



**DC COMMISSION ON
THE ARTS & HUMANITIES
STRATEGIC PLAN
2021 - 2023**

SUBMITTED BY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THEMES OF THE PLAN:

1. **Embedding Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) as core values of Agency grantmaking and every aspect of its programs, governance and operations**
2. **Leading the post-pandemic recovery of the District's arts and culture sector and beyond**
3. **Improving the Agency's alignment with the Executive and Legislative branches of the District of Columbia government; improving CAH governance and organizational culture**

Since 1968, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (the Commission, CAH, or the Agency) has supported and advanced the arts and cultural life of the District of Columbia.

With the onset of the Covid pandemic in 2020 and the coincident national protests and conversations around historical and systemic racism, inequities, and injustices, CAH has undergone a period of intense reexamination of its programs and practices. See further discussion of the Task Force on Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (the Task Force) relating to Goal One.

While this plan builds on the historical activity of the Commission providing grants to the nonprofit arts community and to individual artists, it cannot be overemphasized that the goals and strategies outlined here to be pursued in the 2021-23 period have been profoundly affected by the events of the last two years. Though challenges abound, as they do for every arts grantmaker across the country, the Commission is now in a strong position to further develop its toolkits, programs, capacities, and relationships in order to have even greater impact in its diverse communities, in the arts sector, and more broadly affecting the social and economic recovery of the District post-pandemic.

In addition to the IDEA and pandemic context of this plan, another factor affecting CAH is the fact of its becoming an independent agency of District government in 2019. While the Mayor continues to appoint the Chair and all Commissioners, the Commission now has direct authority to hire the Executive Director, with consent of the Council. The Commission's annual budget is currently funded almost exclusively by a percentage of received sales tax revenues as defined by legislation, which is subject to change, and agency performance continues to be evaluated on an annual basis by the Council. The Agency is thus not fully independent. Rather, it is interdependent. It is critical to the success of the Agency to build relationships with other sectors and branches of District government.

This plan was developed in large part through consultation with the Agency's key stakeholders from February through May 2021, solicited directly through a comprehensive series of 55 confidential interviews (listed in Appendix A) and two public meetings conducted virtually due to Covid restrictions. Stakeholders included the Agency's grantees, i.e., individual artists and other nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. Also interviewed were stakeholders inside District government – the Mayor's Office, City Councilmembers, agency heads, and senior staff—and community stakeholders, such as community development organizations, Business Improvement Districts, and others whose work intersects with the District's cultural life in some way. Also included were interviews with several Commissioners, Task Force Members, and the Agency's senior staff leaders.

This strategic plan serves as the District's state arts plan, as required by the National Endowment for the Arts of all state arts agencies. As mandated by the NEA and reflected above, this plan is the result of an inclusive, public process that solicited and represented the perspectives of arts constituencies throughout the District of Columbia and reflects the recommendations from that public process.

As a next step in the planning process, Agency staff will be responsible for developing implementation steps and workplans (including timelines, costs and persons responsible) based on the goals and strategies outlined here. As an example, Agency staff will align the Task Force Recommendations attached hereto as Appendix A (many already in the form of implementation steps) with each of these goals and strategies.

Progress against the goals of this Plan will require significant financial and human capital investment. Agency staff will quantify and prioritize these investments in the implementation planning process. One of the most important implementation steps will be the requirement that the CAH Executive Director report at least annually to the Commission on progress against the goals of this Plan.

The list of stakeholders interviewed appears as Appendix B.

The research component of the planning process involved examination of the following:

1. 2012-2020 CAH Strategic Plan
2. CAH enabling legislation
3. NEA State Partnership Guidelines
4. DC Cultural Plan
5. DC Creative Economy Strategy
6. Task Force on Equity, Inclusion and Belonging
 - a. Findings and Recommendations
 - b. Surveys
 - c. Focus groups
 - d. Verbatims
 - e. Benchmarking study
7. CAH budget and organizational chart

Grateful acknowledgement and special thanks are due to CAH Chair Kay Kendall, Executive Director Heran Sereke-Brhan, PhD; Chief of Staff Jeffrey Scott, PhD; and Deputy Director David Markey for directing and coordinating the strategic planning process over the six months required to produce this Plan.

