



# Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County

SUPPORTING ALL THE ARTS

## **2020 Annual Report**

**Advisory Body Name:** Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County

**Meeting Time:** First Monday of the month (no August/December) 5:30–7:30pm

**Chair:** District 1 Silvia Ledezma (August 1, 2020 to present) and At-Large-1 Y’Anad Burrell (January 1, 2020-July 31, 2020)

**Staff Person:** Jenny Balisle, Managing Director (August 17, 2020 to present) and Roger Renn, Managing Director (January 1, 2020 - August 12, 2020)

**Reporting Period:** January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

**Meeting Locations:** From January to March, regularly scheduled meetings were held at various locations. Due to COVID-19, meetings are held on Zoom with public access.

Month	Location	Status
January	10 Douglas Street Suite 250 Martinez, CA	Confirmed
February	Family Justice Center 3501 Lone Tree Way Antioch, CA	Confirmed
March	10 Douglas Street Suite 250 Martinez, CA	Confirmed
April	None	COVID-19 Cancelled
May	None	COVID-19 Cancelled
June	Zoom	Confirmed
July	N/A	N/A
August	Zoom	Confirmed
September	Zoom	Confirmed
October	Zoom	Confirmed
November	Zoom	Confirmed
December	N/A	N/A



What is the purpose of the Arts & Culture Commission of Contra Costa County?

The mission of this Commission is to advise the Board of Supervisors in matters and issues relevant to Arts and Culture; to advance the arts in a way that promotes communication, education, appreciation and collaboration throughout Contra Costa County; to preserve, celebrate, and share the arts and culture of the many diverse ethnic groups who live in Contra Costa County; to create partnerships with business and government and to increase communications and understanding between all citizens through art.

For more information visit [AC5.ORG](http://AC5.ORG)

**I. Activities:** *Describe the activities for the past year including areas of study, work, special events, collaborations, etc.*

The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County is dedicated to advancing the arts through communication, education, appreciation, and collaboration. Our goal is to uplift and highlight our incredible diversity into the future. During the pandemic, we've worked together to expand and deliver offerings online while following CDC guidelines and best practices. Signature programs include the Arts Directory, Arts Calendar, Arts Passages, Arts Café, Poetry Out Loud, ABOUTFACE, Arts Recognition Awards, grants, advocacy, and outreach. This year we had our first Local Arts and Cultural Organizations Grant (LACOG)! We've strengthened our online presence by updating the website and expanding engagement on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Special projects, events, discussions, activities, and services have been hosted or posted through Zoom, Facebook, and Instagram. Artist Calls for Contra Contra County artists are now listed on our website and sent through Constant Contact emails. Throughout the year, the Commission has worked diligently to provide meaningful and authentic support through the arts.



**“This communal discourse is a great way to have our voices heard.”**

**Contra Costa County artist Malik Seneferu**

Image: <https://www.instagram.com/malikseneferu/>

Quote: <https://www.kqed.org/news/11832947/housing-black-tenderloin-mural-spotlights-black-san-franciscos-housing-crisis>

**II. Accomplishments:** *Describe the accomplishments for the past year, particularly in reference to your work plan and objectives.*

The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County has reimagined and strengthened existing program structures along with implementing new initiatives. We’ve expanded outreach to youth and diverse communities while reconnecting with trusted partnerships. The pandemic and social injustices magnify the importance of the arts. For Contra Costa County residents, the arts represent a vital quality of life, free expression, and celebration of community.



Logo designed by Commissioner District 2: Beverly Kumar!

**Local Arts and Cultural Organizations Grant (LACOG):** In partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the California Arts Council (CAC) awarded the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County a grant as part of the 2020 State-Local Partner Cares Relief Fund. The Commission administered a sub-grant program (LACOG) to fund general operating support, and/or project-based support to local arts and cultural organizations serving communities of color disproportionately affected by COVID-19. LACOG awardees were paired with AC5 commissioners to receive one-on-one guidance and support.

LACOG was the first grant administered by the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County. Managing Director Jenny Balisle created an applicant online submission form, Commissioner Google Slide presentation, and LACOG online scoring form. The \$14,000 fund received 19 applications highlighting the need and incredible work of individuals and organizations making significant art contributions. Managing Director Jenny Balisle shared LACOG applicant presentation with the Alliance for California Traditional Arts Director of Special Initiatives to highlight Contra Costa County's incredible art organizations for the [Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions](#) grant and future possible opportunities.



