




City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

Memorandum



DATE: October 1, 2025

TO: Mayor Alan Webber

FROM: Chelsey Johnson, Arts & Culture Director 

SUBJECT: Arts Commission Appointments

Summary:

As of October 2025, the Arts Commission has two renewals of appointment to put forward, and one vacancy to fill due to an expired term. This memo recommends the reappointment of two current Commissioners and the new appointment of one vetted candidate to join the Arts Commission.

Background:

Per City ordinance:

There is created the "Santa Fe Arts Commission," hereinafter referred to as the "commission." The commission shall be advisory to the governing body and shall initiate, sponsor or conduct, alone or in cooperation with other public or private agencies, public programs to further the development and public awareness of, and interest in the fine and performing arts and cultural properties. The commission shall organize and adopt administrative rules and procedures necessary to accomplish its purposes. (Code of Ordinances 6-1.1)

... The commission shall consist of nine (9) members. On the first commission, four (4) of the members shall be appointed for one (1) year terms and five (5) shall be appointed for two (2) year terms. Subsequent terms shall be for two (2) years to maintain staggering of terms. Vacancies, other than by expiration of terms, shall be filled for the unexpired term in the same manner as original appointments. The mayor, with the advice and consent of the city council, shall appoint the commission members and the commission chairperson. All terms expire in October. (Code of Ordinances 6-1.1)

Following a public call for applicants, in early 2025, the Arts Commission's governance subcommittee reviewed and scored 49 applications, interviewed and scored ten, and submitted this list for mayoral approval. The Mayor has selected April Cleveland as the next new Commissioner from that list.

Additionally, two current Commissioners' terms expire this month and we request their renewal for an additional two-year term.

All bios are attached to this memo.

Brought forward for appointment to the Arts Commission by Mayor Webber and confirmation by the Governing Body is the following candidate:

- April Cleveland, first term 11/2025 to 10/2027
Replacing Marcia Mikulak

Brought forward for reappointment by Mayor Webber and confirmation by Governing Body:

- Winoka Yepa, Vice Chair, to serve a renewed full term from 11/25-10/27
- Robyne Robinson, to serve a renewed full term from 11/25-10/27

Action Requested:

The Arts Commission, along with Arts and Culture Department staff, respectfully requests appointment to the Commission of April Cleveland, and renewal of current Commissioners Winoka Yepa (Vice Chair) and Robyne Robinson to serve from November 2025 through October 2027.

BIOS OF COMMISSIONER CANDIDATES

April Cleveland, Executive Director of the Mayor's Arts Award-winning Exodus Ensemble theater collective, takes a holistic approach to Santa Fe, aiming to enhance the city's theater scene and attract audiences from all over. A five-year resident of the Railyard District, she has worked with NMSA students, United World College students, and the Academy of the Love of Learning, helping students transition into full-time professional opportunities. Under her leadership, Exodus Ensemble employs 12 full-time theater professionals and thrives through innovative, entrepreneurial fundraising models that do not rely on ticket sales.

April is highly focused on creating collaborations and partnerships and is constantly thinking about ways to bring people together in innovative ways, especially under challenging circumstances. She questions traditional models and has a strong talent for connecting with people. Passionate about Santa Fe, she is committed to making it a better place through the arts, forging relationships with all arts organizations and artists in the community. Her energy, curiosity, and drive would be a great asset to the Arts Commission.

Commissioner Winoka Yepa, Vice Chair, (she/her/asdzaan), is Diné, originally

from Shiprock, New Mexico, located on the Navajo Nation/Diné'tah. Ms. Yepa brings a wealth of experience from the arts, museum, education, and Indigenous research fields. Ms. Yepa was formerly the Senior Manager of Museum Education at the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, where she re-established and developed the museum's education program and curated the museum's first series of virtual residencies, virtual exhibitions, and first mobile application. She is currently a Data and Research Associate with Native Americans in Philanthropy and is a doctoral candidate in Education at the University of New Mexico. Ms. Yepa also serves as an advisory board member for Imagining America, a Humanities Advisor for GallupARTS, and an Education and Community Programming Advisor for Tse'Nato.

Commissioner Robyne Robinson is the Principal Consultant for fiveXfive Public Art, a firm that brands a strong business identity with the community through the arts. The former Director of Arts @ MSP, Robyne, developed arts and culture programming at MSP International Airport, generating over 5 million dollars for the Minnesota arts community through commissions, exhibitions, and programming at the nation's 16th largest airport. Her work at MSP has received praise from transportation writers and national media, including The New York Times. Robyne is well-known as an Emmy-winning news broadcaster in the Twin Cities and the first African American prime-time anchor in Minnesota. During that time, she also produced and hosted the first nightly arts and entertainment segment in a major newscast – The Buzz – which resulted in international press coverage and one of the first interviews and lengthy relationships with Prince. Robyne is the creative mind behind ROX Jewelry Designs, sold throughout the US, Greece, and London. Her work is on display at the Lewis Museum of African American Art in Baltimore, fine art galleries in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and has been featured in US and UK magazines. Robyne has received numerous honors, including being selected as a 2010 candidate for Lt. Governor, a Hubert Humphrey fellow at the University of Minnesota, and the critically praised curator and owner of Flatland Gallery (2000-2003). She rounds out her list of awards with her recent induction into Minnesota's Broadcasting Hall of Fame—another milestone as the first African American honoree.