

Kentucky Arts Council Board Meeting

Singletary Center President's Room at 405 Rose Street, Lexington, KY

June 20, 2025, 10 a.m. – Noon

Staff Present (in-person): Chris Cathers, Sarah Schmitt, Tamara Coffey, Macie Lowe, Leeann Potter, Vinh Dao

Staff Present (online): Dave Blevins, Mark Brown

Board (in-person): Ken Burney, Everett McCorvey, Randall Vaughn, Lynn Schrader, Nathan Mick

Board (online): Brook Forrest White, Dior Cotten, Lennon Michalski, Margaret Prim, Wally Dant, Janell Samuels

Meeting called to order by Everett McCorvey. Attendees introduced themselves, both in-person and online.

Chris Cathers, executive director of the Kentucky Arts Council (KAC) reads Land Acknowledgement. Acknowledged the unique and enduring relationship between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories. Honored both past and present American Indian Tribes represented in the Commonwealth.

Juneteenth Acknowledgement Recognized Juneteenth, commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. Emphasized the ongoing need for justice and equity.

New board member Ken Bernie, a contemporary artist, was introduced, followed by a welcome from Dean Mark Shanda of the College of Fine Arts.

McCorvey asks for a motion to accept the March meeting minutes. Marcheta Sparrow moves, Lynn Shrader seconds, all approve motion passed.

Cathers states KAC received a call from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) with an offer that is in the process of legal review. The Kentucky Arts Council is seeking approval for FY2026 grants, including the Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant, the Kentucky Touring grant, the Individual Artist Fellowship and Emerging Artist Award, the Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship, and blanket approval of the Teaching Art Together and the Arts Miles Program.

KAC Staff Program and Grant Updates

Sarah Schmitt, Executive Staff Advisor

Fiscal Year 2026 Kentucky Arts Partnership (KAP) Grant

Report delivered on behalf of Brett, providing essential information to inform board motions.

General operating support grant for arts organizations statewide. Represents the majority of the grantmaking budget. Supports organizations providing year-round arts access, contributing to Kentucky's cultural and economic growth.

Application & Assessment Process Rigorous application process, reviewed by external panels.

Applicants must demonstrate:

- Quality, year-round public arts programming
- Fiscal responsibility and strategic development capacity (including disaster preparedness)
- Community value and commitment to arts advocacy
- Applicants divided into six Tiers based on average annual eligible revenue.
- Panels grouped by Tier or adjacent Tiers for fair comparison.

FY26 Applications

- 113 eligible applications (increase from previous year).
- Slight attrition from returning applicants (not statistically significant).
- New applicants bring strong contributions to statewide arts delivery.
- Growth attributed to expanded communications efforts and improved financial accountability assessments.

Trends & Insights

- Tier 5 (organizations with \$100,000–\$500,000 annual revenue) is the largest and growing group, representing approx. 45% of applicants.
- Geographic reach if all awards are approved:
- 36 counties served

- All congressional districts represented (1: 19, 2: 14, 3: 25, 4: 8, 5: 14, 6: 33)
- 35 state senate districts and 51 state house districts represented.

Customized reports (including funding totals by political boundary) available upon request, including visual maps and charts.

Tamara Coffey, Arts Program Branch Manager

Fiscal Year 2026 Individual Artist Fellowship and Emerging Arts Award, Kentucky Touring Grant

FY26 IAF/EA

- 17 eligible Emerging Artist Award applications
- 50 eligible Individual Artist Fellowship applications
- 26 counties (17 Fayette Co/15 Jefferson Co/remaining counties—Barren, Boone, Boyle, Bullitt, Caldwell, Campbell, Daviess, Estill, Franklin, Kenton, Lee, Letcher, Madison, Meade, Menifee, Mercer, Nelson, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Shelby, Warren)

FY26 KYT

- 5 eligible applications (1 each Madison, Fayette, Jefferson/2 Franklin/\$18,000 total requested funds)

January-June 2025, 14 CISS presentations on Zoom

Jan. 15	Wholesaling for Artists & Craftspeople
Jan. 23	Creating Inclusive Arts Programming: Universal Design for Learning
Feb. 19	The Homer Ledford Award 2025
Feb. 19	The Business of Art, the Art of Business
Feb. 27	Confidently Teaching Creativity
March 5	Growing an Inclusive Arts Workforce
March 18	How to Get Ready for Anything: Easy Steps for Artists and Creatives
March 27	Arts Education and Accessibility
April 2	Taxes for Kentucky Artists & Creatives

April 3	From Revision to Reality: Implementing the New Visual and Performing Arts Standards
May 14	New Generations of Storytellers
May 16	AI and Arts Administration: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bot
May 21	Creating a Marketing Plan for Your Art Business
June 4	Celebrating the Black Experience

McCorvey asks board to renew abstentions as necessary and report to KAC staff. Board then reviews funding amounts with and without NEA grant funds.

