

February 2017



State Cultural Districts Program

Nevada County Arts Council, by resolution of Nevada County Board of Supervisors, is State-Local Partner with California Arts Council. As such, we facilitate collaborative efforts that promote and sustain the visual, literary and performing arts of Nevada County in order to advance the cultural, social and economic life of our community. We are a 501c3 not-for-profit organization.



Cultural districts across the United States

- Thirteen states have established statewide cultural district programs
 - Arkansas and California have enacted cultural district policies but have yet to launch programs
 - Legislation for new programs is under consideration in several other states.
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- Rhode Island has the oldest program (1998)
 - Newest is South Carolina (2014)
 - Number of districts **per state** range tremendously from 78 in Louisiana to under 10 in a number of states

Overview by State

State	Number of Districts (Year Program Began)	Certification Cycle	Recertification Process	Decertification	Evaluation/Metrics Method
CO	18 (2010)	Biennial (pending)	Yes (every 5 years)	n/a	Annual report
IA	35 (2005)	Ongoing	Yes (every 10 years)	No	Periodic evaluation by the department of revenue
IN	6 (2008)	No policy; in practice about every other year	n/a	Yes, but no formal process	Annual report
KY	6 (2011)	Annual	Yes (each year district files public value report)	Yes	Annual report, site visits
LA	78 certified (2008)	Annual	n/a	Yes	Annual report
MA	32 (2010)	Rolling applications	Yes (every 5 years)	No formal process	Annual report, site visits
MD	24 (2001)	Biannual	Yes (every 10 years)	n/a	Annual report
NM	8 (2008)	Biennial (districts in cities with population over 50,000 can self-designate)	Yes (every 5 years)	Yes	Annual report, site visits
OK	7 (2013)	Triennial	Yes (every 3 years)	n/a	Annual report, site visits
RI	9 (1999)	Ongoing (legislation necessary to certify)	n/a	No formal process	State tax office collects data on tax incentives; state arts agency has conducted one survey
SC	6 (2014)	Ongoing	Yes (every 5 years)	No	Annual report
TX	28 (2009)	Annual	Yes (every 10 years)	n/a	n/a
WV	8 (2005)	Ongoing	Can be evaluated every 3 years	Yes	State arts agency evaluation any time after first 3 years of designation

In California the enabling legislation is AB189

A “state-designated cultural district” is a geographical area certified pursuant to this chapter with a concentration of cultural facilities, creative enterprises, or arts venues that does any of the following:

1. Attracts artists, creative entrepreneurs, and cultural enterprises.
2. Encourages economic development and supports entrepreneurship in the creative community.
3. Encourages the preservation and reuse of historic buildings and other artistic and culturally significant structures.
4. Fosters local cultural development.
5. Provides a focal point for celebrating and strengthening the unique cultural identity of the community
6. Promotes opportunity without generating displacement or expanding inequality.





California Arts Council's charge in the legislation

CAC shall create criteria and guidelines for state-designated cultural districts.

1. Establish a competitive application system by which a community may apply for certification as a state-designated cultural district.
2. Provide technical assistance for state-designated cultural districts from, among others, artists who have experience with cultural districts and provide promotional support for state-designated cultural districts.
3. Collaborate with other public agencies and private entities to maximize the benefits of state-designated cultural districts.



A geographical area within the state may be certified as a state-designated cultural district by applying to the council for certification. Certification as a state-designated cultural district shall be for a period of five years, after which the district may renew certification every three years.



The council may solicit and receive gifts, donations, bequests, grants of funds, or any other revenues, from public or private sources, and expend those moneys, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for a state-designated cultural district program and for any other purpose it deems necessary to implement this chapter.

The California cultural districts program will have the following goals:

- To encourage the development of a broad array of authentic and sustainable cultural districts that reflect the breadth and diversity of California's extensive cultural assets
- To identify, support, and connect centers of arts and cultural activity throughout the state through the certification process
- To provide increased access to the arts and culture through the development and preservation of cultural centers throughout the state
- To foster increased opportunities for artists, craftsmen, and other small businesses contributing to the creative economy
- To encourage the retention of homegrown assets and actively work to mitigate displacement
- To support enhancements to the built environment and resident's pride and stewardship of place by helping to foster remarkable places
- To contribute to increased public awareness of, and visits to, California's centers of cultural activity





Three major components

1. Certification
2. Funding
3. A resource center, which will be put in place over time.

Applications for the pilot cohort will be solicited in early 2017 with the goal of selecting a small group of 10 to 15 districts that represent the many possible manifestations of cultural centers present in California.

