



DC CAH Preliminary Findings and Recommendations

CAH Task Force on Equity, Inclusion & Belonging
December 2020



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES



Golden Rule
TECHNOLOGY + INCLUSION

The Task Force Charter

The purpose of the DC CAH Task Force on Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging is to create a set of practices and behaviors and a culture of fair and equitable processes to ensure robust, varied, and fully-accessible resources to the broad community; substantively address any perceptions to the contrary; and boldly lead, setting an example for the region and industry while, where necessary, improving and optimizing the ways we do business.

Task Force Members

Reginald Van Lee, Task Force Chair

Kay Kendall, Task Force Co-Chair, CAH Chairperson

Cora Masters Berry, Task Force Co-Chair, CAH Commissioner

Heran Sereke-Brhan, CAH Executive Director

David Markey, CAH Deputy Director

Rhona Wolfe Friedman, CAH Commissioner

Natalie Hopkinson, CAH Commissioner

José Alberto Uclés, CAH Commissioner

Gretchen Wharton, CAH Commissioner

Maggie Fitzpatrick, CAH Commissioner

Quanice Floyd, CAH Commissioner

Monica Ray, Community Member

Davey Yarborough, Community Member

Brian Allende, CAH Resource Allocation Analyst

Lauren Dugas Glover, CAH Public Art Manager

Khalid Randolph, CAH Grants Programs Manager

Jeffrey Scott, CAH Chief of External Affairs

J. Carl Wilson, Jr., CAH General Counsel

Background & Timeline

The task force is an inclusive group of staff, commissioners and community members whose work is aligned around developing recommendations that address the objectives of the charter. Recommendations are informed by primary research and a benchmarking study commissioned by the Task Force.

June 2020: Task force formed; weekly meetings began

September 2020: Survey research planning began. Sub-teams were formed to develop the questions for each of the key stakeholder groups- staff, commissioners, city council, grant applicants, and grant recipients.

October 2020: Survey fielded with a total of 896 participants

October 2020: Benchmarking study was conducted identifying best practices of arts commissions across the US

November 2020: A second survey was sent to organizations to ascertain their policies and practices around equity and inclusion

November 2020: Focus groups with 20 people were conducted to capture input from the community and grantees who may not have been reached by the survey

December 2020: The Task Force formed sub-teams to hone recommendations: Practices & Culture, Accessibility & Community, and Leadership & Business Optimization

December 2020: Final recommendations were developed

DC CAH TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Accepted by the Board of Commissioners
25 January 2012

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION	TIME LINE	COSTS	RESPONSIBILITY
MULTILINGUALISM				
	Proactively advertise (e.g., website and elsewhere) the existing service around information provided in multiple languages (especially Spanish) upon request- grant applications, all materials, language interpreters	2Q	\$2,000 starting point for welcome messaging	Communications and Grants staff
DIVERSITY & EQUITY REPRESENTATION IN GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS				
	Require diversity data in mid year reports on organizations' boards, staff, constituents. Include questions on next grant cycle applications	2Q	No Cost	Grants staff
CLEAN HANDS REQUIREMENT CLARIFICATION				
	Clarify that the current policy allows those on payment plans to apply (Not to be publicized)	2Q	No Cost	Grants staff
MATCHING REQUIREMENT ADJUSTMENT				
	Waive the matching requirement for GOS grants for all organizations with budgets of \$500K or below. (The prior threshold was \$250K)	2Q	No Cost	Grants staff
COMMUNICATIONS OUTREACH				

Explore the possibility of using Instagram/social media for 2-way communication between staff and artists/community.	2Q	TBD	Communications
Improve visibility of arts, exhibitions, productions, and allow for the community to reach/communicate with artists and organizations (DC Arts in Real Time)	3Q	TBD	Communications
Establish a robust outreach plan that includes local print, tv and radio media, partnerships with creative organizations to advertise and make referrals. Develop social media campaign that targets at promise populations	2Q/3Q	TBD	Communicatons
Initiate community-based, art-informed public messaging campaigns using District-based creative agencies representing Black, Brown, and other historically marginalized groups to creatively share information about CAH opportunities for funding and examples of CAH-funded projects.	3Q	TBD	Communications
Proactively widen the audience of people who are notified by communicating with a wide variety of groups and by placing ads in key spots, i.e. DC Council's Communications' offices, to ANCs, community organizations, and neighborhood newspapers. Seek ways to engage broader community in CAH messaging through school and community competitions for CAH poster and public messaging campaigns.	2Q	TBD	Communications

