reason for eligibility. "Project Staff as applicants are not current City of Fresno residents". Thus far, no specific language has been cited and I have not found it myself in any materials including the Measure P Guidelines, EAAC application, LOI guidelines, policy recommendations, and the proposal request. I have been reassured by others in the grant process that there are applicant organizations (with artist leads in Madera, Huron, etc) not being held to the same requirement, which is consistent with this not being stated in any grant policies or eligibility requirements.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this process.

Best,  
Sine Chan-Golston  
Company Manager, *The ARTsonists*  
[REDACTED]

Sine Chan-Golston  
Company Manager, *The ARTsonists*

## FAC Response (New Reason For Ineligibility)

From: Lilia Gonzales Chavez [REDACTED]  
Subject: RE: Grant Ineligibility Follow-Up  
Date: August 22, 2025 at 4:57 PM  
To: Sine Chan [REDACTED]  
Cc: EAAC Grants [REDACTED], Lopez Orta [REDACTED], Andrea Mole [REDACTED]

Hello Sine,

I appreciate your follow through regarding this issue because you are in a pool with over 200 applicants that we processed this year, each with its own nuance.

Unfortunately, after careful consideration of the application you submitted it is clear that your collective is not Fresno based.

The guidelines state, under **Eligibility : Who Can't Apply for Emerging Organization Project Specific Support? Ineligible Organizations** first bullet – **Organizations without a principal place of business in the City of Fresno.** It also states under **Funding Use:** You can't use the grant money for these things: first bullet- **Activities occurring outside of the City of Fresno.** Lastly the guidelines state under **Funding Restrictions:** **All activities funded with EAAC funds must take place in the City of Fresno including rehearsals, performances, and presentations.** Consideration will be given to activities that take place in the City of Fresno.

From the application you submitted it is clear that the members of your collective may come to the City of Fresno for the final rehearsal and performance, but your principal place of business is not in the City of Fresno. Your online collaborative meetings which is how the group comes together to work is not an eligible use of these funds since the participants would not be in the City of Fresno.

I applaud the work you are doing and wish Fresno had a theater/comedy company like this. Your project history demonstrates success, and, in the future, you may want to consider establishing yourself as a Fresno based non-profit. At this time however you did not demonstrate eligibility for the EAAC grant.

Wishing you the very best,  
Lilia

Lilia Gonzáles Chávez, D.F.A.

She/her/ella

Executive Director

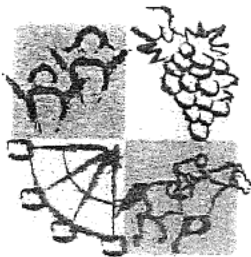
Fresno Arts Council

Fresno CA 93721

Enriching people's lives through the arts!



Friends of the



Big Fresno Fair

Tax ID# 77-0441647  
501(c)(3)

September 10, 2025

**Award-Winning  
Museums**

Big Fresno Fair Museum  
*Founded in 2013*

Fresno County  
Historical Museum  
*Founded in 2015*

Fresno Arts Council:

On behalf of the Friends of the Fair 501(c)3, I would like to file a formal appeal based on Criteria 2 for the following reasons:

**Friends of the  
Big Fresno Fair Board**

Mike Kludjian  
*President*

Brad Stevens  
*Vice President/Secretary*

Nat DiBuduo  
*Treasurer*

Brian L. Tatarian  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Tim Bakman

Louis Brosi

Cathi Donovan

Patrick Monreal

Chris Pacheco

Jami Tuell

1. As a first-time applicant, it was our informed belief that when we submitted our Letter of Intent, any anomalies would have been pointed out to us at that time for remedy. Clearly, we misinterpreted the amount we could apply for based on our financials. When we received the link to the General Operating Application, we understood this to mean that what we had submitted for review was accurate. Had we known at that time, one of two things would have occurred on our end.
  - a. We would have adjusted the amount we applied for in General Operations or
  - b. We would have resubmitted an LOI as a Project Grant for the proper amount.

In either case, it was clear from the readers' comments that was a factor that was "concerning" to them. We purposely submitted the LOI with enough time to resubmit should any issues arise. The impact on the readers was substantial and could have easily avoided had we been informed our LOI was faulty in regard to the amount we could apply for.