Congratulations to [East Bay Center for the Arts](#), [Richmond Art Center](#), [RYSE Center](#), and [The Quinan Street Project](#) for being our first grantees!

**We look forward to Contra Costa County's support in continuing this granting program!**



**Grants:** The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County received a State Local Partner (SLP), Veterans in the Arts, Poetry Out Loud, and CARES Act funds for arts programs and grants. As a California Arts Council designated SLP, we're grateful to receive grants that directly support communities, foster new collaborations, and build trust through art.

**Arts Directory and Arts Calendar:** The Arts Directory and Arts Calendar is a free listing service for any Contra Costa County artist or arts organization. This year we streamlined the service and added administrative notifications.

**Arts Directory:**

<https://zoomaru.org/searchregistry.php?r=y&eportal=contracostaarts>

**Arts Calendar:**

<https://www.zoomaru5.com/index.php?id=0&display=&eportal=contracostaarts>

**Social Media and Platforms:** The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County has expanded its outreach on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Make sure to like and follow us to explore the incredible artistic diversity of our County including events, art opportunities, and exhibitions!

**Facebook:** @artsculturecommission

**Instagram:** @artsculturecoco

**Youtube:** Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County

**Zoom:** We have a professional account with Webinar features to support programs!

**Artist Calls:** An Artist Calls section has been added to our website highlighting a curated listing with links and resources for Contra Costa County artists. In addition, a Constant Contact email is sent monthly with artist opportunities.

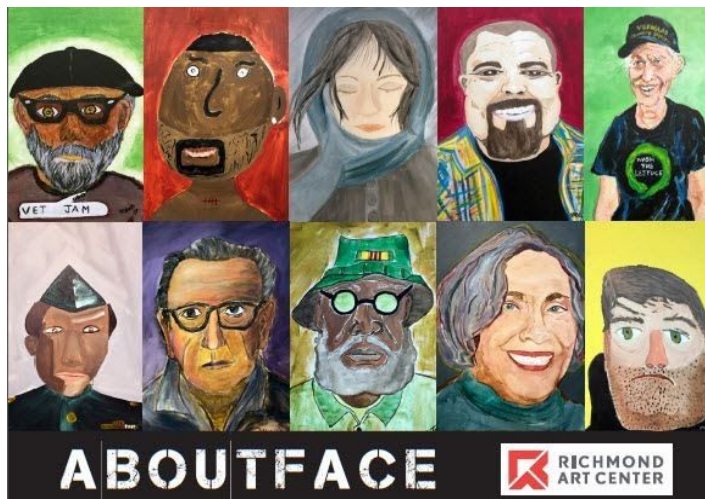
**Link:** <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/7917/Artist-Calls>



**Arts Passages:** Arts Passages is a rotating visual art exhibit located at the Contra Costa County's Administration Building and partnering venues. Exhibitions showcase the rich diversity of artworks, artists, arts organizations, cultural groups, and residents throughout Contra Costa County. In the past, Art Passages was held in the lobby of the main County administration building and Board of Supervisors chamber at 651 Pine Street, Martinez.



Past exhibitions included work from [NIAD \(National Institute of Art and Disabilities\)](#) in Richmond (District 1), [The Lamorinda Arts Alliance](#) and Scene on the Strait artists (District 2), the [Brentwood Arts Commission](#) (District 3), the [California Watercolor Association](#) and the Gallery Concord, in Walnut Creek and Concord (District 4), the Pittsburg Arts Collaborative (District 5), and many others.



Look for an Art Passages exhibition featuring ABOUTFACE portraits and Contra Costa County artist [Rebeca Garcia-González](#) at the new building (1025 Escobar Street, Martinez) when construction is completed following all pandemic safety protocols.

Thanks to Chair District 1 Silvia Ledezma for her dedication and enthusiasm to make Arts Passages possible!

Link: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/5700/Art-Passages>

FEATURING OVER 100 WORKS  
FROM 27 HIGH SCHOOLS IN  
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

# ARTIST CAFE

**LIVE ON  
FACEBOOK**

@artsculturecommission



Hear direct from some of  
the High School artists that  
have works in this show.

