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Cultural Space Agency Launches A New Chapter Through Partnership With San Francisco-based nonprofit Community Arts Stabilization Trust

Collaboration with CAST offers national expertise to support CSA's cultural real estate efforts for Seattle's creative communities

Seattle, WA/San Francisco, CA – The [Cultural Space Agency \(CSA\)](#) today announced a new partnership with [Community Arts Stabilization Trust \(CAST\)](#), a nationally recognized leader in community-centered real estate for arts and culture. By combining local leadership with national expertise, the collaboration marks a pivotal step as CSA strengthens its internal operations and positions itself for long-term growth and sustainability in its mission of creating affordable and equitable cultural spaces across Seattle.

Since its founding in 2020 as a public development authority chartered by the City of Seattle, CSA has worked to address one of the city's, if not the nation's, most pressing challenges: the loss of affordable cultural space. While the Agency has delivered impactful projects like [Station Space](#) at King Street Station and [El Barrio](#) with Cultivate South Park, it has also navigated periods of instability marked by leadership turnover. This moment marks a deliberate transition for the Agency. By strengthening its governance, refining its operational model, and deepening engagement with community and civic partners, the agency is focused on laying the groundwork for a more stable, accountable, and resilient organization.

"A decade ago we set out to create an experimental model for how real estate gets developed in Seattle—one that centers vulnerable cultural communities that have historically been left out of civic cultural infrastructure-building," said **Matthew Richter, Cultural Space Agency Co-Founder and current strategic advisor**. "This model caught the imagination of the regional community. We secured well over 30,000 square feet of cultural space and raised over \$25 million in our first three years. Moving forward I see

the partnership with CAST as an investment in collaborative leadership and shared power. CAST is one of the international models that first inspired the development of the Space Agency, and CAST's leaders have generously served as important mentors and advisors throughout CSA's evolution."

CSA's transition comes amid significant shifts in the commercial real estate market. Rising office vacancies and rebounding downtowns have created new opportunities for adaptive reuse. Yet for many BIPOC artists and cultural organizations, access to stable, affordable space remains out of reach due to rising costs and pressures of displacement.

"CSA's work is more urgent than ever," said **Michael J. Peterson, Cultural Space Agency Director of Operations and Finance**. "While recent years have been challenging, we now have both the expertise and an aligned partner in CAST to help advance our mission. By turning instability into opportunity, we can ensure Seattle's artists and cultural organizations remain rooted in place. That begins with renewed curiosity—deepening relationships with community stakeholders and authentically partnering to strengthen our capacity so we can carry projects through with the resources they deserve."

One of the newest additions to the CSA portfolio is [LaunchPoint](#), a 1,500 square-foot storefront that will serve as a permanently dedicated pop-up space on the ground floor of Grand Street Commons, an affordable housing development in Rainier Valley. The space was acquired in December 2025 and awarded \$860,000 from the City's [Equitable Development Initiative](#) to support a diverse series of pop-up cultural spaces, artists' studios, community-based cultural projects, and creative microbusinesses.

The partnership with CAST represents a critical step in CSA's evolution. As a national leader in community-centered real estate stewarding over 280,000 square feet of arts and cultural space across the San Francisco Bay Area and Colorado, CAST brings technical expertise, governance support, and a track record of helping arts organizations stabilize. The collaboration will support CSA in completing its annual audit, strengthening internal systems, and building the operational foundation needed to steward more cultural spaces in the future.

"CSA and CAST both treat space as long-term cultural infrastructure rather than a short-term commodity," said **Louise Martorano, CAST Managing Director of National Programs**. "This unique sector of creative land trusts and cultural placekeeping that unites both of our organizations is gaining traction across the globe, and we are excited to be part of this growing community of practice in sustaining affordability for the arts."

Looking ahead, CSA has more than 30 cultural space efforts currently in development through its Community Partners program, and the agency continues to administer the [Build Art Space Equitably \(B.A.S.E.\)](#) certification program with direct support from the City of Seattle and 4Culture to ensure that artists and cultural organizations remain an integral part of Seattle's growth.

This next chapter is not only about strengthening one organization—it is about securing the future and growing cultural infrastructure across the city. “The Space Agency was created to ensure that cultural space is not an afterthought of Seattle’s growth, but an intentional and permanent part of it,” Richter added. “CAST’s willingness to step up and support the agency through this period speaks volumes to the values alignment between our two organizations. This is about building a stronger framework for the future—together.”

Additional Quotes

Gülgün Kayim

Former Director of the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture and strategic advisor to CSA

“Coming from Minneapolis, I’ve seen how important creative-sector real estate can be to the health of an arts community. CSA stands out because it brings that work together with a racial equity analysis, which is essential in a city where artists are increasingly being priced out.”

“In the public sector, transparency is critical for trust and accountability. We recognize that CSA has faced challenges, and that’s precisely why CAST is here. Trust is built through actions. Our role is to bring sector experience and help strengthen transparency and meaningful engagement with the community.”

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About Cultural Space Agency (CSA)

The Cultural Space Agency is a mission-driven and community-based cultural real estate development entity, a Public Development Authority chartered by the City of Seattle in 2020 to serve cultural communities of color. It secures long-term affordable commercial cultural space with community partners; builds community wealth through direct investment in real property; creates opportunities for ownership of commercial cultural space; and it takes these actions in partnership with rich and diverse cultural communities, with a particular focus on the needs of Black and Indigenous communities. Learn more at culturalspace.agency.

About Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST)

Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) is a community-centered real estate nonprofit committed to ensuring artists and cultural workers can stay anchored where they create. Founded in 2013, CAST works in deep partnership with communities across the San Francisco Bay Area and Denver, particularly communities that have endured systemic oppression and historical underinvestment. CAST models new ways to secure and steward affordable, inclusive spaces for creative and cultural expression by applying real estate financing tools and structural models in innovative ways, building community knowledge and agency, and creating and holding space for visioning and arts activation. Its programs and services have helped arts organizations build pathways to ownership, enabled artists to secure long-term affordable leases, and created dedicated spaces for cultural connection and exchange. Learn more at cast-sf.org or follow CAST on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Bluesky](#).