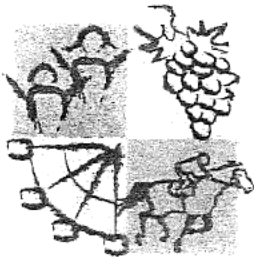
Kacey Auston-Tibbetts  
*Development Director*

Richard M. Aaron  
*General Counsel*

Mastro & Associates  
*Certified Public Accountants*

2. We believe the application was extremely clear about the distinction between the Big Fresno Fair and the Friends of the Fair who applied for and would completely administer the funds we would have received solely for The Fresno County Historical Museum. As the non-profit arm of the Fair, we do not and cannot co-mingle funds with the for-profit entities related to the BFF. We operate completely separately from each other and always have. This could not have been stressed more clearly in our application, yet, again, this appeared as a concern of a reader. We believe this is a misinterpretation of our application and should be remedied.

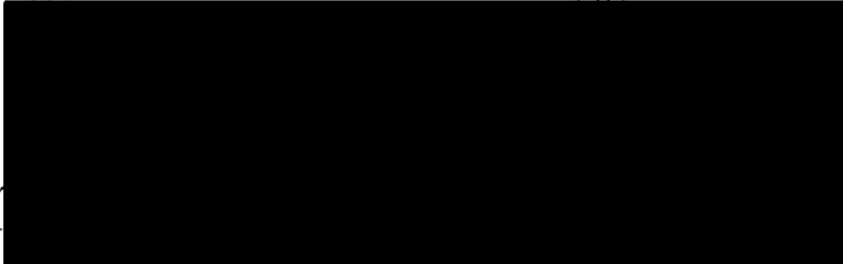
Friends of the



**Big Fresno Fair**

Tax ID# 77-0441647  
501(c)(3)

In closing, we understand what a massive responsibility administering the EAAC grant is and want you to know your efforts are appreciated. In this case, however, we request a review of our application based on the points stated above to ensure fairness of the rating process.



Brian Tatarian, CEO/Friends of the Big Fresno Fair

**Award-Winning  
Museums**

Big Fresno Fair Museum  
*Founded in 2013*

Fresno County  
Historical Museum  
*Founded in 2015*

**Friends of the  
Big Fresno Fair Board**

Mike Kludjian  
*President*

Brad Stevens  
*Vice President/Secretary*

Nat DiBuduo  
*Treasurer*

Brian I. Tatarian  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Tim Bakman

Louis Brosi

Cathi Donovan

Patrick Monreal

Chris Pacheco

Jami Tuell

Kacey Auston-Tibbetts  
*Development Director*

Richard M. Aaron  
*General Counsel*

Mastro & Associates  
*Certified Public Accountants*

18

General Operating Support Cost	Itemization	Notes
Personnel (Administrative or Staff Salaries): Name or Title of Position Ex. Program Coordinator, Director, Staff Artists, Bookkeeper. Calculate Fringe Benefits within Personnel Costs to include mandatory costs such as taxes, employee benefits etc. based on the cost of labor.	Ex. 20 hr/wk@\$30/hr x 50 weeks=\$30,000	Ex. Program Coordinator will devote staff time to educational activities planning
Executive Director / Chair: Racquelle Mendiola \$30 an hour	3 hours a week for 35 weeks = 105 hours a year	22 drawing programs
	60 hour a year	operational/ research
Vice Chair: Daniel DeMeza. \$27 an hour	3 hours a week for 35 weeks = 105 hours a year	22 drawing programs
	60 hour a year	operational/ research
Secretary: Martin Townsend. \$27 an hour	3 hours a week for 35 weeks = 105 hours a year	22 drawing programs
	60 hour a year	operational/ research
Facilities: Ex. Rent, Utilities, Maintenance, Insurance (No Capital Improvement Expenditures allowed)	Ex. PGE \$150/month x 12 months=\$1800	
Rent	\$2000 a month x 6 months=\$12,000	
Utilities	PGE \$200month x 6 months=\$1200	
Insurance	Commercial property (\$250/month), general liability (\$500/year)	
Equipment, Supplies		
Workshop Supplies <i>Project Support</i>	Paper pads (drawing and mixed media) x 10 (\$17 each), clay x 5 (\$25 each), soft pastels x 4 (\$30 each), clay tools x 5 (\$25 each), drawing tools x 5 (\$25 each), cleaning supplies (\$250)	