August 27 | 7-8pm

Moderated By  
Lafayette HS Student,  
Carolyn Considine

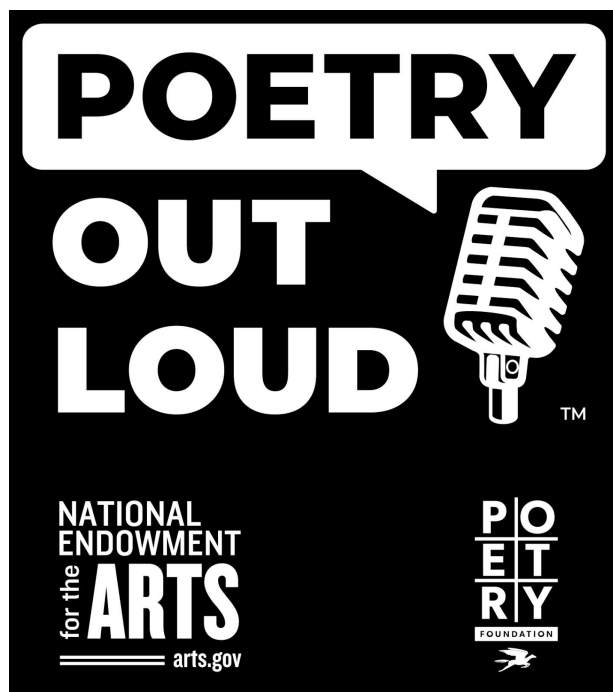


**Arts Café:** Arts Café is a series of art workshops, lectures, discussions, and exhibitions throughout Contra Costa County and online. An Arts Café Facebook Live (panel discussion) had over 3000 views! Carolyn Considine, a high school student who resides in Lafayette facilitated and created the Virtual Arts Café. The exhibit showcases work from over 100 high school and college prep schools, spanning across 27 different high schools in Contra Costa County. The professional and visionary skills of Commissioner At-Large-1 Y'Anad Burrell and encouragement from Commissioner District 2 Beverly Kumar for Contra Costa County youth makes this program a success!

Virtual Arts Café: <http://bayareaarts.org/> Link: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/5701/Arts-Cafe>



Virtual Arts Café with Carolyn Considine with over 2K views (image from [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/artsculturecommission): @artsculturecommission)!



**Poetry Out Loud:** Poetry Out Loud is going virtual for the 2021-21 school year for the first time! Poetry Out Loud (POL) is an exciting National competition started in 2005 by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. The contest challenges high school students to memorize and recite poetry, a chance to showcase their talents, build self-confidence, and gain both an appreciation and understanding of poetry.

Poetry Out Loud is a free program! There is no cost to either the school or the students.

The [Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County](#) has been an [California Arts Council](#)'s official local partner for Poetry Out

Loud since 2007. Every Contra Costa County high school is encouraged to participate, and for the first time this year non-profit organizations and libraries may participate as well. Each year ten to fifteen high schools representing East, West, and Central County have participated. These include public schools, private schools, charter schools, alternative schools, court schools, and homeschool groups.



This year, Managing Director Jenny Balisle will be facilitating the transition online with Student Coach Brennan DeFrisco (Student Coach). We'll expand outreach to Instagram to target youth by encouraging participation.

**2019-2020 Contra Costa County Finals - Poetry Out Loud Video:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6WyykBR0fo>

Link: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/5416/Poetry-Out-Loud>



# ABOUTFACE

BUILDING VETERANS' SELF-UNDERSTANDING THROUGH SELF-PORTRAITS



The Arts and Culture Commission is excited to be working with Veterans in Contra Costa County by offering a series of FREE self-portrait painting online classes as a way of saying, "Thank you for your service."

- No art experience required.
- Bring your family to join in the fun and they can paint a portrait too.
- All painting materials and technical assistance will be provided!

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN FREE WORKSHOPS

- To register for FREE virtual classes: [www.ac5.org](http://www.ac5.org)
- Email [staff@ac5.cccounty.us](mailto:staff@ac5.cccounty.us) for program updates and class information.
- Visit [www.ac5.org](http://www.ac5.org) for workshop details.
- Virtual workshops will follow Contra Costa County protocols to keep instructors and veterans safe.

