

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Aaron L. Myers II, Executive Director

September 28, 2026

The following is a summary of the agency's activities and operations.

This meeting tonight is the final meeting of FY26, and as the team is in the process now of wrapping up all business from this fiscal year and preparing to jump into FY27 – starting with hosting state arts agencies from across the country here next during NASAA's General Assembly, I want to say thank, you to the CAH team. The work that's done by our Grants/Public Arts team, that are facilitated through our Operations, Resource Allocation and Legal teams, and then further amplified by the Comms, Events, Outreach, along with Community and Culture, is a work that is having great impact all over the city and beyond. We are grateful to the Commissioners, who, as volunteers, dedicate a lot of time and effort to ensure that we are listening and providing access to the community. This agency has provided touchpoints to the community through workshops (both in-person and online), networking events, cross governmental agreements, all in an effort to ensure that our grant opportunities reflect the needs of the community while providing access to the entire community to take advantage of the grant opportunities offered by CAH.

This year, one touch point came as we engaged with the community for input on the strategic direction of the Agency through our Strategic Plan. We are presently in the stage of crafting our annual plan, which will give the yearly direction of the agency, with ways the agency can 1) Track Progress 2) Communicate Progress 3) Gather and Disseminate Data - to ensure that we continue to move in the direction the pushes the mission outlined by the community forward. We look to have more information on this in our next meeting.

Since our last meeting, the CAH has had the opportunity to support and participate in several important events that reflect the extraordinary breadth of arts, culture, and community across the District.

We were proud to support **Theatre Week 2026** and attend the official kickoff at Arena Stage. The celebration brought together local artistic directors, theater artists, industry leaders, and supporters as we look ahead to the 2026–2027 theater season. Washington, D.C. continues to be a world-class destination for live performance, and we are proud to celebrate and support the artists, administrators, technicians, and cultural workers who make that possible.

In recognition of **African Heritage Month**, CAH was also pleased to partner on a panel discussion at the DC Public Library that brought together literary and artistic perspectives from storytellers across the Eritrean and Ethiopian diasporas. Programs like this demonstrate the power of the humanities to preserve history, strengthen cultural identity, and create opportunities for

communities to share their stories in their own voices.

I also had the pleasure of participating in **The Art of the City: How Artists Shape Communities**, presented by the Arts Program of the Aspen Institute in partnership with Eaton Hotel. The evening featured a discussion about the role public art plays in defining the identity, economic vitality, and future of modern cities, anchored by a conversation with internationally renowned sculptor Janet Echelman. It was a meaningful opportunity to discuss how artists contribute not only to the beauty of our city, but also to how communities understand themselves and imagine what comes next.

As part of **Hispanic Heritage Month**, CAH was honored to deliver welcoming remarks at the historic Lincoln Theatre for the **Miss and Mister Fiesta DC 2026 Pageant**. This annual celebration highlights the heritage, talent, leadership, and contributions of Washington's Latino community, and we were proud to be part of such a longstanding District tradition.

And most recently, we joined the Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs for the **Second Annual Mid-Autumn Festival and Night Market**. I had the honor of offering remarks during the celebration and recognizing the legacy of the late architect **Alfred H. Liu**, whose work includes the iconic Friendship Archway in Chinatown. His contributions are an important reminder that art, architecture, and cultural heritage are deeply woven into the physical identity of Washington, D.C.

This weekend, CAH was also proud to join **The Washington Ballet** in celebrating its 50th anniversary. The occasion was especially meaningful as it coincided with the 50th anniversary of **Go-Go music in Washington, D.C.** I was honored to offer remarks recognizing these two important cultural milestones and the ways both ballet and Go-Go have helped shape the artistic identity, history, and creative legacy of our city.

Taken together, these events represent what makes the District's cultural landscape so special. CAH remains committed to ensuring that the arts and humanities are visible, accessible, and celebrated throughout all eight wards. Tonight, the Commission will vote on recommendations from both the Grants and Public Arts team. I again want to say thank you to the best grant managers in the world. Their due diligence has created access and opportunities for thousands of creatives. I will continue to advocate to this administration and the incoming administration, along with to the Council, to ensure we as an agency are granted with appropriations that will fund a full FTE count that will allow grant portfolios to be proportional to the size of our Grants team.