Equipment	tables x 3 (\$400 each), movable stage x 2 (\$250 each), lighting x 3 (\$150 each)	
Marketing, Printing, etc		
Calendar	event calendar printing x 150 (\$10 each), flyer design and printing x 10 months (\$30each)	
Promotions/ Marketing	Ads x 5 Months (\$50 per month)	
Services: Translation, Research, Evaluation, Documentation		
Documentation	Professional photography of events x 3 (\$400 each)	
Workshops and Draw Nights	Park reservations x 10 (\$40 each), venue x 10 (\$100 each)	
Meeting Expenses		
Software, Technology, Platforms, Subscriptions, web designer, etc.		
CMAC memberships (research)	40/year per person x 3	
Web site	Website design/ maintenance \$1500	
Other Operating Costs		
Program Support Staff	3 staff members at \$3000 each	Newly recruited board
Community Outreach and Partnerships		tabling/vendor fees a
Artist Stipend	4 artists at \$250 each	
Logo Design		PPL Design for consu
General Operating Support Total Request		

Total Cost
\$ 30,000.00
\$ 3,150.00
\$ 1,800.00
\$ 2,835.00
\$ 1,620.00
\$ 2,835.00
\$ 1,620.00
\$ 1,800.00
\$ 12,000.00
\$ 1,200.00
\$ 2,000.00
\$ 815.00

\$ 2,030.00
\$ 1,800.00
\$ 250.00
\$ 1,200.00
\$ 1,400.00
\$ 40.00
\$ 1,500.00
\$ 9,000.00
\$ 700.00
\$ 1,000.00
\$ 1,000.00
\$ 49,795.00

**Lilia Gonzales Chavez**

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**From:** Paper Crane [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 9, 2025 5:34 PM  
**To:** EAAC Grants  
**Subject:** Appeal Request: Expanded Access to Arts and Culture Grant — Paper Crane Arts Center  
**Attachments:** EAAC+Gen+Ops+Budget+Template.xlsx; EAAC\_Intent\_to\_Award\_9.5.25.pdf

Important You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Appeals Committee,

On behalf of Paper Crane Arts Center (PCAC), I respectfully submit this appeal regarding the recent funding decision for our application to the Expanded Access to Arts and Culture Grants, for General Operating Support for Emerging Organizations. We are sincerely grateful for the committee's consideration and partial award; however, we believe there may have been an error in how our application was processed and assessed, which significantly impacted the outcome.

### 1. Grounds for Appeal

The award report states that PCAC requested \$2,300, while our actual submission requested approximately \$49,000 in general operating support. This discrepancy appears to have directly influenced the evaluation of our application under Criteria 1 and 2.

Criteria 1: Our narrative and budget were prepared to justify the full \$49,000 request, demonstrating organizational needs, programming impact, and alignment with fund priorities. Assessing the application as though we only sought \$2,300 misrepresents the scale of our work and diminishes the scope of our intended impact.

Criteria 2: Because the recorded funding request was incorrect, the evaluation of our budget, capacity, and potential benefit to the community was not accurate. This likely reduced the competitiveness of our application compared to others.

### 2. Supporting Evidence

All submitted application materials—including the budget narrative and financial documents—consistently reference the \$49,000 request.

The award letter indicates approval for 30% of our request, but this appears to have been calculated against the mistakenly recorded \$2,300 figure, rather than the actual \$49,000 request.

This suggests a clerical or administrative error in data entry, rather than a reflection of what we submitted. Please find our records, which were acquired via Submittable, attached below.

We respectfully ask that the Fresno Arts Council review our application in light of the correct funding request amount of \$49,000 and reassess our eligibility for a full or proportional award. We believe that,

when evaluated with the correct request, our application meets the stated priorities under Criteria 1 and 2 and demonstrates significant community impact and alignment with the Council's mission.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your ongoing support of emerging cultural organizations like Paper Crane Arts Center. We remain committed to fostering accessible, equity-driven arts programming for the Fresno community.

Respectfully,  
Martin Townsend  
Secretary  
Paper Crane Arts Center



5

Lilia Gonzales Chavez

**From:** Andreas Werz [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, September 12, 2025 6:31 PM  
**To:** Lilia Gonzales Chavez; EAAC Grants; [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Purtell, Michael  
**Subject:** Appeal

Important You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Greetings:

Pursuant to Fresno Arts Council's Intent to Award for Expanded Access to Arts and Culture Grants, 2025, applicant Philip Lorenz International Keyboard Concerts, submits the following appeal based on Criteria 2. Applicant believes that its application material was incorrectly processed - negatively resulting in a lower scoring. Applicant submits support for this appeal. (Support is not limited to what is submitted below.)

