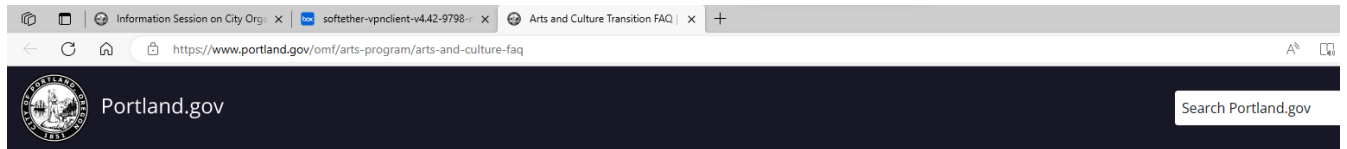


Source: <https://www.portland.gov/omf/arts-program/arts-and-culture-faq>



Home / Management and Finance / City Arts Program

## Arts and Culture Transition FAQ

### Information

We are here to answer your questions! Please email [cityartsprogram@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:cityartsprogram@portlandoregon.gov), and we will continue updating this page with Frequently Asked Questions.

In July, 2023, Portland City Commissioner Dan Ryan announced that the City of Portland is restructuring its approach to arts service delivery, and will allow the City's sole-source contract with the Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC) to expire on June 30, 2024. Rather than renewing the current contract, which is large and complex, the City will develop discrete RFPs (Requests for Proposals) for certain functions, such as grantmaking and public art, and other, potentially new services to support a growing arts and culture sector.

The City is also in the process of adapting the City Arts Program to becoming an Office of Arts and Culture, to coordinate the City's many arts and culture initiatives with a goal of increasing the percentage of taxpayer funds that go to working artists and arts organizations.

Please read [Commissioner Ryan's statement](#) for more information.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: Why is the City making this change? Why now?

A: The City has been examining its relationship with RACC since 2018, when a [report from the City Auditor](#) found that The City does not have clear goals for arts and culture, and the City's oversight of the RACC contract needed improvement. In response to this report, the City established the City Arts Program in 2018 to provide oversight of the RACC contract, and the City Arts Program launched a cultural planning process in 2022 to help the City develop clear goals for arts and culture.

Several concerns from the Auditor's report have persisted over the last five years, despite increased oversight from the City Arts Program. In addition, when RACC presented its [annual report to Council](#) in December of 2022, City Council expressed frustration that RACC could not answer basic questions about the organization's finances, what the impacts of the City's investments have been, and who was being served. For the first time in 28 years, RACC's report was not accepted by Council, and RACC has not provided any additional information to Council Offices in the intervening seven months to allay Council's ongoing concerns.

As a result of these and other contract issues, the City has announced that it will not renew its contract with RACC when it expires in June of 2024. The City will change its arts service delivery model from a sole source agreement with RACC to a series of smaller, better-defined contracts with stronger accountability measures. The City will start issuing RFPs for these new contracts in late 2023, and RACC may bid for these contracts to deliver various arts-related services in FY2024-25 and beyond.

**In making these changes, the City's ultimate goal is to spend less taxpayer money on loosely-defined management and administrative functions at RACC, and deliver more grants and services to artists and arts organizations.**

### Q: What does this mean for artists and arts organizations who currently receive support from RACC? Will there be a gap year of funding?

A: The City is committed to ensuring zero service disruptions, and there will not be any gaps in funding throughout this transition. RACC remains in a contractual relationship with the City through June of 2024, and will distribute more than \$4.1 million on the City's behalf this fiscal year, including \$1.7 million from the City's general fund and \$2.4 million from the City's Arts Education & Access Fund, or Arts Tax. Well before the RACC contract expires in June of 2024, the City will have identified who will be responsible for distributing a similar levels of grant funding in FY2024-25 and beyond. Organizations that currently receive General Operating Support from RACC can expect to continue receiving General Operating Support in the future. Artists and arts organizations that apply for project grants, or Arts3C grants from RACC, can expect those grantmaking opportunities to continue as well.

### Contact

#### City Arts Program

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### Related


[About the City Arts Program](#)

**Q: Might RACC continue providing services for the City after its contract expires in 2024?**

A: Yes, through the City's new RFP process, RACC may choose to bid on the services they are interested in providing, and may be awarded future contracts. RACC may also choose not to bid on certain services that RACC is not interested in providing.

