

Expanded Access to Arts and Culture Grant Program –Update

The City of Fresno (City) is committed to transparency and accountability in managing Measure P funds. Recent developments regarding the embezzlement of Measure P funds by a Fresno Arts Council (FAC) employee have raised significant concerns and we want to keep our community informed every step of the way. Below is a timeline of actions taken by the City to address the situation, protect taxpayer resources, and ensure continued support for local arts and culture programs.

Program Update Timeline

February 5, 2026:

The City was notified by a FAC board member that an employee had embezzled approximately \$1.5 million in Measure P funds. The individual is no longer employed by the Arts Council.

February 6, 2026:

- The City met with FAC leadership and two board members and received a spreadsheet of paid and unpaid grantees. This list is available at <https://www.fresno.gov/parks/expanded-access-to-arts-and-culture/>
 - The Fresno Police Department launched a criminal investigation.
 - The City terminated its contract with FAC (effective February 20, 2026) and requested the return of all funds, documents, and property. A forensic financial review will be conducted, and the City will pursue all legal avenues to recover taxpayer funds.
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February 9, 2026:

The City began reconciling the list of paid and unpaid grantees as provided by FAC on February 6 with the grantee list presented to the Parks Recreation and Arts Commission (PRAC) on October 13, 2025, to ensure all grantees are accounted for.

February 10, 2026:

A dedicated phone number and email were established for organizations to submit agreements, supporting documentation and questions:

- Phone: 559-621-2999
- Email: ExpandedArts@fresno.gov

February 17, 2026:

A Memo was provided to PRAC Commissioners outlining the timeline of events related to FAC's mishandling of funds and detailing actions to be taken by the City to assist impacted grantees in Cycle 2 of the Expanded Access to Arts process.

February 20, 2026:

Deadline for FAC to return all unearned payments, Measure P funds, and City-owned property and records. Six boxes of documents and agreements were returned to the PARCS Administration Office. No funds have been returned to date.

February 23, 2026:

PRAC recommended approval of an Amendment to the Annual Appropriations Resolution (AAR) to City Council that would allow the City to utilize any monies recovered from FAC for payment to Cycle 2 grantees.

February 26, 2026:

The PARCS Department will present the Amendment Annual Appropriations Resolution to City Council for approval, allowing any returned Measure P funds from FAC to be appropriated into the PARCS Department budget for distribution to Cycle 2 grantees.

(<https://fresno.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7924466&GUID=8A59F86D-2D8E-4D78-878C-6E77139B1877>)

Ongoing Actions:

- PARCS will continue financial and contractual reconciliation for Cycle 2 grantees.
- Continued coordination with the City Attorney's Office and Risk Management to determine next steps for grantee contracts.
- Cycle 3 Awards will be administered and implemented by the City of Fresno and PRAC. This process will begin once a path forward is determined for completing Cycle 2
- City will be filing a claim against FAC's insurance policy
- Updates will be provided during monthly PRAC meetings (3rd Monday of each month):
 - March 16, 2026
 - April 20, 2026
 - May 18, 2026

The City of Fresno remains committed to transparency, accountability, and supporting our arts community. We will continue working diligently to recover taxpayer funds, assist impacted grantees, and ensure that Measure P resources are used as intended, to expand access to arts and culture for all residents. Please check back regularly for updates and reach out to us with any questions or concerns.