Applicant believes the review process was flawed and was overly subjective. Applicant understands that subjectivity is an inherent part of the review process, especially as it pertains to prioritization of projects. However, after reading comments of reviewers, Applicant believes that reviewers' reviews of the application are substantively wrong and their analysis of the application flawed. Consequently, review of the application material has resulted in a lower score. Specifically, reviewer(s) incorrectly deny 1) that learning can take place as a result of observing a performance:

"None of [the attendees] will learn how to play a musical [sic] as a result of attendance, and watching world class musicians perform on a stage (or in an orchestra pit) does little to inspire the attendees to think, 'I could do that.' The concerts come; the concerts go. Nothing changes."

and reviewer(s) incorrectly deny 2) that a piano concert series is both art and education:  
"There is not teaching of an art, only the opportunity to watch it performed and have a short dialogue afterward."  
"[T]his project is a concert series, not education."

These comments indicated a flawed understanding of performance. Because of reviewers' flawed understanding, Applicant believes its application was improperly assessed which resulted in a lower score for Applicant.

Sincerely,

Andreas Werz  
President and Artistic Director

6

**Lilia Gonzales Chavez**

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**From:** Derek Payton [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 11, 2025 9:43 PM  
**To:** EAAC Grants  
**Subject:** EAAC Appeal: Root Access Hackerspace (Emerging General Operating Support)

Prevent phishing You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Fresno Arts Council,

I am writing to appeal the scoring of Root Access Hackerspace's Emerging General Operating Support application for the 2025–26 EAAC grant cycle.

Our application received an average score of 4.6, resulting in a 30% funding allocation. Most panelists scored the application highly, praising our programming, alignment with the Cultural Plan, and community impact. However, one panelist's comments indicate the application was scored down for reasons inconsistent with the published criteria, which disproportionately lowered our overall score and altered our funding tier.

That panelist wrote:

"Would have loved to see more concrete examples tied to numbers (for example – with this grant we want to provide X amount of free membership for XYZ community)."

The *Emerging Organization General Operating Support Guidelines* (2025) state:

"General Operating Support Grants are intended to provide core support... including but not limited to rent, utilities, and staff salaries... Funding is *not* intended to support a specific project."

Quantifying free memberships for particular communities is a project-style output, not an operational cost. The guidelines distinguish between sustaining operations, such as rent, utilities, and staff salaries, and project deliverables, which are not eligible under General Operating Support. Our application was correctly submitted under General Operating Support, where funding is intended to stabilize organizations by covering everyday expenses. By scoring it down for not including project-style deliverables, this reviewer appears to have applied the wrong standard.

This constitutes an incorrect processing of required application materials, as defined in the appeals process. We respectfully request that this scoring anomaly be reviewed to determine whether corrective action is warranted.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Derek Payton** (he/him)  
Founder & Executive Director

**Root Access Hackerspace**  
[REDACTED]

⑦ and ⑨

# SOUTH TOWER

community land trust

September 14, 2025

Lilia Gonzalez Chavez  
Executive Director  
Fresno Arts Council  
[REDACTED]  
Fresno, CA 93721

Dear Mrs. Chavez:

On behalf of the South Tower Community Land Trust, I would like to submit this written appeal for our project as well as the two projects that we fiscally sponsored. The full project titles are below:

1. Broadway Paque Public Art & Activation Project
2. Deep Roots Storytelling and Advocacy Series (fiscally sponsored)
3. My Neighbor's Neighbor (fiscally sponsored)

While the Broadway Parque Project is recommended for a partial award, there were significant clerical, technical and prejudicial issues with the project review that warrant an audit. Additionally, both of our fiscally sponsored projects were not recommended for any award and warrant audit as well. Please review the information below as grounds for appeal.

Broadway Parque Public Art and Activation Project has grounds for review with both clerical and technical errors as well as application materials being incorrectly processed that impacted scoring.

The clerical error was that the panel review session on 8/8/25 that reviewed two of our projects only had one reviewer attend. We have learned that another reviewer requested to attend via Zoom but was denied that accommodation by FAC staff even though that accommodation was available for other review sessions. These sessions are a critical step of the review that allows reviewers to share with their peers and adjust scoring. With only one reviewer being present, our projects and others reviewed during that session were not given the same depth of review creating an unequal playing field.

