

Dear Arts Forum Supporters:

An urgent message about arts funding in Oakland:

From Lori Zook., Acting-Chair, City of Oakland Cultural Affairs Commission

Funding for the Cultural Arts and Marketing Department is on the chopping block and will be voted on by the Oakland City Council this Tuesday, October 21. The meeting begins at 6pm and this topic is currently Item 19 on the Agenda, so it could be a long night. Grant funding is in jeopardy, as are all of the staff positions. This is a serious threat to a thriving but already under-funded community. We do understand that the City's finances are in a dire situation, but the fact of the matter is that the cultural arts department has historically borne more than its share of cuts and now represents only .4% (4/10 of 1%) of the overall city budget, yet serves 6,273 children and youth through the art in the schools program (most of whom would not have access to arts without these programs), and another 957,650 people through performances, events, etc. Not only will department staff lose their jobs: staff and teachers in the already-fragile arts sector will also lose jobs.

The case to be made to the City Council:

- The arts are not a luxury.
- Children and youth who participate in arts programs and learn positive ways to express themselves are less likely to engage in unsafe or criminal activities.
- Neighborhoods with visual and performing arts venues bring in revenue to the local economy, help prevent crime and violence by "keeping the lights on", and add to the overall quality of life in our city.

There are currently three council members who are opposed to cutting arts funding: Nancy Nadel, Jane Brunner, and Desley Brooks. All other council members have indicated that they will vote to cut the program. Please don't let this happen!! Contact your council person immediately (preferably before Monday) and let them know that cutting the arts program is unacceptable. Also, let the three council members that support the arts know how much you appreciate their support. Below is contact info for each of the district council members:

District 1, Jane Brunner, jbrunner@oaklandnet.com, (510) 238-7001;
District 2, Pat Kernighan, pkernighan@oaklandnet.com, (510) 238-7002;
District 3, Nancy Nadel, nnadel@oaklandnet.com, (510) 238-7003;
District 4, Jean Quan, jquan@oaklandnet.com, (510) 238-7004;
District 5, Ignacio de la Fuente, idelafuente@oaklandnet.com, (510) 238-7005;
District 6, Desley Brooks, dbrooks@oaklandnet.com, (510) 238-7006;
District 7, Larry Reid, lreid@oaklandnet.com, (510) 238-7007
At-Large, Henry Chang, Jr., cityochang@aol.com

Please forward this to your staff, board, friends, students, their parents, your mailing list, etc. It is our responsibility to make our voices heard - and to let the officials know that we represent a larger portion of the public than they think!

Lori Zook, Acting-Chair
City of Oakland Cultural Affairs Commission

RECAP of three things YOU can do to make a difference:

- 1) Forward this to your people
- 2) Contact your council member and let them know how important the arts are to you - a voting member of their district
- 3) Come to the 10/21 city council meeting

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