Utilize MWBE classification across the entire ecosystem. Advertise all MWBE programs and targets.	2Q	TBD	Communications
Establish definition of equity and inclusion using Task Force definitions. Publish these definitions on the website and in all grant guidelines.	2Q	TBD	Communications
Offer convenient times for staff to meet with working community members, including evening hours.	2Q	Review	ED & Staff members
BUDGET: Accommodate within current budget as possible, but revisit overall as necessary.	2Q		ED & Communications

WEB UPGRADES/UPDATES

Ensure that the website currently being re-done includes additional interactive capabilities--perhaps through social media and mobile applications. List resources using clear, attractive and accessible presentation.	2Q/3Q	TBD	Communications and Staff
Customize portal to make it more user-friendly. Make uploading data for applications easier. Find a better portal that is interactive and user friendly; simplify the process. Assign/hire a person (or persons) to specialize on Jungle Laser or train a current grants manager to be the point person. Research the possibility of a private/public partnership that would assess our data architecture pro bono.	3 Q	\$50 - 100K	CAH and Grants staff

FINANCIAL UPDATES FOR PANELS

Call applicants for updates on financials before panels. Add to grant managers' responsibilities if deemed necessary. Review annually.	2 Q	No Cost	Grants staff
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GRANTEE DEBRIEFS

Require grant managers to let all applicants who fail to get a grant know that they have a 30-day window for debriefings. Require a second email to ensure the communication. Give direct info on how to communicate with grant managers so that there is no slippage in receiving messages. At the time grant winners are announced, set up definite meeting dates and times with those who did not succeed. If they do not want to attend, it is up to artist/organization to let the staff know. Responsibility of the Commission to initiate concrete steps to offer positive feedback and assistance. Do not wait. Be proactive. Publicize on the website and other media that we offer this to those who did not receive a grant.

2Q

No Cost

Grants staff,
Communications and
Marketing

CAH will establish a process that all unsuccessful applicants shall receive scoring notes and rubrics automatically. Publicize that we offer this to those who did not receive a grant.

2Q

No Cost

Grants staff,
Communications and
Marketing

COMMUNITY INTERACTION

Interact more with community and answer questions related to grants, grant writing as well as provide information about the Commission, its budget and operations i.e., Dir. and Commissioners dialogue/facetime with Councilmembers.

2Q/3Q

TBD

Executive Director,
Commissioners and
Staff

Set up 'Commission Stations' for staff and community interaction- virtually now, and post-COVID in public facilities such as schools, museums and libraries. Establish a consistent dialogue (e.g., quarterly town halls) between Executive Director, Commissioners and City Council members. (Commissioner from Councilmember wards) Priority on at promise communities.	2Q/3Q	TBD	Executive Director, Commissioners and Staff
Develop a plan to conduct a survey of community needs and Commission performance every two years.	3Q/4Q	TBD	Commissioners and Staff

PANEL DIVERSITY & MANAGEMENT

Enlist and actively seek new panelists that represent the community. Establish pods in communities (PICS) and use the Commission Stations (staff and community interaction venues). Do better outreach. Talk to the churches. Ask Commissioners and the community to provide recommendations. Put panelist application on CAH website and highlight it when grants are announced.	2Q	TBD	Executive Director and Staff
Choose a diverse group of panelists who best reflect the composition and demographics of our city and who are advocates for the arts community. Keep a rubric of qualifications for ideal demographics of panelists. Set equity and inclusion targets for the pool of grant reviewers. Ensure that wards have adequate and equitable representation on grant panels, with a focus on Black, Brown, and other historically excluded groups.	2Q	No Cost	Grants staff and Commissioners
Submit legislation to the Council for payment of panelists. This will help secure working people on the panels and shows respect for their time. Follow NEA guidelines for panelist payment amount.	2Q	TBD	General Counsel

Create Panelist Committee as a standing committee	2Q	No Cost	Commission Chair and Commissioners
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PANELIST PREPARATION

Spend more time with panelists before the panels. Reinforce and standardize current training with 'How To' video as part of their prep	2Q/3Q	\$3K	Grants staff and Panelists Committee
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COMMISSIONER TERM LIMITS

Consider Commissioner term limits to bring fresh perspectives, drive accountability and ensure equity. Potentially two consecutive three-year terms and rotating off for one year before consideration of reappointment.	3Q	No Cost	Chair and General Counsel
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COMMITTEE CHAIR DECISION MAKING