The Broadway Parque Project technical error came when Mrs. Chavez used her position as moderator of the review process to monologue about how "the budget is actually very inflated" because it exceeded \$65/square foot of mural area. This editorial commentary was an overstep of the role of FAC staff in the review process and demonstrated an extreme prejudice against South Tower CLT's proposed project. I observed the review of 3 other mural projects and none of those did FAC staff share the \$65/sf budget benchmark which is also not included in the published guidelines. Not only that, but this claim of an inflated budget was built upon FAC miscalculation of the scope of our project. The scope stated in our application is two 150 foot x 8 foot walls totalling 2,400 square feet with a proposed budget of \$117,366 equals \$48.90/sf. FAC staff had only used half our area to arrive at \$97.80/sf which was a technical error.



South Tower Community Land Trust [REDACTED]

Fresno, CA 93701 EIN [REDACTED]

# SOUTH TOWER

community land trust

The incorrect processing of the Broadway Parque Project includes two factors. First was the info on process above demonstrated FAC staff efforts to influence the one reviewer present. The commentary about the "inflated budget" was only shared after the reviewer had made positive comments about the project budget and requested to increase their score. Again, FAC staff exhibited prejudice against the project in a manner that seemed an incorrect way to process a project application. Secondly, FAC staff created confusion regarding a letter of support versus a letter of authorization regarding murals on City of Fresno owned property. Our project included a letter from City Councilmember Miguel Arias for the project. During this portion of the review Mrs Chavez claimed the project had no letter authorizing the mural on public property. This was presented as a major deficit for the project. When FAC staff brought the letter from Councilmember Arias up on the screen, she did not see anything about it. I had to verbally interject to state we had a letter from the Councilmember in the application. After looking at the letter Mrs. Chavez moved the goal post by saying the letter can only come for the City Manager. While the guidelines do say that murals on public property must have written authorization, it does not state that it must come specifically from the City Manager. Historically, public art in City of Fresno property has been authorized by numerous City staff and elected officials and the City of Fresno does not have a public art policy that spells out the process for authorization. At this stage of the application we began with support from the Councilmember as the most logical support to secure. Also in the guidelines this letter seems like a compliance step prior to funding and not a scoring item in the rubric.

For the reasons above, we feel our project review process should be audited by unbiased parties. Related to our fiscally sponsored projects, because of the high level of bias and prejudice against our project, we believe our fiscally sponsored projects may have received similar treatment and their review and scoring should be audited by an unbiased third party. Additionally, the Deep Roots Storytelling and Advocacy Series was reviewed as part of the Established Organization Projects and My Neighbor's Neighbor was reviewed with the Emerging Organization Projects. We believe that both these projects should be in the Establish Organization Project category.

Lastly, because these comments were made verbally by Fresno Arts Council staff, they may not be recorded in the notes. So I feel it is critical for the review of this appeal to include the audio recordings of the review. Because only one reviewer was present at the review, any correspondence with reviews about these projects should also be included in the appeal.

With gratitude,

[REDACTED]  
Kiel Lopez-Schmidt  
Executive Director  
South Tower Community Land Trust

Cc: Parks Recreation and Arts Commission  
Councilmember Miguel Arias



South Tower Community Land Trust

Fresno, CA 93701 EIN: [REDACTED]

8

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to appeal the grant panel recommendation not to fund my project, in any capacity, based on a numerical score of 3.6875. I firmly believe that my application was incorrectly processed on the grounds that the panel was not informed on eligibility requirements of the category.

I am an emerging independent creative director with a project fiscally sponsored by an Established Organization, as defined in the guidelines. I was informed that panel reviews were taking place but not that applicants were allowed to attend. I was also informed that there was false information and bias shared about my sponsor organization in another project review panel. Since I was not present, it's unclear from the notes what information was shared during the discussion of my application. However it does appear from the notes that panelists were misinformed because it was suggested that my project be in another category. In the application process, questions for my category were definitely geared towards larger organization structures. The term "organization" was posed in narrative questions and I was informed by FAC staff to answer those questions about my project. Procedural mishandlings misled the review panel such that a fiscally sponsored project like mine was at a numerical disadvantage in the "Established Organization Project Specific Support" category.