## VIRTUAL 2021 CLASS SCHEDULE

[www.ac5.org](http://www.ac5.org)

- Saturday, January 9 10am-3pm
- Saturday, January 16 10am-3pm
- Saturday, January 23 10am-3pm



Arts and Culture Commission  
of Contra Costa County  
SUPPORTING ALL THE ARTS

BRINGING ART TO THE VETERAN COMMUNITY

**ABOUTFACE:** The Commission was awarded a Veterans in the Arts grant with County Board of Supervisors matching funds allowing for multiple-day workshops in spring 2021. In 2015, the [California Arts Council](#), the Arts and Culture Commission, and the Physical Rehabilitation Service at Veterans Affairs Health Care developed ABOUTFACE for the purpose of addressing the needs of veterans and improving their lives through art programming. It is based on the belief that individuals have the capacity to heal themselves.

ABOUTFACE is going virtual for the first time! The Arts and Culture Commission works with Veterans in Contra Costa County to offer a series of **FREE** self-portrait painting classes with supplies as a way of saying "Thank you

for your service." The three-day workshops are team-taught by Teaching Artist and Coordinator Victoria Bianco and Veteran Assistant Coordinator Jeffrey Geronimo (DC1(SW/AW) Geronimo, US Navy veteran). Workshop activities include peer discussion, sketching, and painting a final self-portrait. At the end of the program, all portraits will be exhibited at various venues throughout the County and online. The first classes will be virtually held in three four-hour sessions starting in January of 2021.

The painting and drawing classes are free to Veterans throughout Contra Costa County. Currently, the workshops are being transitioned to an online to meet for four Saturday sessions. At the end of the program, art supplies will be gifted to them and their final portraits will be exhibited in various locations throughout the county and online. We are grateful for Vice-Chair At-Large-3 Joan D'Onofrio's dedication and Commissioner District 4 Elizabeth Wood's incredible outreach. In addition, the assistance of ABOUTFACE Technical Intern CJ Bennet.

Link: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/5824/ABOUTFACE>

ABOUTFACE Veterans' Voices of Contra Costa video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiY5CYrJgSI>



**Arts Recognition Awards:** Since 2015, the Commission has recognized inspiring individuals who've made a significant artistic, cultural, or philanthropic contribution to Contra Costa County. The commissioners diligently work to coordinate the nomination process and find judges. Commissioner District 4 Elizabeth Wood has been working tirelessly to highlight amazing Contra Costa County residents! Stay tuned for 2021 with expanded and new categories!

Link: <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/5192/Arts-Recognition-Awards>

**Advocacy and Outreach:**

Commissioners and the Managing Director have outreached to community stakeholders, leaders, and decision makers. In addition, identified local artists of all diverse backgrounds. The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County advocates for the arts in a number of ways, including working with local, regional, state and national agencies and organizations.

Partner groups include [California Arts Council](#), [California Arts Advocates](#), [Americans for the Arts](#), [Poetry Out Loud](#), [The Art of Health & Healing](#) and [California Summer School for the Arts](#).



Our commissioners represent diverse neighborhoods and communities. They're liaisons to the arts, artists, cultural groups, and organizations. The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County actively encourages engagement and offers support to seek opportunities and build partnerships.



For example, Commissioner District 2 Beverly Kumar worked with the Contra Costa County Education Department for the upcoming *The Art of Resilience* featuring high school student artworks. Commissioner District 2 Beverly Kumar: "We proudly present a contribution of art and culture through the lens of Contra Costa County High School students in the first annual Contra Costa County Office of Education exhibit, *The Art of Resilience*. The creations in this show are a testament to never giving up and the spirit of hope that presses on in the act of creation, even during a pandemic. Artistic disciplines including music, dance, theatre, visual arts, literary arts, and media arts have a positive effect on children's and adolescents' social-emotional development. By using the arts as a vehicle for addressing

social-emotional learning not only do we aid students in acquiring tools to express themselves, but we empower them as they draw from experiences to build resilience in times of hardship and adversity."



**III. Attendance/Representation:** Describe your membership in terms of seat vacancies, diversity, level of participation, and frequency of achieving a quorum at meetings.

Commissioners represent diverse districts and communities throughout Contra Costa County. Despite starting the year with in person meetings and transitioning online, commissioners engaged positively and were ready to participate. Currently, there's 2 vacancies (District 3 Commissioner Petural PJ Shelton moved and At-Large 2 Commissioner LaMar Anderson passed away). The At-Large 2 vacancy applicant has been selected and going through the approval process. The April and May meetings were not scheduled due to COVID-19. The July meeting was exchanged for the annual no August meeting. Commissioner participation achieved meeting quorums while following the Brown Act and Better Government Ordinance.

