



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

DIRECTOR'S REPORT
SUBMITTED BY
DAVID MARKEY, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
January 23, 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.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 TO DATE

We continue to move grant paperwork through the system. Thanks again to the Grants, Public Art, and Finance teams for their various parts in this process. Brian will provide more details in his report, but we've established purchase orders for approximately 50% of our close-to-900 grantees. We are behind where we were this time last year for a couple of reasons. One of those reasons is due to some ongoing challenges in creating "vendor" accounts for new grantees. We have been working with multiple colleagues across agencies to try to move the vendor registration process forward. Purchase orders cannot be created for these grantees until that process is complete. We have been messaging out to grantees and will continue to be proactive and responsive in our communications.

CURRENT GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- **FY23 Facilities and Buildings: Relief (FAB-R)** closed in late-December with 130 applicants. This is the third year of this particular relief grant and the number of applicants is slightly higher than that of the FY22 cycle. We have approximately \$1.4m to

disburse through this program. We hope to complete vetting later in the month and push award notifications out in early/mid-February, which would be two months ahead of last year's timeline.

- **FY23 Color the Curb: School Safety Program** paneled in December with the work of sixteen (16) artists being reviewed. This will be the third year of this program and there is much interest in growing the program from our DDOT and DCPS partners. The Public Art team will provide more specifics later in the meeting.
- **FY24 GOS** launched earlier this afternoon and will be open through February 21st. We are being intentional in reaching out to those arts and humanities organizations that may be eligible to participate this year and expect 180+ applicants this year. As we assist applicants in putting their applications together through workshops and live chats, we have also added two workshops called I.D.E.A. by Design by Dr. Durell Cooper, to help organizations build out their understanding of the concepts within I.D.E.A. and to move them to action.

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. Our colleagues, Camille Ashford and Melvin Witten are coordinating the series and planning for programming from April through June/July. This later launch this year will allow for a comprehensive marketing effort of the season of offerings.
- ***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. We have been in discussion with our colleagues at UDC and hope to have the two-day March event take place in their performing arts space this year.
- ***Grantee Application Assistance Program***: In our efforts to reach deep into our community and to connect with communities that may not be familiar with CAH and its opportunities, we are putting together a cohort of current grantees who will go into the community and help orient new applicants to our grant opportunities and assist them in navigating compliance requirements and the grantee application portal. Our goal is to launch this in February in preparation for the launch of our fellowship and project-based grants launch in May.

REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS

- **The Evolution of AHFP:** The Arts and Humanities Fellowship Program is one of CAH’s signature grant programs for individual artists. The commitment to supporting individuals has grown significantly in recent years with a current AHFP budget in excess of \$3m. As we determine how this program continues to grow and reflect the need of individuals in our community, we want to involve that community in the decision-making around any proposed changes. Below is a skeletal timeline for engagement in advance of the launch of FY24 AHFP in May:

Dates	Engagement
Early/Mid-February	Survey of individual artists and humanities practitioners
Mid/Late-February	Townhall(s)/Focus Groups
March	Presentation of findings and recommendations to ED and commissioners
April	Socialization of proposed evolution with community
May	FY 2024 AHFP Launch

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.

- **Monthly Newsletter:** CAH’s Communications Dept. launched its first monthly newsletter in early-January. The goal of this newsletter is to better inform the community of the work of CAH, the people behind it, and an opportunity to share resources to help sustain and support them.
- **Engaging Marketing and Communications Departments:** Our colleague, JR Russ (CAH Public Affairs Specialist) has been meeting with marketing departments of arts and humanities organizations across the city to better support and connect with them and the work of their 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**
Our HR specialist, Denise Jackson and I are planning next steps for staff engagement following the organizational development sessions in December with consultant, Shereen Williams. Denise is also working with the Wellness Committee to create a slate of opportunities for agency staff.

- **Hiring Updates**

- Welcome to Terrance Brown Jr. as the latest addition to the agency. Terrance joins the Grants Dept. as a grants management specialist.

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