As an experienced coordinator, I do have experience handling a budget, as well as scaling to fit the needs of stakeholders. There are two budget items I stand by and one that I agree with the panelist that said it was an overestimation. First, I firmly believe the price of chips and water for art workshop participants should not be considered a "hospitality" cost, but a "workshop materials" cost for the physical and mental engagement and accessibility of participants, especially in the evening hours. I'd imagine "hospitality" costs would be a catering or a purchasing of meals to network with partners or stakeholders in a business meeting. Chips and waters are a fairly standard accessibility cost, so I would be purchasing these anyway. Secondly, I do believe a healthcare stipend is relevant to the coordination of the project because receiving a part-time salary payment for my work as an independent contractor can disqualify me from my current healthcare coverage. Maintaining treatment to my health does in fact allow me to manage and carry out the project and I have had two prior experiences with state funded arts programs that funded healthcare coverage. Lastly, a comment that was warranted and helpful was that my budget estimate for the workspace was a high number. Estimates for affordable and accessible workspaces were challenging to find and I will be seeking resources to address this gap moving forward. Additionally, the general recommendation for fleshing out my data evaluation process is actually an area that I aim to expand upon within my network of event coordination, so I am glad to receive that feedback for future events. I'd like to thank the FAC for the opportunity to offer my appeal on this funding recommendation and for the careful consideration of my appeal by the PRAC subcommittee.

Sincerely,

Christina Olague

Greek Cultural Arts Alliance of Fresno  
OPA! Project  
Project Coordinator: Demitra Vallis and  
Event Coordinator: Amanda Sopp  
[REDACTED]  
Fresno, CA 93702

September 12, 2025

Fresno Arts Council  
[REDACTED]  
Fresno, CA 93721

Re: Greek Cultural Arts Alliance of Fresno's OPA! Project Appeal

To Whom It May Concern:

The Greek Cultural Arts Alliance (GCAA), OPA! Project respectfully submits this appeal based on *Criteria #1: Clerical error or technical error* and *Criteria #2: Incorrect processing of required application materials negatively influenced the panel's assessment of the funding request*. Several panel comments reflect misunderstandings or oversights of clearly stated proposal content, indicating that key materials were inconsistently or inaccurately reviewed. These errors directly impacted the panel's evaluation and ultimately the funding decision.

**PANELIST COMMENT:**

Panelists wondered whether the one-time introduction and exposure at schools' multicultural nights would generate enough interest and participation in a workshop and event that could be months in the future.

**OPA! SUBMITTED PROPOSAL EVIDENCE:**

In section 1B Paragraph 2 we stated: "We will engage families by partnering with the Fresno Greek Fest to promote the program through its wide-reaching social media platforms. We are also collaborating with Arts Enrichment for All to connect with coordinators of school multicultural nights."

**GCAA REBUTTAL:**

We recognize the panel's concern about the timing of multicultural nights. While event dates are determined by individual schools and often not confirmed far in advance, our

strategy ensures ongoing visibility. As noted in our proposal, we are partnering with the Fresno Greek Fest—which reaches over 20,000 attendees annually—and Arts Enrichment for All, which has strong connections with school multicultural coordinators. These partnerships will help us maintain engagement and promote participation well in advance of our final event, regardless of when school events occur.

**PANELIST COMMENT:**

One question I had was about the costumes and if they will be reusable for future performances or if each student will keep theirs since they will cost the budget a couple thousand dollars, it would be helpful to understand the long-term use of those items and whether the investment continues to serve the community beyond this single event.

**OPA! SUBMITTED PROPOSAL EVIDENCE:**

In section 3C Budget Notes Paragraph 3 we stated: "The costumes will be used throughout the OPA! Series and for future events such as the Fresno Greek Fest, school cultural nights, and visits to senior communities. Purchasing the costumes ensures they can be reused, making this a long-term investment rather than a one-time cost."

**GCAA REBUTTAL:**

We addressed this concern in our proposal.

**PANELIST COMMENT:**

Intended impact is to reach 100 students through partnership and outreach with Greek Fest and local schools

**OPA! SUBMITTED PROPOSAL EVIDENCE:**

In section 1A Describe the project's activities, Paragraph 3 we stated: "This free event will welcome families from the school sessions and the broader community."

In Section 2B Identify the Cultural Plan goals that align, Paragraph 5 we state: "Importantly, this is not a one-time event. Greek cultural programs have been largely absent from local schools for over 20 years. Our long-term goal is to restore and build a consistent, visible presence in youth multicultural programming across the city. We want Greek culture to become a well-represented and recognized part of Fresno's diverse cultural fabric."