Ensure that an IDEA lens is applied in the new by-laws to the selection of the Committee Chairs, Committee membership assignments and decisions	2Q	No Cost	Chair, General Counsel, and By-Laws Committee
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COMMISSIONER/STAFF TEAM BUILDING

Plan a retreat for team building amongst Commissioners, amongst Staff, and between Commissioners and Staff.	3Q	TBD	Chair and Executive Director
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DIRECT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Create a category of grants/direct financial support for disabled, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ arts administrators and organizations	2Q/3Q	TBD	Grants staff
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HELPING SMALLER ORGANIZATIONS GROW

Help smaller organizations grow by evaluating the feasibility of using different formulas than are currently being used. Using the same selection criteria, consider increasing the cohort size mix by adding 15 qualified new grantees with annual budgets of \$500K or less.

2Q

TBD

Grants staff to Grants Committee to Commissioners

Consider multi-year funding

TBD

TBD

Grants staff and Executive Director

Consider mechanisms for providing grant writing support

TBD

TBD

Grants staff

GEOGRAPHIC EQUITY

Create equity throughout the wards by ensuring that geography is an important consideration in IDEA. Using the same selection criteria, consider adding at least 10 qualified new grantees from EOTR

2Q

No Cost

Grants staff to Grants Committee to Commissioners

EXPANDING SPECIAL GRANT CATEGORIES

Based on findings of the baseline data, consider establishing an open applications period for "special projects" for emerging and expanding artists and organizations.

TBD

No Cost

Executive Director, specific assigned staff person(s). Input and review from total staff and Commissioners.

Based on findings of the baseline data, consider establishing different grant categories within various grant venues (e.g., for emerging and established artists and organizations, as well as Black, Brown and historically excluded groups.)

TBD

No Cost

Executive Director, specific assigned staff person(s). Input and review from total staff and Commissioners.

EQUITY TRAINING FOR COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

List equity training resources on website for the community to easily see and use.	2Q	No Cost	Communications
Conduct equity training by a hired outside professional TBD, whether entire commission trains as one group or separate for staff and commissioners.	2Q/3Q	TBD	Executive Director and Chair

EQUITY & INCLUSION TARGETS

Conduct a study to establish baseline data on how grants are currently distributed with the goal of reallocation of funding to align with race and other demographics. Consider increasing the number of African American grantees by at least 10%. Use available tools and resources. Consider outside help for analysis and insight development as required.	9 months to establish reallocation for FY 2022; three years to fully align with city statistics; By Jan 2021 for FY 2022	TBD	Grants Committee and Staff
Develop and implement a metric system for equity to be included in grant scoring by giving extra points/value/consideration to organizations that employ and execute equity, inclusion in various forms such as programs, events, staff, Board, public communications and other areas. Conduct a thorough review of outcomes after each metric system is added. Suggest implementing a ladder approach to measure outcomes.	3Q (April-May) with scaffolding of steps, Q4 with published results. Staff reporting to Commission, establish timeline.	No Cost	Grants Committee and Staff

EQUITY LENS AND MATRIX APPLIED TO ALL GRANTS

(A) Ensure that the pool of CAH applicants for both individual grants and GOS institutional and project grants shift by at least 5-10% each year to include arts organizations and individual artists who have not received city investments, especially Black, Brown, and other historically excluded groups . (B) Require grant managers to be accountable to equity targets in the pool of applicants each grant cycle (C) Revise language and criteria for grants to include an equity lens according to definitions developed by the Equity Task Force. D) Require bi-annual reports from CAH Staff on progress toward equity goals.

2Q (Jan-March)

No Cost

Executive Director,
Specific Staff assigned,
with review by
Commission.

(A) Analyze grants to define how an equity lens can be applied. (B) Define artistic merit/excellence and publish on website and in grant guidelines. Discuss with grant applicants and include in all grant guidelines. Use Task Force definitions where applicable for grant proposals. (C) Analysis should have input from staff and Commissioners. (D) Develop quarterly progress reports to Commissioners of the revision of grants guidelines and outcomes (goals) regarding equity.

2Q (Jan-March)

No Cost

Executive Director,
Specific Staff assigned,
with review by
Commission.

APPLY EQUITY LENS TO BUDGET SUPPORT ACT

Apply equity lens to the Budget Supports Act and challenge existence of the law and cohorts defined in that law

2Q

No Cost

General Counsel and
Commissioners

CREATE IDEA STANDING COMMITTEE

Create IDEA Standing Committee

2Q

No Cost

Chair and Commissioners