



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Aaron Myers, Executive Director

July 24, 2023

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

1. New and Returning Commissioners

Welcome to our newest members, Commissioner Julianne Brienza, Commissioner Cecily Habimana, and Commissioner Chase Maggiano, and welcome back to our returning members Commissioner Sims and Commissioner Torres. The staff and I look forward to working together in service of our constituents.

2. Grantees Comms Working Group

Public Affairs Specialist JR Russ reached out to communications staff at grantee organizations this past January to build relationships and to better support sharing news about CAH funded programs. And enough respondents expressed interest in a Communications Working Group, which kicked off with an exploratory conversation in April with a list of 50 grantee organizations. The goals were to position CAH as a resource for professional development and support regarding communications, as well as provide a space for peer learning. Since April, there have been two meetings which have covered communications theory, measuring impact, social media statistics, search engine optimization basics, and using analytics tools across several platforms. Meetings of the Working Group will continue monthly for the remainder of the fiscal year.

3. Additional Office Space

The number of agency professional staff continues to increase in order to meet the needs of the moment and provide the best possible customer service to our constituents. However, staff need space to work, and even with our current posture of allowing staff up to three teleworking days a week, we are nearly out of space in our current office suite. At the front of the 200 I Street building is an office suite previously occupied by the 202Creates program. That program has now joined with the Creative Affairs Office at the Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, and Entertainment office building in northeast DC, leaving the space at the front of this building vacant. CAH is aggressively pursuing obtaining that suite through the Office of the City Administrator as additional workspace for staff. If successful, we would likely move the entire Grants Department to the new space, while keeping operations and support teams in the current space. The entrance to the suite is before the building's security checkpoint, allowing grantees and other constituents easier access to grant managers for meetings, debriefings, and workshops.

4. New Staff

We have selected individuals for the 3 roles below and they have all received “tentative selections”; currently working to get them official offer letters and onboarded at the date shown below.

<u>Events Coordinator #1</u>	projected start date 7/31
<u>Events Coordinator #2</u>	projected start date 8/14
<u>Special Assistant</u>	projected start date 8/14

Interviews are currently **in progress** for the Community Outreach Specialist.

Interviews will begin in the next few days for the Arts Grants Coordinator.

The Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Officer position description has been drafted and is with the DCHR Classifications team for review and approval. Once approved we will be able to post the opportunity and accept applications.

5. Finance Department

CAH has issued over 1,000 distinct grant awards in each of the last four fiscal years. To the best of our knowledge, no other grantmaking agency in the District of Columbia government comes close to those numbers. Issuing over 1,000 grant awards means that over 1,000 separate purchase orders have to be created, and once created, grantees invoices must be processed against those purchase orders to disburse the funds to their intended recipients. Our Finance Department manages the entire purchase order/invoicing/payment process for the grants, while at the same time managing requisition and payment requests from the rest of the agency as well. What we might sometimes lose sight of is that CAH’s Finance Department has been just three individuals: Resource Allocation Officer Brian Allende, Program Analyst Kia King, and Resource Allocation Analyst Melissa Leonard. And now, for the time being at least, we will have a Finance Department of two, as Kia is leaving the agency to pursue an exciting new opportunity that we’re sure she will be great at. The critical work of the Finance Department cannot be overstated, because if our grantees don’t receive their funding, if the money isn’t in their account, then we have failed in our mission. I am deeply appreciative and grateful for countless hours of hard work from Brian, Melissa, and Kia.

6. Art All Night 2023

CAH has finalized and executed the Art All Night 2023 Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Small and Local Business Development. Per the terms of the MOU, CAH has advanced \$250,000 to DSLBD to support the 2023 Art All Night festival. Previously, Commissioners expressed an interest in CAH having a more visible role at the festival itself, reflective of the agency as the major funder

for Art All Night. However, as outlined in the chart below, CAH is no longer the major funder as of the 2022 festival.

AAN 2019		
<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
CAH	\$ 185,000.00	39%
DSLBD	\$ 180,287.04	38%
Private Funds	\$ 91,989.86	19%
Other DC government agencies	\$ 15,000.00	3%
TOTAL	\$ 472,276.90	
<i>AAN 2020 — No Event</i>		
AAN 2021		
<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
CAH	\$ 200,000.00	30%
DSLBD	\$ 155,024.81	24%
DMPED	\$ 125,000.00	19%
Private Funds	\$ 126,558.15	19%
Other DC government agencies	\$ 49,200.00	8%
TOTAL	\$ 655,782.96	
AAN 2022		
<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
DSLBD	\$ 443,955.72	46%
CAH	\$ 285,000.00	30%
MSO fundraising	\$ 226,019.85	24%
TOTAL	\$ 954,975.57	

In light of this, along with the reality that this is a government event with its topline branding as “Mayor Bowser Presents”, any additional prominence for CAH at the festival is unlikely.

7. Large Capital Grants Program

As Chairperson Van Lee indicated, we will learn more about the new Large Capital Grants program in the Grants Committee’s report. A requirement of the legislation that created this new grant program is that the Commission issue rules to set forth the eligibility and disbursement requirements for the grant, and we will look at some

proposed rules tonight. It's been my goal as an artist and advocate to be as fair and equitable as possible, and I intend to continue to be as fair and equitable as possible as the Executive Director for the Commission. And so, I want our constituents to be fully aware of what is in the law, and the process that we are required to undertake here. As we've studied this issue, we've received feedback from grantees on parts of the law that seem positive, and parts that could benefit from an adjustment. It is our intention to share that research with the Council alongside our proposed rules for the grant. Our goal, ultimately, is to provide solutions that are in the best service of the District's arts and cultural sector both at the organizational level and the individual one as well.

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