Name:	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total:
District 1: Silvia Ledeza	X	X	X	N/A	N/A	X	N/A	X	X	X	X	N/A	8
District 2 Beverly Kumar	X	X		N/A	N/A	X	N/A	X	X	X	X	N/A	7
District 3 Petural (PJ) Shelton	X	X		N/A	N/A	X	N/A	X	Moved out of District			N/A	4
District 4 Elizabeth Wood		X	X	N/A	N/A	X	N/A	X	X	X	X	N/A	7
District 5 Teresa Snook O'Riva	X	X	X	N/A	N/A		N/A	X	X		X	N/A	6
At-Large-1 Y'Anad Burrell	X	X	X	N/A	N/A	X	N/A	X	X	X	X	N/A	8
At-Large 2 LaMar Anderson	X	X		N/A	N/A	Passed Away						N/A	2
At-Large 3 Joan D' Onofrio	X		X	N/A	N/A	X	N/A	X	X	X	X	N/A	7
At-Large 4 Lanita Mims				N/A	N/A	X	N/A	X	X	X	X	N/A	5
Alternate Pearl Parmelee	X		X	N/A	N/A		N/A	X	X	X	X	N/A	6
Managing Director Jenny Balisle	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	X	X	X	N/A	3

**Agendas and Minutes:**

<https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/AgendaCenter>



**Commissioner LaMar Anderson passed away on June 18, 2020.  
We'll work together to fulfill his legacy!**



Commissioner At-Large 2 LaMar Anderson and Chair Silvia Ledezma,  
*ABOUTFACE* exhibit at Richmond Art Center, 2019.  
<https://richmondartcenter.org/exhibitions/aboutface/>

Commissioner LaMar Anderson was a Lieutenant in the United States Navy's Special Operations unit and served as the Project Director of the 2019 ABOUT FACE program. He lived, worked, and participated in community service and considered it not only his duty, but his destiny.

Before he was appointed to the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County in 2017, he was dedicated to and active in copious projects. He was Vice Chair of the Concord Pavilion Outreach Commission and served on the Board of the Concord Ambassadors of our sister city Kitakami, Japan. Commissioner Anderson was a County Election Inspector, a member of the Contra Costa County Economic Opportunity Commission, and the first African American to serve on the Concord Planning Commission.

Commissioner Anderson received degrees from California Polytechnic University, his JD from LaSalle University College of Law, and his LLM from Western New England College of Law. He was one of the State's top winning track and field coaches who compiled a winning record yet to be matched. \*Written by Vice-Chair At-Large-3 Joan D'Onofrio.

**IV. Training/Certification:** Describe any training that was provided or conducted, and any certifications received, either as a requirement or done on an elective basis by members.

Commissioners were provided with the [Contra Costa County Advisory Body Handbook](#) and [Contra Costa Television Brown Act Training](#). Managing Director Jenny Balisle provided Commissioner Google Docs training to assist with completing tasks. In addition, she's provided technical assistance to commissioners transitioning online.

New Commissioners receive an orientation which includes viewing the *Brown Act and Better Government Ordinance, What You Need to Know* presentation and viewing the *Ethics Orientation for County Officials* presentation. All Commissioners update Brown Act training per the Advisory Board Handbook (recommends training be reviewed at two-year intervals).

**V. Proposed Work Plan / Objectives for Next Year:** Describe the advisory body's workplan, including specific objectives to be achieved in the upcoming year.



Contra Costa County should be very proud how the Arts and Culture Commission's programs and outreach activities shine during extraordinary times. We look forward to working with partners to support initiatives by expanding online presence and outreach during and post-pandemic. Our focus will be to identify community stakeholders for the Cultural Plan, implement a Youth Advisor, and strengthen signature programs.

**The Cultural Planning Prospectus identifies these needs:**

1. **Advocacy concerning the role and importance of the arts and culture:**

**Action**

- Support Contra Costa County Veterans by offering ABOUTFACE painting workshops online and ensuring a smooth transition.
- Support Contra Costa County highschool students by offering Poetry Out Loud program online.
- Advocate, research, and apply for Cultural Planning funding.
- Advocate, research, apply, and create additional funding resources for signature programs and Contra Costa County art grants.

## **2. Arts education programs in schools and elsewhere in the community:**

### **Action**

- Support Arts Cafés (youth leaders) through social media and Commissioner engagement.
- Expand the Poetry Out Loud program to include additional highschools.
- Advocate and support Youth Advisors to represent Contra Costa County.

