



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

DIRECTOR'S REPORT
SUBMITTED BY
AARON MYERS, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
April 24, 2023

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

Recognizing the Interims

I'd like to start by taking a moment to recognize two individuals that made sure the agency continued to function as effectively as possible during this recent leadership transition: Deputy Director David Markey for his service as Interim Executive Director from August 2022 until earlier this month, and Attorney Advisor Robin Carr McClure, for her service as Interim General Counsel from March 2022 until March 2023.

FY 2024 Budget Support Act

To echo Chairman Van Lee, the annual budget process has a lot of moving parts to it. The draft legislation for the FY 2024 Budget Support Act submitted by the Mayor to the Council includes a "dedicated revenue adjustment" subtitle. CAH is included in this subtitle. Several other agencies are included in the subtitle as well. At our budget oversight hearing on March 30, several of our grantees expressed their opposition to this subtitle, and on Thursday of this week, the Committee of the Whole will mark-up the BSA, at which point we'll see what changes the Council might propose.

Agency Operations

Over the years we've watched as the surface parking lots here in Navy Yard disappear one by one as new buildings are constructed in their place. That fate appears sealed for two of the last remaining lots, directly in front of our building at 200 I Street SE, which recently discontinued operations. A number of our staff rely on those lots as part of their daily commute to the office, so in an effort to hopefully relieve some pressures, the agency is now on a temporary three day telework/two day in office split (previously it was two days telework, three days office split). This temporary measure will be evaluated in the coming months.

For the first time in recent memory, and perhaps ever, we have provided bonus checks to the staff. They have performed admirably under the pressure of the pandemic and leadership transitions, and their work is deeply appreciated. We intend for bonuses to be given annually going forward, as is the practice in other independent agencies.

One of my chief priorities currently is to provide for the wellness of the staff through physical, social, and emotional health. The department heads are currently conceptualizing ideas for wellness plans, and we will be involving the staff on the development of these plans as well.

Current and upcoming Requests for Applications

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

FY24 Art Bank Grant; opens May 1

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

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

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

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

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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.