



DC COMMISSION ON ARTS & HUMANITIES

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**  
SUBMITTED BY  
**DAVID MARKEY, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
NOVEMBER 21, 2022

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**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 are six weeks into the new fiscal year and grant managers, in both the Grants and Public Art Departments, are busily securing required paperwork for approximately 900 grantees to route for execution. The grants process is a layered 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. Once agreements are fully executed, awards move into the payment processing system for a purchase order to be established. There have been some additional challenges this year with the new financial system, DIFS, which staff members are in the process of remediating with colleagues across several agencies.

Grant managers have also begun to assemble panelists' feedback to send to applicants and grantees, and to engage them in the debriefing process. We wish for all applicants to be successful in our processes and encourage applicants to receive panelists' comments and

engage in meetings with grant managers, so they can build upon the strengths of their applications for future grant cycles.

We mentioned at the end of the last fiscal year, that CAH issued approximately 1,400 awards in FY 2022. A similar number of reports are now due, which grant managers will begin to review and approve.

Grants managers also engage in site visits on an ongoing basis. This engagement is a vital part of the work they do, not only as an indicator of CAH's support for organizations and individuals beyond the grant award, but as a means of better understanding the successes and challenges of the community, and in turn, to have CAH's grants and programmatic opportunities better reflect those needs.

While both Grants and Public Art Departments run parallel in many of their application and award processes, direct engagement with grantees is deeper and more ongoing for Public Art grantees in the post-award phases of the process. Some examples of such ongoing engagement include the work of the curatorial, Arts Exhibition Grant (AEG), the Barry Legacy Project grant, and the Public Art Building Communities (PABC) grant. Just last week, the Public Art Department co-presented one of this year's PABC projects to the Commission of Fine Arts for approval.

### **REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS**

An example of how grant managers engage in a process of reflection to improve upon ways of working and to respond to the evolving needs of the community can be seen in recent work around CAH's panel process. The Grants Dept. has embarked on assessing the current structure to: (a) establish a baseline of understanding as to the current process; (b) better identify gaps in knowledge and understanding; (c) establish clear and consistent processes across all grant programs; and (d) strategize for panelist recruitment and onboarding.

Grants Dept. staff also recently did a deep dive into CAH's grant programs and processes with members of both the Grants and I.D.E.A. Committees.

### **UPCOMING**

The FY23 cycle of the Facilities and Buildings (Relief) grant is scheduled to launch on November 28<sup>th</sup>. This will be the third year CAH has been able to offer this opportunity to assist arts and humanities organizations in rent or mortgage payments for their facilities. The application window will be open through December 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **FORECASTING TO FY 2024**

CAH recently presented its proposed budget for FY 2024 to the Mayor's Budget Office. The budget included many of the key initiatives that have been discussed in recent months, along with a personnel plan to better address current and anticipated workflow scope and future growth.

## 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 scheduled to take place before the end of the year. These will be followed by a workshop specific to access and inclusion, as they relate to disability, early in 2023. The more informed we are as staff in these areas, the more of a resource we can be to our applicants and grantees.

- ***The Artists' Table***

As many of you are aware, the October 27<sup>th</sup> event was positively received and we continue to work with our marketing/PR firm to ensure its impact resonates beyond the evening itself. One way of doing this is to have the fifteen artists' portraits housed in CAH's virtual gallery.

- ***Create and Thrive!***

CAH and Arts for the Aging facilitated two trainings this past month for 14 teaching artists to help build their understanding and skills in working with older adults. Once teaching artists are 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 sixteen high schools interested in participating this year. The program is scheduled to take place over a weekend in mid-March 2023.

- ***Celebrate the Creative Spark! is back!***

This series of two-session residencies explores the generative process of the artist with children and youth in DC's Public and Public Charter Schools and is scheduled to take place in Winter/Spring of 2023. CAH will solicit applications from teaching artists and pair them with the appropriate ages/grades and schools across the city in what promises to be a fun exploration of creativity.

## **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 has begun her work with staff around issues of concern with the goal of building a more cohesive and positive workplace environment at the agency.

- **FY 2022 End-of-year Reviews and FY 2023 S.M.A.R.T. Goals**

Self-evaluations and manager-staff meetings have now been completed and FY 2023 are in process.

- **Hiring Updates**

- **Executive Assistant:** We anticipate our new executive assistant joining us on December 5<sup>th</sup>.
- **Grants Management Specialist:** We anticipate a new grants manager joining the Grants Dept. in early-January.
- **General Counsel:** Interviews for this position are near completion. We have several strong candidates in the mix and hope to on-board a new GC early in 2023.
- **Executive Director:** The search process is moving swiftly with the goal of identifying a new ED early in the new year.

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