In Section 2C Identify and describe the ways in which your work addresses Cultural Plan specific recommendations and strategies, Paragraph 5 Goal 4 we state: "While we

are currently focused on elementary aged children, we plan to expand our program to include senior community members as we grow."

In Section 1B. Who is/are your target audience(s), and how will you engage them, Paragraph 5 we state: "Our goal is to reach over 100 participants through this series and provide meaningful exposure to Greek culture."

**GCAA REBUTTAL:**

Our goal to reach over 100 students is intentional and strategic. It reflects a sustainable starting point that aligns with our long-term vision of restoring Greek cultural programming in the community. Through established partnerships, we are creating meaningful, scalable engagement that will grow over time.

**PANELIST COMMENT:**

Panelists questioned whether the outreach and impact was significant enough for the large budget ask, though they recognized that costumes would be an investment and could be reused.

**OPA! SUBMITTED PROPOSAL EVIDENCE:**

In Section 1B. Who is/are your target audience(s), and how will you engage them, Paragraph 4 we state: "We are especially focusing on underserved areas, including zip codes 93701, 93702, and 93703, where median household incomes range from \$32,000 to \$44,000."

In Paragraph 5 we state: "Our goal is to reach over 100 participants through this series and provide meaningful exposure to Greek culture."

In Section 1C. What part of the city do you serve? Identify the primary zip codes where you provide services, Paragraph 1 we state: "The primary zip codes we will be serving are 93701, 93702, 93703, 93704. We are also open to participating in multicultural nights within other zip codes throughout the city of Fresno."

**GCAA REBUTTAL:**

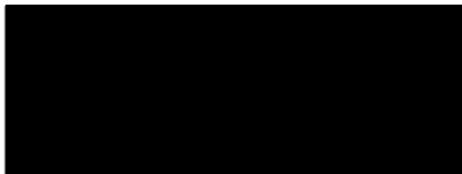
Our outreach is intentionally focused on underserved areas of Fresno, where access to cultural programming is limited. The budget supports both immediate impact and long-term use, including reusable materials and ongoing engagement. The goal of reaching 100 participants for the culminating event is a realistic starting point that prioritizes depth of experience and lays the groundwork for future growth.



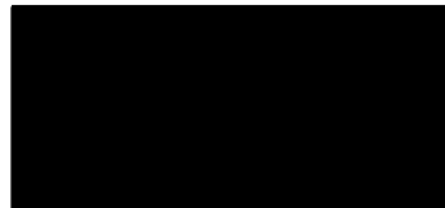
## CONCLUSION:

We appreciate the panel's feedback and the opportunity to clarify key elements of our proposal. Our project is rooted in long-term cultural impact and community engagement, with a strategic focus on underserved areas. The budget reflects both a thoughtful investment in reusable resources and a sustainable program model that extends well beyond a single event. While our initial reach is modest, it is intentional—prioritizing quality, accessibility, and scalability. We are confident that this project aligns with the goals of the Cultural Arts Plan, particularly in building cultural equity and long-term visibility for underrepresented communities. We are appealing based on *Criteria #1: Clerical error or technical error* and *Criteria #2: Incorrect processing of required application materials negatively influenced the panel's assessment of the funding request*. Several panel comments suggest that key details—clearly stated throughout our submission—were either overlooked or misunderstood. We respectfully request a reconsideration with full attention to the materials provided, which reflect thoughtful planning and a strong alignment with funding priorities. Even if full funding is not possible, we believe this initiative is deserving of support and represents a meaningful step toward greater cultural inclusion in Fresno.

Respectfully,



Demitra Vallis  
OPA! Project Coordinator



[Redacted Name]  
OPA! Event Coordinator

**From:** Kasey Jackson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 15, 2025 4:05 PM  
**To:** EAAC Grants  
**Subject:** Letter of Appeal

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Good Dirt Coalition (DBA: Good Dirt Collective), I respectfully submit this appeal regarding our recent Measure P grant application. We understand appeals may only be considered on the basis of clerical or technical error, and we believe several such errors occurred in the review of our application:

**1. Board Membership Listing**

The review noted "three officers were listed but no board members." This is a clerical error in interpretation. The three individuals listed in Section 6A of our application are both our officers and our board members:

- Corbin Gunstream – President
- Kristin Ragan – Secretary
- Tonya Nichols – Treasurer

**2. Community Impact**

The review stated the project was seen as "high impact for a select few." This reflects a clerical oversight of information already contained in our application. We specifically noted that the community is engaged through vendor markets where the art created by our participants is sold. In fact, as documented in our reporting, over **\$90,000 worth of pottery** has been purchased by community members in the past two years, demonstrating broad community reach and impact.