Recommended initial CAC approach to implementation

Types of cultural districts including geographic context (**urban, suburban, & rural**), focus (**consumption, production, heritage**) as well as where the district is in a life-cycle (**emerging, mid-point & established**).



- **Cultural consumption** district means *a district that emphasizes experiencing art, with a concentration of venues and facilities* where the public can go and have a range of art experiences. An example might be a theater district.
- **Cultural production** district means *a district that emphasizes the creation of art, craft, and other creative products, with a concentration of artist studios, creative workplaces,* and other assets focused on production. An example might be an artist studio district.
- **Cultural heritage district** means *a district that focuses on a particular culture, tradition or history.* An example might be a Chinatown district or a downtown historic district.
- **Emerging** means a district that is just forming or has been in existence, as a partnership or management structure with staff and programming, for less than five years.
- **Established** means a district that has been in existence with a management structure, staff, and programming for more than ten years.
- **Mid-point** means a district, with a management structure, staff, and programming, that has been in existence for between five to ten years

Recommended initial CAC approach to implementation continued...

An accessible certification process:

- **Official state certification** – each district will enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the CAC certifying state designation as a cultural district for a period of five years and granting the district the right to use the state cultural district brand in its marketing
- **Branding materials** – including the state cultural district logo, as well signage and banner templates
- **Technical assistance** - including at a minimum an annual convening session, as well as peer to peer and other group learning opportunities given available resources
- **Joint marketing support – leveraging resources from state tourism partners**
- **A stipend – recommended** at \$5,000 per district per year, to be used to support participation in the developmental evaluation process that will lead to the refinement of the design of the cultural districts program
- **Participation in developmental evaluation** – the pilot cohort will receive support from the consulting team conducting the developmental evaluation of the cultural districts program, including at a minimum one site visit per year





Proposed requirements for the initial applicants

Only partnerships will be eligible to apply, ones that include, at a minimum:

1. A cultural non-profit or artist collective
2. A local business or business association
3. A branch of local government and/or a community development corporation

In addition, to be eligible to apply, the cultural district must have at a minimum completed a preliminary **cultural asset survey or inventory**.

Recommended timeline

January 2017

Issue notice of opportunity for the pilot cohort and request letters of interest (open for 8 weeks)

February 2017

Conduct application/LOI webinar

March 2017

Letters of interest due to the CAC
Publish guidelines for the final application
Identify site visitors and finalize site visit protocol

April/May 2017

Panel selects semi-finalists (late April)
Conduct site visits for semi-finalists

May 2017

Notify finalists, finalist application period opens

June/July 2017

Final applications due (allow a minimum of 30 days from notification)
Panel selects pilot cohort





What is evidence of a successful district?

- It's a destination
- Economic influx and revitalization
- Retention of artists and arts organization
- Retention of homegrown assets and uses
- Inclusive development

What are the benefits of a cultural district program?

- Access to selected **state resources**, from **grants and funding**, to **tax credits** and **other financial incentives**, as well as **partnerships with various state agencies** which take many forms, from expedited permit review to special marketing initiatives
- **Technical assistance**, including peer to peer learning opportunities such as convening
- **Recognition**
- **Tools to help preserve existing cultural resources**, with a focus on equitable development and ways to mitigate displacement especially in communities that feel vulnerable given rapid development, escalating real estate prices, and other contextual circumstances
- **Better partnerships with/for local government**, as well as a **better understanding of the value and importance of artists and cultural resources**.
- Increased **pride of place**, to **enhanced marketing opportunities** for arts and cultural organizations as well as **local businesses**.
- Expanded **cultural tourism** is also frequently cited, **in particular by rural and smaller communities**





Concerns?

At both the state and district level:

- Lack of clear purpose/goals
- Lack of dedicated leadership/staffing
- Lack of data

At the district level:

- Lack of retention of pre-existing assets
- Escalating real estate values
- Loss of authenticity

Questions for our community

- At its best, what would be the benefits of cultural district designation?
- Do you have any concerns about a cultural district program?
- Next steps



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