



DC COMMISSION ON ARTS & HUMANITIES

DIRECTOR'S REPORT
SUBMITTED BY
DAVID MARKEY, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DECEMBER 19, 2022

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.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 TO DATE

Grant managers across both the Grants and Public Art Departments continue to move paperwork for approximately 900 grantees. As I noted previously, the journey from a grant award to a payment is a multi-stepped one. There is often significant back-and-forth between grant managers and grantees in this process as grant managers assist with issues including clean hands certificates, insurance, and budget changes based on project scope adjustments. We continue to have some challenges with the new financial system, DIFS, that was adopted this year. It is taking us longer than usual to onboard new grantees to District government and to make address and bank changes for existing grantees. CAH staff members are in the process of remediating with colleagues across several agencies.

Grant managers continue to meet with applicants and grantees to provide them with panelist feedback on their applications. Our goal is to help them build on their applications from year to year, so they may have greater success in the process.

Grant managers have also begun to dig into approximately 1,400 grant reports for the FY22 cycle of grants.

CURRENT GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- **FY23 Facilities and Buildings: Relief (FAB-R)** is open and is scheduled to close tomorrow evening at 10pm. This is the third year of this grant program with the goal to assist arts and humanities organizations in rent or mortgage payments for their facilities. We currently have just over 100 drafting or submitted applications. A series of workshops and live chats was held during the application window to assist applicants in submitting the strongest application possible.
- **FY23 Color the Curb: School Safety Program** returns in the current cycle with four (4) elementary schools in Ward 1, Ward 6, and Ward 8. This collaborative design and placemaking project was created through a partnership of CAH, District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and DC Public Schools (DCPS), with the goal of increasing pedestrian safety by painting ground murals in curb extensions outside or near schools in Washington, DC. The selected schools underwent a study through DDOT's Safe Routes to School program. Applications went to panel this past Friday. CAH will select four (4) artists to work with schools to create a ground mural in the curb extensions adjacent to the school. The schools include: H.D. Cooke Elementary (Ward 1); Boone Elementary and Hendley Elementary (Ward 8); and Miner Elementary (Ward 6).

PROGRAMMING UPDATES

- ***Business of the Arts*** is a series of workshops and moderated panels offered by CAH to its community of individual artists, humanities practitioners, and organizational members with the goal of building their understanding and skills across a wide range of subject areas. We are in the early planning stages, with the goal of rolling out programming in the February-May period.
- ***Create and Thrive!*** CAH and Arts for the Aging facilitated two trainings in November for 14 teaching artists to help build their understanding and skills in working with older adults. Teaching artists have been paired up, they will begin their co-planning process and residencies at senior centers will be scheduled in the coming months.
- ***Words on Fire***: Now in its second year, this festival continues to celebrate the annual *Poetry Out Loud* program and includes newer spoken word and written components. Momentum has already picked up with fifteen high schools signed up to participate, three of which have never participated in the program in the past. Twenty (20) teaching artists have begun to work with close to 3,000 students in in-school workshops to

prepare them to compete in the program. The event is scheduled to take place over a weekend in mid-March 2023.

- **Public Art Panel Series:** CAH and DC Public Library (DCPL) will host two artists talks in February and March to build off the DCPL Inaugural Art Bank Loan Program of works now at Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library. These public panels will be in the format of moderated artist discussions. The first panel in February is entitled “*MLK’s Beloved Community and the DC Art Bank*” and will be an exploration of how the Art Bank Collection on the walls at the MLK Library brings Dr. King's teachings to life. The second panel is entitled “*Opening Channels of Cultural Communication: Stories from the DC Art Bank*” and will be held during the DC History Conference in March. The panel will provide insight into how both the social history and the artistic approaches on view at the MLK Library showcase the power of the arts to open channels for communication. More to follow.

REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS

Grants Dept. staff recently did a deep dive into CAH’s grant programs and processes with members of both the Grants and I.D.E.A. Committees. Among items discussed included review and scoring criteria for all grant programs and a possible revision of the fellowship (AHFP) grant program for FY24. More updates will follow in future commission meetings.

CAH’S WORK BEYOND GRANT-MAKING

While grant-making is at the core of what it is we do, the agency has deepened its commitment in recent year to create more intersectional opportunities for the community beyond its grant-making focus.

- **I.D.E.A. Staff Development Opportunities:** As CAH moves deeper into the space of better understanding both the fullness and potential of I.D.E.A., two opportunities for staff engagement are taking place this month. Similar opportunities for applicants will take place early in the new year.
- **Monthly Newsletter:** The Marketing-Communications Dept. is prepping for the launch of a monthly newsletter in early-2023. Content will include updates on what is happening in the world of CAH along with resources for the community of artists, humanities, and non-profit organizations.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE & STAFFING UPDATES

CAH is committed to ensuring the agency is a welcoming and inclusive place for staff members to work purposefully and collectively towards CAH’s mission to serve its community.

- **Professional Development**
Organizational development consultant, Shereen Williams engaged with staff in three

workshops in late-November with the goal of identifying issues of concern and putting a plan in place to build a cohesive and positive workplace environment at the agency.

- **Hiring Updates**

- **Executive Assistant:** Welcome to Ashley Lynch, the newest addition to the CAH team.
- **Grants Management Specialist:** A new grants manager is set to join the Grants Dept. in early-January.

###