ARTS • CO • LAB

All the Love.
All the Power.

THANK YOU!

Building the Creative Economy through collaboration, equity, and reciprocity.

sfac san francisco arts commission
Mellon Foundation
Center for Cultural Innovation
LATINO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
PRESIDIO TRUST
CA For The Arts
Acción Latina
United States Artists
Creative West
Work for a BETTER BAY AREA
KIM ZIN CREATIVE
AFRICAN AMERICAN ART & CULTURE COMPLEX
BIONEERS

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IMPACT'25 REPORT

Building the Creative Economy through collaboration, equity, and reciprocity.

OUR MISSION

Arts.Co.Lab a 'Laboratory of Artistic Collaboration' is a Cultural Equity Agency focused on strengthening the cultural ecosystem within' Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, LGBTQ+, individuals with disabilities, and other under-resourced communities through professional development and infrastructure creation for the creative economy.

ACL believes in art creation as a human right; therefore, the ACL Grassroots network promotes and supports the development of community-based artists, micro-organizations, and collaborative projects in the areas of production, arts administration, communications, and funding through the challenges of translating artistic vision into material reality.

Our agency's vision is to create tools to further the creative economy, empower marginalized narratives, and dismantle the inequitable funding systems in the arts and culture ecosystem.







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OUR TEAM



Deniss Guerra
Administrative Officer



Arturo Méndez-Reyes
Founder/Executive Director



Therese Davis
Co-Founder/Program Manager



Levi Hernández
Graphic Design



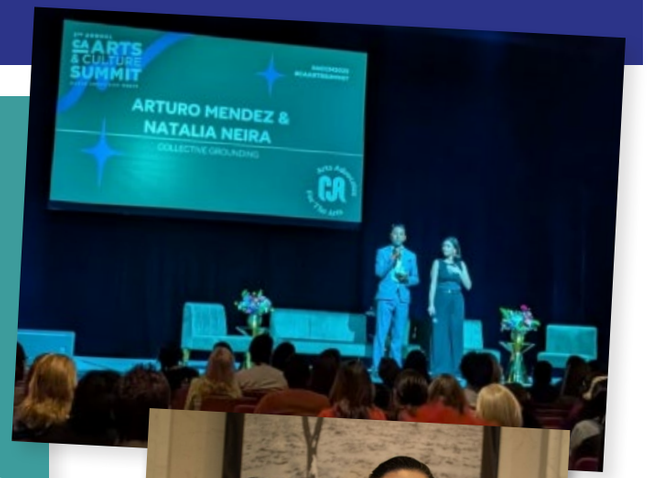
Mahelly Ferreira
Media Content Creator



Sen Mendez
Tutoring and Development Support

Therese and Arturo are artists and administrators of color who have a combined 35 years of experience working in producing and managing artistic & cultural projects. Our team represents the communities we intend to serve: Black, Indigenous, Immigrant, Women, LGBTQ+, and Disabled.

ADVOCACY IMPACT



At Arts.Co.Lab, advocacy is central to our work. We view artists as creative workers and cultural stakeholders, designing strategies that move social issues from visibility to structural change. Our approach centers access-first design, trauma-informed facilitation, and partnerships that uplift Disabled, Immigrant, Latinx, Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and working-class artists.

In 2025, Executive Director Arturo Méndez and TGW alum Natalia Neira Retamal opened the Arts Advocacy Summit in Sacramento with a Totonac ritual ceremony, grounding the gathering in indigenous knowledge. **Our leadership continues to collaborate with the Greater Bay Area Arts Coalition (GBAC), CA for the Arts, Creative West, Artists for a Better Bay Area, the Latino Community Foundation, the National Arts Policy Alliance**, and community organizers to align local practice with regional and statewide policy goals.

Our impact emerges through strong networks, practical tools, and policy-driven momentum. What began as Open House convenings will expand in 2026 into the Arts Caucus, four region-based gatherings that will build peer relationships, map cultural assets, and create a living directory of artists and advocates.

We're not just training artists, we're shaping the ecosystem.



Arturo Méndez-Reyes and Virginia Please (Alumni Jethro Cuenca) at the SF Immigrant Excellence Award Gala.

"When we come together to speak about politics, it's important we first nurture our spirit, that way we know that what comes out of our mouth is not our egos, nor a political calculation; it is THE TRUTH". - **AMR**

A LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Since founding Transformative Grant Writing in 2020, our mission has been to help our community regain its footing after the health crisis. What began as an urgent response became a profound journey of learning, empowerment, and the creation of more equitable systems for artists, especially those from Black, Indigenous, immigrant, LGBTQ+, and disabled communities.