**3. Target Location**

The review commented that "further justification" was needed for our Northwest Fresno location. This appears to be a clerical omission of the information we provided. We want to clarify that the studio location was selected because of its accessibility to major bus stops, which our participants rely on. Additionally, as stated in our application, participants come from across the Fresno area, particularly lower socio-economic neighborhoods. Our program is open to all and does not restrict participation by geography.

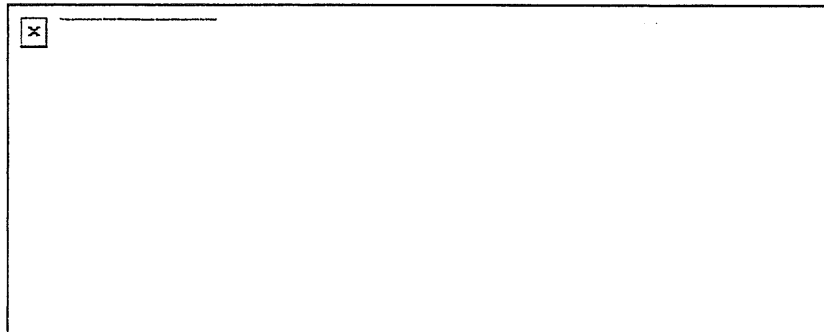
**4. Inclusion Statement**

The review noted the omission of LGBTQ language in our inclusion statement. This is a clerical oversight, not a programmatic one. Our application stated that we do not exclude any participants. As evidenced in practice, we have welcomed young women who identify as LGBTQ+ and gender fluid. The absence of specific wording does not reflect exclusion, and the intent of our inclusion statement was accurately represented in our work.

We respectfully request reconsideration of our application based on these clerical and technical misinterpretations.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful review. We remain committed to serving Fresno's young women and engaging the broader community through the transformative power of art.

Sincerely,  
Kasey Jackson  
Chief Operating Officer  
Good Dirt Collective



—Original Message—

From: Gender Alchemy [REDACTED]  
Sent: Monday, September 15, 2025 11:29 AM  
To: EAAC Grants [REDACTED]  
Subject: Request For Appeal

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] Learn why this is important [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear Measure P Review Panel,

I am writing to formally appeal the decision regarding my application for Feeding Our Roots under the Expanded Access to Arts and Culture (EAAC) program. I believe my application was incorrectly categorized and processed, which directly impacted its scoring and the ultimate funding decision.

The project was deemed a "social service project." However, I respectfully submit that Feeding Our Roots is, at its heart, a cultural project. As an LGBTQ+ initiative, it was designed to nourish and celebrate the traditions, resilience, and creative expressions of a marginalized community. The funding would have supported a yearlong leadership forum culminating in a community-centered event, creating lasting impact that affirms and uplifts the cultural identity of queer, trans, and gender-expansive people in Fresno.

As an openly queer trans man, I know how urgently we need to cultivate new culture bearers. Our community faces not only a lack of education about our shared history, but also a lack of tools to build and sustain healthy, thriving cultural spaces. Just because our practices may not reflect the dominant culture of those reviewing does not mean they are not cultural. For me and my community, Feeding Our Roots is a profound expression of our heritage, survival, and belonging.

I also respectfully request that the "Culture" criteria within the application process be defined more explicitly to include all marginalized communities. Without this clarity, projects like mine risk being misclassified and denied equitable consideration under the Cultural category—despite embodying precisely what EAAC funding is intended to preserve and expand.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that my application be reconsidered for its cultural merits under the EAAC program. Thank you for your time, your service to our community, and for providing this opportunity to appeal.

Respectfully,

—

Jess Fitzpatrick  
he/him/his  
Founder and Executive Director of Gender Alchemy Gender Exploration is a Radical, Magical Act!

[REDACTED]  
A 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organization  
EIN: [REDACTED]  
Mailing Address: [REDACTED] Fresno, CA 93744