Teresa Day from Kentuckians for the Arts speaks on the importance of the board speaking to their legislatures about the arts. KAC staff cannot do so. Expresses there are not enough funds for the arts.

McCorvey moves on to grant approvals. Board reviews the Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant, Kentucky Touring grant, Individual Artist Fellowship and Emerging Artist Award, the Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship, and a blanket approval of the Teaching Art Together and the Arts Miles Program.

Kentucky Arts Partnership Grant, Kentucky Touring grant, Individual Artist Fellowship and Emerging Artist Award, the Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Vaughn moves for a motion to approve grants, Cotten seconds, all in approval. Motion passed.

Tourism Arts and Heritage Secretary Lindy Casebier greets board virtually. Thanks KAC for all they do. Announces that Governor Andy Beshear announced numbers continue to grow as far as the economic impact of tourism. Throughout Kentucky. 14.3-billion-dollar economic impact with over 97,000 Kentuckians employed in in in the tourism and arts industry. KAC and other agencies in the cabinet play an important role in economy growth for Commonwealth. Grateful for the environment KAC creates for artist to thrive in. Played a key role in the General Butler State Park writing workshop with Poet Laureates Crystal Wilkinson and Frank X Walker. Two KAC staff attended.

For blanket approval of the Teaching Art Together and the Arts Miles Program, Schrader moves Vaughn seconds and approval is unanimous. Motion passed.

Chris Cathers, KAC Executive Director report:

- LexPhil Partnership: LexPhil Brass Quintet performed its sixth free chamber concert at the Lexington Senior Center, attended by over 200 guests, supported by the Friends of the Senior Center and the Kentucky Arts Council.
- Poet Laureate Appointment: Kathleen Driskell named Kentucky Poet Laureate (2024–2026).
- Economic Impact of Arts: Governor Beshear highlighted tourism at \$13.8 billion, with \$6.9 billion attributed to the arts.

Grants & Exhibits

- America250KY Grants: 10 artists and 17 organizations approved for funding; next round opening soon.
- Statewide Traveling Exhibits:
 - 2020–2021: Native Reflections
 - 2021–2022: Our Kentucky Home
 - 2022–2023: Continent to Commonwealth
 - 2024–2025: Native Reflections, Part 2

Programs expanded community relationships and generated sales for artists.

Highlighted Artist Humbarto Lahera González featured in 2024 Governor’s Derby Exhibit, 2025 Governor’s Derby Celebration Poster, Woodford Reserve Derby Edition bottle, and Forbes Magazine.

Tourism & Derby Celebrations

Governor Beshear hosted Derby Week Kickoff featuring Kentucky Crafted Artists, live music, demonstrations, and local food & beverage vendors. Kentucky tourism reported a third consecutive record-breaking year: \$14.3 billion economic impact, 97,394 jobs, and 80+ million travelers.

Upcoming Events & Partnerships

- Gandharva Performance: Multidisciplinary performance blending global music, Indian dance, and spoken word.
- Celebrating the Black Experience Exhibit (July–Dec 2025): In partnership with the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage, the traveling exhibit will be hosted in Mt. Sterling, Bowling Green, Hazard, Berea, and Frankfort.

Board expressed gratitude for partnerships, artists, and ongoing community engagement initiatives across the Commonwealth. Cathers expresses wonderful outreach and work that KAC staff does.

KFTA Teresa Day continues the importance of KAC board members having conversations with legislatures about NEA budget.

Board members go around on Zoom and those attending in person to discuss around the commonwealth what is going on with them.

McCorvey thanks Cathers for all his work directing the arts council and the staff for all they do. Reminds board of upcoming meetings September 19 and December 5. Makes a motion to adjourn, Cotten seconds. The motion passes, meeting adjourned.