In recent years, we have expanded through initiatives such as **Transformative Arts Markets** and **Transformative Tech Equity**, while forming meaningful partnerships with the San Francisco Arts Commission, the Mellon Foundation, the Latino Community Foundation, and others. Above all, we have witnessed.

Our students' extraordinary impact: launching projects, building creative businesses, and advocating for their communities with clarity and courage.

We honor the 250 artists who have entrusted us with their growth and celebrate ***the $2.5 million in Grants directed to their projects.*** To our partners and funders, your generosity and mentorship have transformed our work from an emergent effort into a lasting resource.

Our first FIVE YEARS are only the beginning!

As we mark our first five years, we reaffirm a core belief: the arts and culture sector can provide a dignified and sustainable livelihood for working artists. Our Laboratory of Artistic Collaboration remains dedicated to developing tools and structures that support this vision.

Thank you for walking with us. Together, we are strengthening a resilient creative economy.

With deep gratitude,
Arturo Méndez
& Therese Davis
And the Arts.Co.Lab team

ARTS CO LAB



OUR PROGRAMS



1

TRANSFORMATIVE GRANT WRITING

It's an 8-week intensive program where artists receive support and practical tools to develop a written project that they can use to access funding opportunities such as grants, fellowships, residencies, etc.
Complete with 7 training sessions and 6 individual coaching sessions, artists develop collateral materials to move their projects forward.

Andreina Maldonado's play 'Our Work Our Dignity' live at KQED

2

TRANSFORMATIVE ART BUSINESSES

Equips artists to build sustainable, values-aligned ventures rooted in their cultural and community knowledge.
Emerging to Established artists vision what may be possible for them as a growing art business and leave with a pitch narrative and next steps after participating in this program.

Cohort 1 of Transformative Arts Businesses at their Open House graduation at the Bayview Opera House



3



TRANSFORMATIVE TECH EQUITY

Empowers artists to access working technologies that enable their artistic practice. Whether it is to write, design, develop, communicate, sketch, or develop their vision as a whole, TTE provides small no-interest credits for artists to purchase the piece of technology they need to make their practice sustainable. With this support many of our artists are able to activate their projects and take them to the next level.

Photo: Student Cadence Myles (Cohort 16) after receiving her headphones. This arose from the need of having effective communication during our coaching sessions.

OUR ECOSYSTEM OF IMPACT

This is a model of the growth we've identified in the practice of meeting artists where they are at in their life. We developed this model in collaboration with other Organizing Fellows from the Greater Bay Area Arts Coalition and are using it to produce content for leadership development in direct Advocacy.

1) An artist is a highly intuitive person who identifies needs in their immediate context.

2) They embark on creating something to support that need through their practice.

3) They open up about receiving compensation about the work they do.
(Here is where we meet a lot of our students).

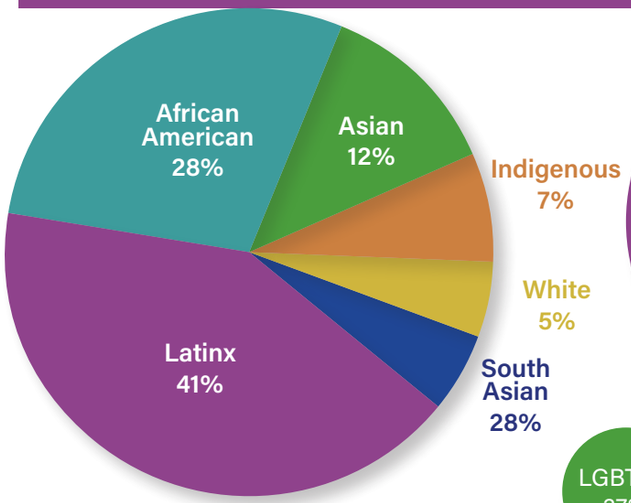
4) They realize the impact they are having in their communities.
(Here is where they start applying for grants and pitching their project).

