

DIRECTOR'S REPORT
SUBMITTED BY
AARON MYERS, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
May 22, 2023

FY21 TO FY23 STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUS AREAS

1. I.D.E.A.

Commit to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (I.D.E.A.) in every aspect of Agency grant-making and other programs and operations, including governance and administration.

2. Pandemic Recovery

Lead the post-pandemic recovery of the nonprofit arts and culture sector in the District and play an important role in the District's broader economic and social recovery efforts.

3. Community Awareness and Connectedness

Improve communications, raise awareness of CAH programs, strengthen community connections and networks between and among stakeholders in the field, and elevate the role of the arts and humanities throughout the District.

4. District Government Alignment

Strengthen alignment with both the Executive and Legislative branches of District government.

5. Governance and Organizational Culture

Rethink governance and administrative protocols to improve Commissioner and staff relationships and morale and improve the CAH brand within District government and in the broader community.

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

FY 2024 Budget Support Act

Attached you will find the:

CAH related sections from the FY24 BSA committee print, containing Council's new text.

Fiscal impact statement for the dedicated tax adjustment:

The budget is in process, and we are following the process closely as it does its rounds at the council. We have sent to the chair of the council our suggestions and possible solutions to what has been proposed. In the upcoming days, we will continue our outreach to Council as well as to you, our commissioners, and community stakeholders. It remains our focus to ensure we are provided the proper and adequate funding to equitably support our current and future grantees.

Grantees

There are 9 people awaiting payment. These cases vary as to why the payments have not been received. Examining these cases, CAH has not been negligent in its work to process their payments. Our team has and is displaying its commitment to helping these individuals navigate their challenges to get to the desired solution. I've called each of these people today, either

leaving a voicemail or talking directly with them. I plan to follow-up with each of them on Friday.

Operations

I'm actively working to continue & increase our attention to our IDEA action plan. An IDEA Officer is slated as one of our new FTE hires for FY24.

Over the last month, I've met with most of the staff on a one-on-one basis. Everyone came in a solution-based posture, and some of these solutions (ranging from making elements of our processes paperless to certain trainings that would benefit the employees) are being explored & implemented now.

I've called for a total swat analysis of the agency ranging from examining our operational systems to how our technology works both internally and externally. Our technology assessment will happen this Wednesday by OCTO where we will learn how to upgrade our equipment/software & improve our wireless/cellular connectivity both in the suite & the equipment we use when teleworking. This will positively impact our virtual meetings with the public & our commissioner's meetings. We will be getting an IT staffer under our new partnership with OCTO.

We've begun formulating our upgraded communications plan and will be announcing the hiring of a new communications director soon. This will enable us to improve our communication internally among staff, other agencies, and most of all with our current and future grantees.

A wellness plan for the agency is moving forward, and we've had input from the staff, with a committee preparing recommendations for implementation. The very behavior we want to see (regarding wellness) must be modeled by its leadership. I am being intentional in modeling this behavior and encouraging our managers to do the same. If there are any wellness practices that you would like to suggest or wellness systems you've seen successfully implemented in other place, please email me and/or Denise Jackson in our offices.

Programs

I am working with Commissioner Hopkinson to fulfill the NEA Mandate by implementing a Folklife Program here at CAH through a partnership with Howard University. You may recall the presentation by Joy Ford Austin at our last meeting. Commissioner Hopkinson will be speaking more to this later in the meeting, but I would like to state that I and the agency are fully committed to supporting this program and I look forward to seeing how this program and partnership can grow in the future.

Commissioners

As some of you saw in-person at our last commission meeting, there is a working space for the Commissioners. We have a dedicated staff member assigned to the commissioners to help facilitate use of that office space. We've also divided our grantees by ward, and will be connecting our grantees to the commissioners by the wards you live in. Our Staff member,

Andia, will be help facilitate virtual meetups between the commissioners & our grantees. Our commissioners will also be receiving instruction on how to get us a good image to use on both our website & to hang in the office. This effort is something the agency has desperately needed for several years and I'm excited for the opportunity create another avenue where we can be in even deeper in the community.

Past Events

Events DC Resource Fair - This past Thursday, CAH was invited to join Events DC first resource fair, at the R.I.S.E. Demonstration Center. It was an event geared at providing nonprofit organizations with resources needed to improve their community programming, with a room for exhibitors to share their programming as well as another room with several workshops throughout the afternoon. All parties considered it a success and are already anticipating collaborating on similar endeavors in the future

Fellowship Mixer - This past Friday, CAH hosted a mixer for FY23 Fellowship grantees to connect and network with each other, at the Royal Sands Social Club just a few blocks away from the office. Interest was high among the hundreds of grantees, with almost 100 RSVP'ing, dozens sharing regrets, and 22 attending in person. Future events among consideration are exploring a variety of options to provide diverse environments for socializing, including a Sunday afternoon at the drum circle at Malcolm X Park or a weekday brown bag lunch at the National Portrait Gallery Courtyard Cafe.

Trans Pride - This past Saturday, CAH tabled for the first time as a part of the exhibitor fair at Trans Pride DC's event at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. This event engaged community members, activists, volunteers, organizations and others committed to supporting and advocating for trans, non-binary and gender expansive folx in the metropolitan DC area. In addition to connecting with attendees, there were other organizations who were also exhibiting who were interested in learning more about our funding opportunities for their programs and communities.

Upcoming Events

Black Pride - This upcoming weekend, CAH plans on tabling at Black Pride (we are finalizing details), the first official black gay pride event in the United States and one of two officially recognized festivals for the African American LGBT community. We would be participating as part of their Organization & Vendor Expo.

Capital Pride - On Sunday, June 11, CAH plans on tabling at Capital Pride's Street Festival, which is a full day of entertainment on three stages, food, drink, and advocacy with over 300 exhibitors. The festival is the largest annual event in the national capital region and continues to be free to the public. Timing is particularly good as we will have had a number of grant programs open the week earlier, and some of those that are currently open not closing until the week after.

Our Labor Day Festival will return this year. This festival is personal to me, as it was the byproduct & compromise of some advocacy efforts I'd helped to lead. The theme for this year is 50 Years of Hip-Hop & 50 Years of Home-Rule. Over the past month we've had intentional

conversations with the Hip-Hop community to understand the history of Hip-Hop here in DC, its current challenges & its future. These are only beginning conversations that I hope will allow us to glean how we can further support this community. Our festival will celebrate the elements that have comprised & supported HipHop in DC Poetry/Spoken Word: Jazz: Go-Go: HipHop. More information to come. It's my goal to have similar conversations with members of other genres & disciplines represented here in the city.

Current and upcoming Requests for Applications

FY24 Public Art Building Communities (PABC); opened April 7

FY24 Art Bank Grant; opened May 1

FY24 Arts and Humanities Education Projects (AHEP); opened May 8

FY24 Arts and Humanities Fellowship Program (AHFP); opened May 8

FY24 Field Trip Experiences Grant (FTE); opened May 8

FY24 Projects, Events, or Festivals (PEF); opened May 8

###