## **3. Greater communication, collaboration, cooperation, and networking:**

### **Action**

- Finalize Youth Advisors approval with Supervisor support next year.
- Identify and support Contra Costa County artists and arts organizations.
- Promote Arts Calendar and Arts Directory as a free service to Contra Costa County artists and arts organizations.
- Share artist calls on [www.ac5.org](http://www.ac5.org) and social media.

## **4. Cultural facilities of various types throughout the County:**

### **Action**

- Provide online services and networking to identify venues for the arts.
- Promote Arts Calendar and Arts Directory as resource for cultural facilities.
- Zoom access with webinar feature for cultural events.

## **5. Funding and other support:**

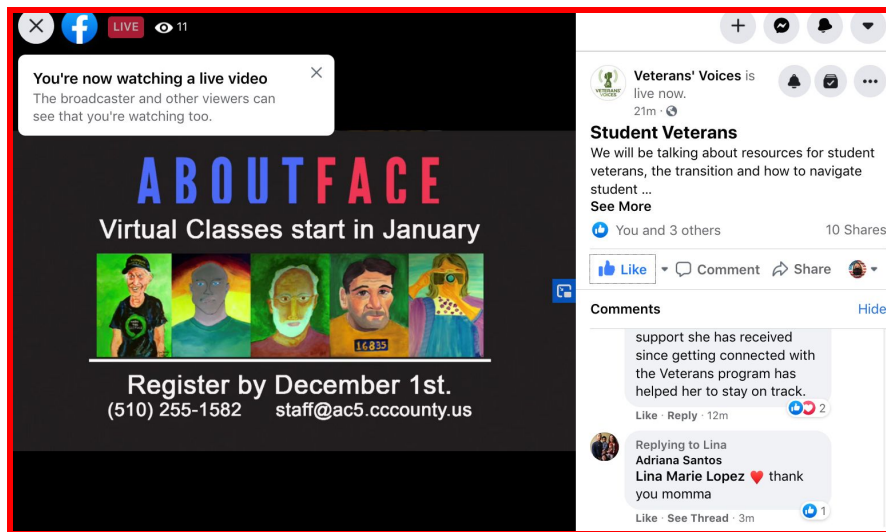
### **Action**

- Research, identify, and apply for Cultural Plan funding.
- Research, identify, and apply for correctional facilities arts programs.
- Create a work plan to identify additional funding resources to support signature Arts and Culture Commission programs.
- Continue Local Arts and Cultural Organizations Grant (LACOG) CARES Act to to fund general operating support, and/or project-based support to local arts and cultural organizations serving communities of color disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

## **6. Inclusion and access by a broader spectrum of the community:**

### **Action**

- Expand Arts Cafés to additional high schools throughout the County.
- LACOG Cares Act grants directly supports communities of color impacted by COVID-19.
- Expand Poetry Out Loud outreach and partnership.
- ABOUTFACE workshop promotion throughout Contra Costa County.



ABOUTFACE on Veterans' Voices through CCCTV and Facebook Live.

## 7. Marketing and visibility:

### Action

- Continue adding artist calls to [www.ac5.org](http://www.ac5.org) for artists and art organizations.
- Strengthen Arts and Culture Commission brand: logo, website, and flyers.
- Expand Facebook and Instagram followers.

## 8. Opportunities for artists to perform and exhibit:

### Action

- Foster diversity of artistic communities and ensure equity by expanding Public Arts programs.
- New Administration Building Art Passages display cases highlight Commission art programs and Contra Costa County artists.
- Online discussions featuring artists from each district.

## 9. Public awareness of the value of arts education and the impact of the arts:

### Action

- Strengthen programs like Poetry Out Loud, ABOUTFACE, and Arts Cafe by offering online facilitation through Zoom, social media, and online exhibits.

## 10. Technical assistance and professional development opportunities:

### Action

- Provide commissioner training for online work: Google Docs and Zoom.
- Zoom webinar feature to host art events and programs.



*We look forward to strengthening our partnership to serve the community through the arts. Commissioners represent diverse districts, neighborhoods, and communities. They are liaisons to arts, artists, cultural groups, and organizations. The Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County is grateful for the Board of Supervisors' support!*

**THANK YOU!**



**For information, records, comments, and questions:**

Jenny Balisle

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