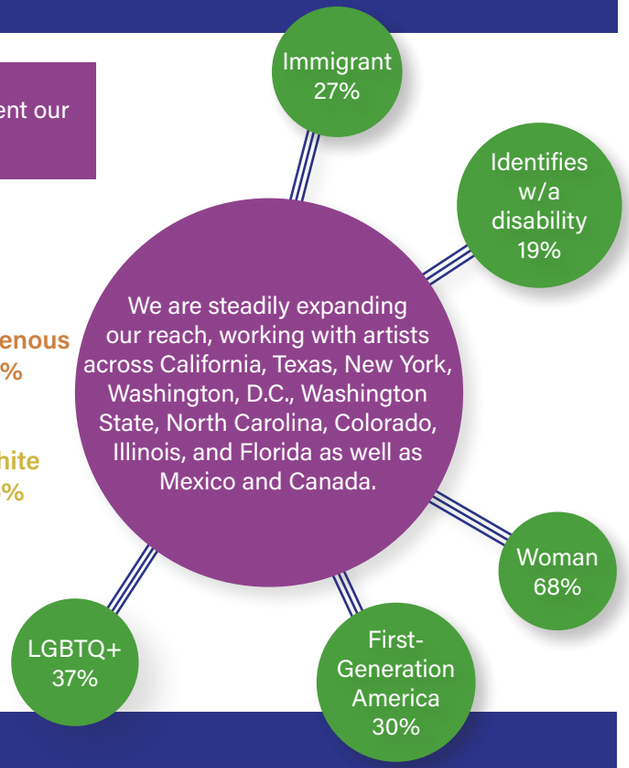
5) They commit to developing a sustainable practice.
(This is where most people either become a 501(c)3 or LLC).

6) They become a resource for their community.
(This is where they become consistent advocates).

WHO WE SERVE

These are some of the intersections that represent our student's demographics:





DIRECT IMPACT

- **250 artists** trained in our different programs total

From 2023 until 2025:

- **120 artists** trained in TGW
- **8 cohorts** completed
- **300+ hours** of pro-bono coaching
- **18 artists** featured in our 20 newsletters
- **150+ opportunities** shared with alumni
- **$2.4 Million in grants** secured by alumni
- **10 hours** of educational content created with UC Berkeley School of Adult Education.



Arturo Méndez-Reyes introducing the content for Transformative Grant Writing.

4 TRANSFORMATIVE ARTS MARKETS

Launched in 2025 with support from the San Francisco Arts Commission's Arts Impact Endowment, our program guides 20 artists in developing the business skills needed for successful art vending. Over six weeks, participants strengthen their pitches, sales strategies, promotions, and inventory management, culminating in an Arts Market at the Presidio Tunnel Tops on October 25–26, 2025.

This November, we witnessed the collective impact of these efforts. The Creative Arts Market, presented in partnership with Presidio Trust and the SF Songbird Festival, highlighted over 25 artists and 30 performers, welcomed more than 2,000 attendees, and generated over $23,000 in artist revenue. Media coverage from five major outlets underscored its growing cultural significance.

We remain committed to developing infrastructure for the creative economy, particularly at a time when technology is transforming the job market, the arts and culture sector can provide an opportunity for people to make a dignified living through their practice.

Our commitment continues beyond the programs.

This fall, we supported Transformative Grant Writing alumni in preparing strong applications for the SFAC Arts Impact Endowment, offering co-working, coaching, and ongoing community through Cohort 18. We are proud of their dedication and wish them clarity and confidence as they develop their project proposals into an actionable business plan.











ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING



HOMIE FUND

Offers a one-time $400 boost to help alumni and community members kickstart a collaboration, event, or project when momentum matters most. From tech needs to production costs, this micro-grant seeds action, visibility, and belonging in our creative ecosystem.



WRAP-AROUND CONTENT

Our Wrap-Around Content keeps artists supported before, during, and after their training through co-working and proposal writing sessions, visioning and goal-setting circles, artist open houses, and vending opportunities.
We also host bi-monthly Opportunities Sessions, where we share open grants, residencies, and fellowships to help our community stay resourced and ready.

CONTENT CREATION AND VISIBILITY

We work directly with our alumni to develop high-quality work samples, educational videos, and promotional content that helps them move forward with their projects forward with content and confidence. Through newsletters, panels, and showcases, we amplify their voices and make sure their stories and impact are seen.



Click here to visit a gallery of our Alumni Magic playlist

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

INDIVIDUAL COACHING

Our coaches are certified through the **Academy for Coaching Excellence**, we support clients through a transformative lens, grounding our coaching sessions with deep listening and practical tools. Our approach meets each person exactly where they are. We ensure clients feel seen, valued, and empowered in the way we support them in moving forward with their goals.

RECONNECTION CAMPAIGN (CRM)

During the Summer of 2025, we launched a **'Reconnection Campaign'** aimed to re-establish contact with our alumni. The campaign is designed in three phases of outreach, in order to learn about their artistic growth, the funding achieved since they took the program, and to continue providing support to their practice. This process also helps us keep our community information up to date.

"Together, we are weaving a resilient network to restore the social fabric of the arts and culture ecosystem."

