

#25 26-0398  
Public comment  
BOS Read 2/27/26

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**Public Comment for Agenda Item 25, BOS meeting on 3/3/26**

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From Terry LeMoncheck <terry@artsandcultureeldorado.org>

Date Fri 2/27/2026 2:06 PM

To BOS-Clerk of the Board <edc.cob@edcgov.us>

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TO: Clerk of the Board

RE: Public Comment on Agenda Item 25, BOS meeting on 3/3/26

As part of the upcoming budget discussion on Agenda Item 25, I write to respectfully request, as the Board of Supervisors receives the Mid-Year Budget Status report, that they consider reinstating 50% of the fiscal year 2025 funding for Arts and Culture El Dorado, in the amount of \$37,500, when decisions are made in April.

Since funding for Arts and Culture El Dorado was eliminated for fiscal year 2026, it has been an uphill battle for our organization to continue to offer its important programs and services to the community. While outwardly our organization may look the same, internally we have laid off staff, and cut back or cancelled programming. Staff morale is poor and the current financial structure is unsustainable. And while we have made new inroads into the public art and education sectors, supporting this work takes infrastructure, human capital, and the ability to plan.

**PROGRAMS CANCELLED:**

- *ARTS 99*: Our quarterly print publication, promoting cultural activities throughout the County, was sent to members of the community but also to a wider circle of corporate leaders, elected officials at the state and federal level, and many others who read about the cultural opportunities here in the County.
- *Creative Currents*: Our monthly column in the Mountain Democrat profiled a creative individual, an educator, a business owner, or other individual making a unique contribution to our quality of life.
- *Slope & Basin*: We were forced to suspend our literary journal after just one issue, a publication that joins the Western Slope and the Tahoe Basin through cultural connectivity and provides a stipend to local poets and writers.
- Our El Dorado: A program for students inviting them to explore their hometown through poetry. We published every poem we received from students in El Dorado County on our website and every poem was included in a chapbook, which was sent to each student poet.

**PROGRAMS CUT BACK:**

- Veterans Voices: Our creative writing program for veterans suffering from PTSD was cut in half due to lack of funding.
- Poetry Out Loud: Without a dedicated program manager to oversee this program, participation in this year's program was greatly reduced.
- Young Artist Awards: Similarly, participation in this recognition program for talented high school juniors and seniors has been severely impacted.
- Switchboard Gallery Exhibitions: We have had to cut back weekend hours. We are no longer able to promote the exhibitions effectively, having cut back on print material and staff time. In order to present the caliber of exhibitions that have drawn people from all over the County, and in fact from the 50-mile drive market – exhibitions such as our rock climbing and whitewater shows, youth art month, vintage

photography, agriculture, fiber arts, and ceramics – we need a critical mass of staff hours, for which we no longer have the capacity.

- Arts Incubator: We are not able to offer the full menu of services to our Incubator projects, with much longer wait times for check fulfillment, consultation, and other important services. These emerging projects, many of which speak for underrepresented and marginalized communities, are not being supported in the ways they should.
- Poet Laureate: The Poet Laureate program is on hold with no current programming. The Laureate Trail, which presents poetry readings and open mic sessions at all County libraries, is on hold.

**MATCHING FUNDS:** We no longer have the capacity to participate in larger-scale state and federal programs such as The Big Read, Creative Forces for Veterans, Creative Youth Development, and others. Not only do we lack the matching funds required for these programs, we do not have the staff capacity, and the loss of matching funds means the loss of tax dollars returning to the County.

**WHAT COUNTY FUNDING SAYS:** As part of the 54-member cohort of county arts agencies, we are now in the tiny minority (4 counties) who do not receive county funding, and people are taking note. This communicates that we are a county that does not value what culture and arts bring to the quality of life for residents, visitors, and young people. We know that 68% of tourism is driven by culture. The El Dorado County Strategic Plan, revised in April 2025, identifies Strategic Focus Areas that include Safe and Healthy Communities, a Thriving Economy, and Strategic Innovation – and the arts without question play a role in facilitating civic engagement, driving economic development through tourism and opportunities for artists, giving young people the chance to excel and be recognized for it, and for those young people to develop creative minds that will tackle the problems of the future. And as young families and retirees consider where to relocate, they will look carefully at what cultural amenities a community may offer.

**OUR REQUEST:** We understand that the Transient Occupancy Tax is now treated as any other discretionary revenue; in fact, we have received funding from both the original TOT and directly from the General Fund. All we are asking for is three thousandths of one percent (0.003%) of the budget – funding that will have a significant impact on our operational sustainability and make a powerful statement about the values of the County of El Dorado.

Thank you for considering our request,  
Terry

Terry LeMoncheck (she/her)  
Executive Director  
Arts and Culture El Dorado  
530-295-3496

[www.artsandcultureeldorado.org](http://www.artsandcultureeldorado.org)  
[www.placervillehistoricronovation.org](http://www.placervillehistoricronovation.org)

Occupying the indigenous lands of the Nisenan and Miwok people