**Q: How will the City center equity in its decisions going forward?**

The City's *core values* of Anti-racism, Equity, Transparency, Communication, Collaboration, and Fiscal Responsibility will continue to guide our actions as we serve the community. The City Arts Program has demonstrated its commitment to distributing resources equitably, measuring who was served, and reporting outcomes to City Council and the public at large. City Arts Program initiatives over the last two years have included:

- [Community Healing through Art](#), developed in collaboration with former Creative Laureate Subashini Ganesan-Forbes in 2021-22, distributed \$240,000 to 16 artists and 33 nonprofit organizations to present a multitude of performances, exhibits, workshops, and other activities throughout Portland's diverse communities. 91% of the program participants identified as Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latino/Latinx, Middle Eastern, or multiracial.
- In collaboration with Commissioner Carmen Rubio and Portland's Creative Laureate Joaquin Lopez, the City Arts Program distributed \$500,000 in [Resiliency Support for Cultural Organizations](#), using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). Sixteen grant recipients were selected for their relationships and cultural contributions to Portland's communities, with track records honoring ancestral lineage, languages and dialects, and culturally-rooted customs and artistic expression. The program emphasized support for organizations that have worked in the face of oppression, forging new relationships and in juxtaposition to dominant spaces and dominant culture narratives, behaviors, and customs.
- The City Arts Program collaborated with Portland Parks & Recreation and the IFCC Community Advisory Committee to develop the [IFCC Grant and Residency Program](#) with \$500,000 in ARPA funding. This program provides grants and free space to artists and arts organizations in alignment with the long-term vision to redevelop IFCC into an expanded Center for Black Art & Culture.
- The City Arts Program led an RFP process that resulted in a \$500,000 contract with the [Native American Youth and Family Center](#)  to commission and install new public artworks that celebrate Indigenous culture in the Cully neighborhood. The project is underway and will continue into 2024.

As the City Arts Program transitions to become the Office of Arts & Culture, we are deeply committed to ensuring we recruit and hire a diverse team that is reflective of the community we serve.

**Q: How much does RACC currently receive from the City of Portland, and for what purpose?**

A: This fiscal year (FY23-24), the City will invest just over \$7 million in RACC through three distinct funding sources:

1. From the **General Fund**, RACC will receive \$3,522,218. By contract, RACC will spend \$1,742,590 (49.5%) on grants, \$1,579,628 on program management and administration expenses (44.8%), and \$200,000 on other direct services and public art acquisitions (5.7%). The City has been increasing its investment in RACC grants and reducing its investment in RACC program management and administrative expenses over the last four years.
2. From the **Arts Education and Access Fund**, or Arts Tax, RACC will receive an estimated \$2.8 million. By law, RACC may spend up to 95% of this sum to support nonprofit Portland arts organizations, and must spend at least 5% on grants and programs to nonprofit organizations that make arts and culture experiences available to Portland residents, with particular emphasis on programs directed to communities who are underserved by local arts providers.
3. From the City's **percent-for-art ordinance**, RACC will receive an estimated \$750,000. By law, 63% of this sum is for acquisition and production of Public Art, 27% is for administration and management costs, and 10% is for maintenance, conservation and deaccessioning of Public Art.


**Q: What will happen with the Arts Tax?**


A: The City's voter-approved Arts Education & Access Fund, or Arts Tax, remains unchanged. By law, funds are distributed first to School Districts for the purpose of hiring certified Arts Teachers for K-5 students. In 2022-23 the six school districts serving Portland received \$7,110,312, ensuring every K-5 public school student in Portland has access to an arts teacher.

Next, funds are distributed to the City Arts Program for the purpose of coordinating, supporting, and reporting on arts education services within School Districts.

All remaining funds are currently distributed to the Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC) to provide grants for non-profit Portland arts organizations. These funds will continue to flow to arts organizations through whomever is chosen to award grants on the City's behalf.

The AEF Oversight Committee has produced [annual reports](#) through 2022, and this September Commissioner Ryan will be bringing a report to Council that highlights the impact of the Arts Education & Access Fund over the last five years.

**Q: How does all of this relate to the cultural planning process ([Our Creative Future](#)  ), currently underway?**

The purpose of the regional cultural planning process is to assess the state of arts and culture in the region, and to develop clear goals and strategies for advancing arts and culture over the next ten years. A [community-based steering committee](#)  is leading this work, and their task remains the same. We anticipate that this plan will shed further light on the best role for a regional arts agency, and work that cities and counties should do to support arts and culture in their own jurisdictions. We look forward to publishing a draft of the cultural plan this winter, and collecting broad community feedback before sending the plan to Portland City Council and other local jurisdictions for adoption in early 2024.

The cultural planning process was not designed to assess RACC's performance, and the City's decision to restructure its contracts for arts related services was made separately from the cultural planning process.

## Questions? Comments?

If you have any questions, or if you see anything on this page is inaccurate or unclear, please email [cityartsprogram@portland.gov](mailto:cityartsprogram@portland.gov).