

Amanda Edwards | District 18

1. How do you personally participate in the arts and culture both in Houston and when you travel?

I have long been deeply involved in Houston's arts community. I first began my participation in arts and culture as a young child who was engaged in performance arts that culminated in performances at The Ensemble. My passion for art led to my induction into the National Art Honor Society Student in high school. From my participation with groups like HGO Young Professionals when I first returned to Houston to my many years as a board member and later as president of Project Row Houses in the Historic Third Ward, arts have been front and center in my experiences here in Houston. Our work at Project Row Houses used art to empower residents, celebrate cultural identity, and strengthen the community. My participation in the arts was also reflected through my service as a City Council Member when I commissioned public art murals to be painted in communities by artists and residents in connection with our efforts to host the Super Bowl in 2017.

I believe art is essential to how we understand ourselves and one another — it builds connection, creativity, and pride. When I travel, I make a point to visit local galleries and cultural spaces to connect with the stories that shape each place.

2. Would you support restoring full funding to National Public Radio and PBS?

For more than 50 years NPR and PBS have been essential components of American life and our public communication infrastructure. In this day and age of misinformation, I think it is crucial to restore full funding to National Public Radio and PBS as they provide such an essential service to millions of Americans.

3. Would you be willing to support a request for appropriations directly to the county or the City specifically for arts? Each congress person can submit requests for their district every year.

Yes, I would support a request for appropriations directly to Houston for the arts. Not only would I encourage arts funding through Community Impact Grants, but I would

also host workshops to educate groups how to apply for said funding. Houston is the most diverse city in America. We have so many stories to tell and so many facets of the city. I think the city should have funding to encourage artists to tell the many stories and lift the many voices in this city.

4. Would you support continued funding at the 2024 level or higher for the National Endowment to the Arts?

Art enriches our communities, drives innovation, and amplifies the voices that make America vibrant and diverse. In recent years, NEA grants have helped fund things like Art League of Houston's summer studio art program for youth, Arts Connect Houston, and the Houston Youth Symphony. Programs like these and many more deserve to be funded. I've been clear that I will stand up to attacks on programs that strengthen our nation, including the National Endowment for the Arts. I will fight to preserve funding at least at 2024 levels and work to ensure artists and cultural institutions have the support they need to flourish.

5. How would you support arts in Congressional District 18?

I would support the arts in our district by championing policies and funding that help local artists, organizations, and community spaces thrive. The arts are not only a source of inspiration and pride, they are engines for education, small business growth, and community development. I will work to ensure federal programs like the National Endowment for the Arts continue to invest directly in our neighborhoods, especially in schools and underserved communities. I believe art plays a crucial role in education and I would support funding arts education through legislation. I also believe in fostering partnerships (via Community Impact Grants) between artists, local governments, and nonprofits to make the arts more accessible and visible in every part of the district. As I mentioned previously, I will make Community Impact Grants more accessible to organizations by hosting workshops on how to access them. I will work to ensure that disaster recovery dollars reach arts-based organizations quickly when crises occur. In addition, I will establish an Arts Advisory Council to advise my office and help guide policy decisions that support our vibrant creative community.