

# The Profound Impact of Arts & Culture

\$5.59B

#### **Economic Impact**

Arts and culture contribute \$5.59 billion annually to Austin's economy, supporting over 41,000 jobs.

**78%** 

### **Mental Wellbeing**

Percentage of Austinites reporting improved mental health through arts participation.

23%

#### **Academic Performance**

Higher graduation rates for students with arts education compared to peers.

Austin ranks in the top 5 creative cities nationally and top 20 globally for cultural vibrancy and creative output per capita.



## Birth of ACME: Answering Austin's Call

### **Born from Community Passion**

ACME was established after decades of community advocacy for prioritizing arts and music in Austin's identity and governance.

### **Perfect Timing**

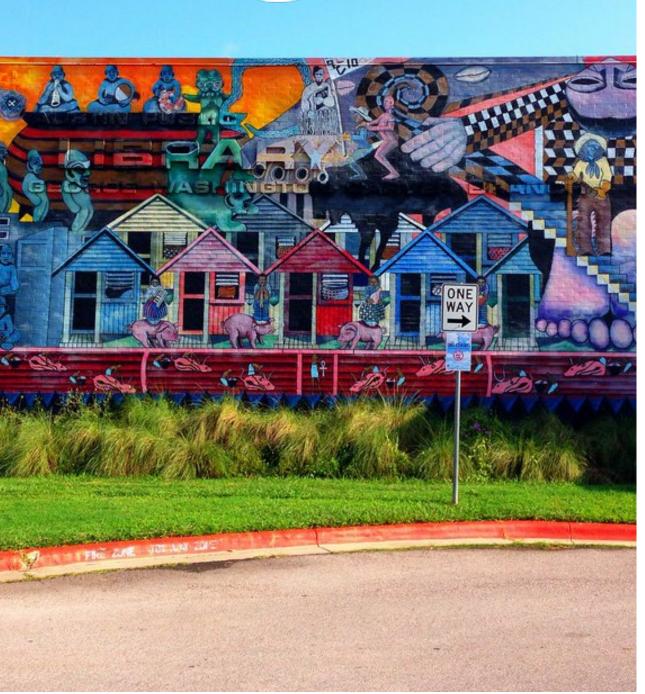
Created during a critical funding shortage for the arts, when traditional sources like bank loans, donations, and federal grants were diminishing.

### **Preserving Austin's Soul**

Art, music, and culture represent the heart of Austin—the unique vibe that retains locals and attracts visitors.







# ACME's First Year: Building Trust Through Action

1 Community-Centered Approach

Established transparency, active listening, and consistent availability to all stakeholders as core operational principles.

**2** Effective Advocacy

Successfully mediated resolutions during the controversial Airport expansion and Convention Center demolition projects, protecting local artists and artwork.

3 Research & Benchmarking

Analyzed historical community data and conducted national/state benchmarking to identify best practices and industry standards.



# The Creative Reset: Strategic Vision

### **One-Year Strategic Planning Process**

Launched The Creative Reset (TCR) to establish ACME's mission, vision, goals, and measurable outcomes.

### **Comprehensive Program Evaluation**

Reimagining our funding programs, cultural facilities, and special events through a data-driven approach.



### **PHASE 1: Enhanced Funding Programs**

Austin Live Music Fund, Historic Preservation, Nexus, Elevate, Thrive, Creative Space Assistance Program and Art in Public Places (AIPP)



## Our Foundation: Listen First, Act Second

ACME revolutionized our approach to community outreach, resulting in unprecedented participation in only 3 weeks!

1,200+

### **Survey Responses**

We gathered a broad spectrum of community perspectives.

200 **Citywide Attendees** 

Our citywide sessions saw active participation from over 200 individuals. fostering widespread dialogue.

**50+** 

### **Staff Participants**

Dedicated staff members actively engaged in the process, ensuring internal alignment and expertise.

### **Targeted Focus Groups**

Through focused discussions, individuals contributed valuable insights in our targeted focus groups.

100

### Personalized One-on-One Sessions

We conducted personalized one-onone sessions, offering tailored opportunities for individual input.



## What We Heard: Community Voices Shaping Our Path

### **Affordability & Cost Barriers**

Addressing rising costs and financial barriers to participation.

### **Process & Transparency**

Streamlining the grant application process and enhancing organizational accountability.

### **Funding & Sustainability**

Ensuring adequate funding levels, fair distribution, and long-term financial health.



# Venue Access, Transportation, Parking & Geographic Equity

Expanding access to spaces with geographic equity.

# Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (DEI)

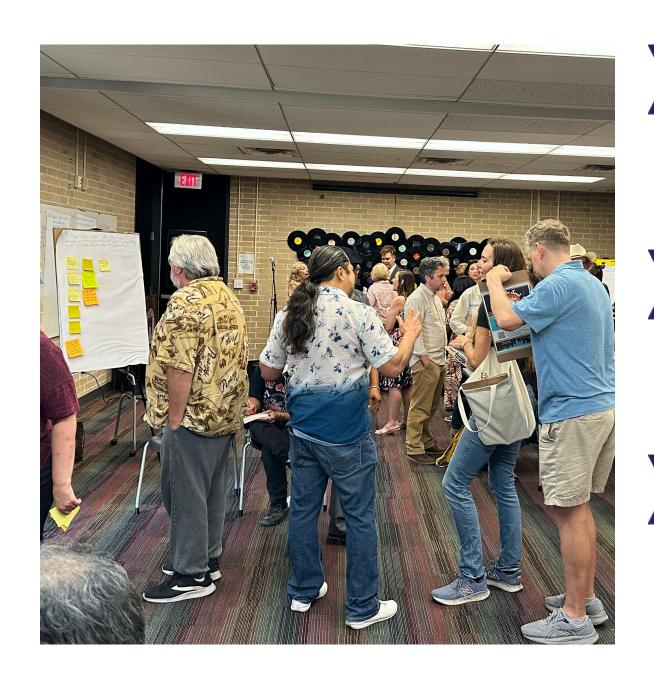
Ensuring diverse voices, traditions, and communities are fully represented.

# Awareness, Communication & Outreach

Improving public knowledge and access to opportunities.

# **Moving Forward: Community Recommendations**







### **Honor Cultural Legacy**

Respond to specific needs of cultural groups and legacy holders



### **Simplify Applications**

Create more accessible funding processes with reduced barriers



#### **Ensure Fairness**

Eliminate conflict-of-interest concerns in funding decisions

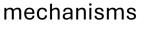


### **Support New Voices**

Invest in emerging creatives and underrepresented communities



Develop clear scoring and feedback





# Program Enhancements: Key Changes



Thrive—Enhanced for Long-Term Growth

Empowering Austin's cultural organizations to grow and sustain their work. Improved Cohort design.

**New in 2025:** Increased funding opportunities, simpler application, strategic and focused approach

Elevate—Reimagined for Community Power

Backing high-impact cultural projects that center community.

**New in 2025:** More accessible with a streamlined application and improved evaluation criteria.

Nexus—Refreshed for Austin's Creatives

Helping creatives take bold steps—Now with more funding levels.

**New in 2025:** Refreshed with lower barriers, enhanced support, and microgrant options.

# Responding Directly to Community Feedback



### What's New

- User friendly process
- One simple application
- Tiered funding
- New microgrants for individual artists
- Mentorship program for first-time applicants
- Operations support
- Transparent scoring and feedback

- Universal appeals process
- Internal process improvement
- Simplified process for smaller requests



### **Access For All**

### Who Can Apply?

- Individual artists and collectives
- Musicians and promoters
- Nonprofit organizations
- For-profit creative businesses
- Legacy and emerging organizations

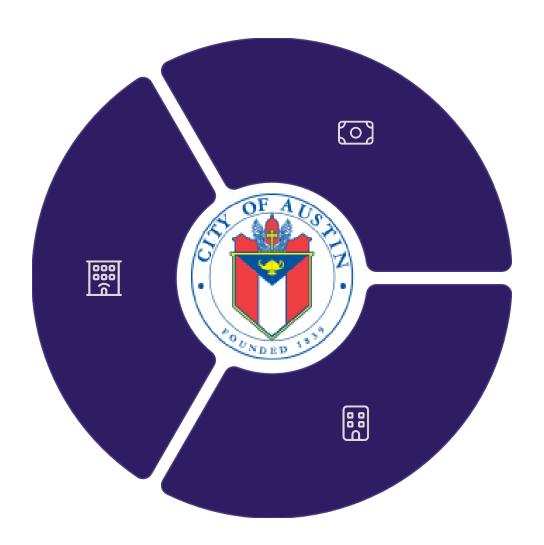


Programs prioritize inclusivity, ensuring all communities have opportunities to participate in the arts.

# **Funding Sources**

### **Hotel Occupancy Tax**

Funds Nexus, Elevate,
Thrive, Austin Live Music
Fund, and Historic
Preservation Grants.



### **General Fund**

Finances the Creative Space Assistance Program for artists and organizations.

### **Bonds & Capital Projects**

Support Art in Public Places
Program for landmark and
heritage projects.

### The Creative Reset: ACME's Road Ahead







### **Phase1: Strategic Planning**

- Develop comprehensive 5-year strategic plan
- Establish measurable goals and KPIs
- Create implementation timeline

### **Phase 2: Program Evaluation**

- Conduct thorough review of all existing programs
- Assess cultural facilities management
- Identify gaps and opportunities

### **Phase 3: Resource Development**

- Launch public-private partnership initiatives
- Develop corporate sponsorship program
- Explore new revenue streams

### **Phase 4: Implementation**

- Roll out enhanced programs
- Launch new communication platforms
- Present progress report to stakeholders



### Our Vision: Art for All

A city where every person, in every neighborhood, has access to creative opportunities and cultural expression.

https://www.austintexas.gov/acme

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Program Guidelines

