



About the Arts License Plate and Million Plates for the Arts

an initiative of the California Arts Council to promote creativity, arts programs and arts education in California

What is the Arts License Plate?

The Arts License Plate is an official license plate with a specially designed background of palm trees and sunset issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for vehicles registered in California. California's Arts License Plate was the first license plate in the nation solely designed to benefit the arts.

Why a Million Plates for the Arts in California?

Because of budget difficulties, California is currently dead last in per capita state arts funding. Currently only 12¢ per person is spent on the arts in the Golden State – compared to \$2.58 in New York. **If a million California cars had Arts License Plates, there would be approximately \$40 million for the arts,** bringing California from the bottom to near the top.

Did an artist design the Arts License Plate?

The Arts License Plate (officially titled "Coastline") was designed by renowned Northern California artist Wayne Thiebaud. The Arts License Plate is the most popular specialty plate in California, and its sunset and palm trees image is often thought of as one of the "icons" of California.

How much does the Arts License Plate cost?

A standard Arts License Plate (DMV chooses the numbers/letters) can be purchased for \$50; a personalized plate (car owner chooses the numbers/letters) can be purchased for \$98. Annual renewal fees are \$40 and \$78 respectively.

How much of the fee goes to the arts?

For each standard and personalized Arts License Plate, approximately \$34.63 of the initial purchase and \$40 of the renewal is placed in the Arts License Plate Fund.

How are the Arts License Plate Funds spent?

Proceeds from the plate sales benefit communities statewide through California Arts Council programs targeting arts education and local arts. Over 300 nonprofit arts organizations received support from the California Arts Council's programs and initiatives -- providing arts for kids and communities to tens of thousands of Californians. These numbers would increase if more funding was available.

The State-Local Partnership program supports local arts agencies and creates an arts infrastructure throughout the state – and is supported by Arts License Plate funding.

The Artists in Schools program brings professional teaching artists into a school or after-school settings, and is supported by Arts License Plate funds.

Are Arts License Plate fees tax deductible?

According to a Franchise Tax Board information letter from November 2009, the Arts License Plate fees may be considered a charitable contribution to the California Arts Council and the State of California.

Can I put Arts License Plates on my business vehicles?

Most certainly! The California Arts Council strongly encourages fleet owners interested in supporting California Arts to get Arts License Plates – and we can help streamline the process directly with the DMV. Call Mary Beth at 916-322-6588 or email mbarber@cac.ca.gov for help.

HOW TO ORDER AN ARTS LICENSE PLATE

How do I order an Arts License Plate?

Go to the California Arts Council's website (www.cac.ca.gov) and click on the Arts License Plate logo for directions, or go directly to the DMV's ordering page at www.dmv.ca.gov and see the "online services" tab. "Order Special Interest and Personalized Plates Online" is sixth or seventh in the list of services.

I'm buying a new car. Can I get an Arts License Plate from the dealership?

We recommend that new-car owners be issued a standard white plate and then order their Arts License Plate through the internet directly from the DMV. It's the easiest way to get an Arts License Plate and has the quickest turn-around.

Do I have to wait for my annual registration renewal to get my Arts License Plate?

No need to wait! You may purchase the plate at any time during your registration cycle and start supporting California Arts right away.

What's the difference between a standard plate and a personalized plate?

A standard plate has a randomly chosen set of numbers and letters chosen by the DMV (e.g. "ABC 123"). A personalized plate has letters and numbers specifically chosen by the owner of the vehicle (e.g. "ART LVR"), as long as the configuration isn't used by another car owner.

Does the Arts Council get more if I pay more for the personalized plate?

Actually the California Arts Council receives the same amount for both types of plates – just under \$35 for the initial cost and then \$40 for renewal.

Which is better – ordering online or through the mail?

The California Arts Council strongly suggests ordering an Arts License Plate through the DMV website. Ordering online significantly speeds up the process. If you wish to personalize your plate, ordering online allows you to check immediately if the personalized message of your choice is available or has already been taken by another vehicle owner.

How many letters and/or numbers can I have on my Arts License Plate?

You may request a combination that is no more than six (6) character spaces and they must be a unique combination that does not currently exist on any California license plate. While other plates may have seven characters, there is only room for six on the Arts License Plate.

If I already have a personalized plate, may I transfer the message to an Arts License Plate?

Yes, as long as the message is no more than six characters.

Will I keep my current random number license plate number?

When you order an Arts License Plate, a new sequence of six characters will be assigned to you.

When and how will I receive the plates?

The DMV asks that you allow approximately 6-10 weeks to process your order. Sequential plates will be mailed to applicants as soon as the plates are ready. If you order a personalized Arts License Plate, you will receive a notice to pick them up at your local DMV. Personalized plates can sometimes take up to 10 weeks if orders are backed up.

Can I order an Arts License Plate for my motorcycle?

We're working on making it available for motorcycle owners, but at the present time, the Arts License Plate is only available for automobiles and trucks.

If I have any questions, where can I get answers?

Answers for many questions about ordering the license plate may be found at the California Arts Council at www.cac.ca.gov or on the DMV's order webpage at www.dmv.ca.gov. Questions may also be answered by the California Arts Council at 800/201-6201 or by email to mbarber@cac.ca.gov.