Thanks also to Task Force Chair and incoming CAH Chair Reggie Van Lee, to all the members of the Task Force, and to Task Force Consultant Elaine Harris for further advancing the ideals of IDEA in the context of this Plan.

A list of the CAH Commissioners and staff is attached as Appendix C.



Resolving these key challenges by implementing the strategies of this plan will put CAH on track to greater success.

1. How will CAH implement and measure the success of its recent IDEA initiative (Task Force Recommendations)?
2. How will CAH lead the recovery of the nonprofit arts and culture sector in the District and position the arts as an important contributor to the District's broader economic and social recovery efforts?
3. How will CAH improve communications and strengthen community connections in order to close the gap between internal and external stakeholders' perception of its work?
4. How will CAH bring itself into greater alignment with both the Executive and Legislative branches of District Government?
5. How will CAH rethink its governance protocols to improve Commissioner and staff relationships and morale and improve the CAH brand within District government and in the broader community?



KEY FINDINGS

Stakeholders provided remarkably consistent messages to the Commission – on the priority of IDEA and arts sector pandemic recovery efforts, as well as the need to more fully embrace proactive communications strategies that will more tightly knit the Commission to the diverse communities it serves, as well as foster collaboration in the sector. Stakeholders also were candid in their assessment that the current level of discord among Commissioners is a distraction from the Agency’s work. Stakeholders believe that overcoming these challenges – including the frequent and destabilizing turnover in the Executive Director position – is an essential prerequisite to the Commission’s success with every element of this plan.

Stakeholders are eager for the Commission to expand its leadership role as an advocate for cultural development in the District. They strongly urged the Commission to take on a larger, visionary and more proactive leadership role. They describe an arts and culture sector that is large, creatively vital, and too often overlooked, especially in all its diverse manifestations.

The field has long been beleaguered by the forces of gentrification, increasing social and economic disparity, and the stresses of sustaining a nonprofit organization or an artistic career. These challenges underscore the need for proactive leadership on the part of the Agency. There is widespread acknowledgment of the leadership platform the Commission possesses, particularly as it sits at the center of a web of relationships with other District government agencies that can be more fully developed for the benefit of the arts and culture sector as well as the broader community in post-pandemic context.

Stakeholders from other units of District government observed that while every agency has the responsibility to do the substantive work with which it is charged, every agency also has the responsibility to develop a diverse and committed constituency for its work – together with a broad awareness of the benefits of its work – among District residents and taxpayers. As a possible model for the Commission, comparisons were made to the Friends of the DC Public Library, a citizens advocacy organization with ties to every neighborhood library throughout the District.



THE PLAN GOALS & STRATEGIES

There are five focus areas and goals of the plan, each with a set of accompanying strategies:

1. **I.D.E.A.**
Commit to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) in every aspect of Agency grantmaking 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

PUBLIC ART

In a parallel planning process, the Public Art Program is developing a Public Art Master Plan whose results will be reported on the same timeline as this plan.

Following is a summary of each area of focus and the strategies pertaining to each area that will guide the work of the Agency for the next three years.



GOAL ONE INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESS

Commit to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access (IDEA) in every aspect of grantmaking and other programs and operations, including governance and administration

The increasing awareness of fundamental social inequities and the events of 2020 forced a reckoning at CAH – as well as nationwide and worldwide – around gaps between institutional aspirations and outcomes regarding IDEA.

In response to these gaps, CAH formed the Task Force on Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (the Task Force) composed of Commissioners, community members, and staff. From June to December 2020, the Task Force met weekly for two hours to discuss ways in which the Agency could become more accessible and equitable in its work. The result of this six-month process was a slate of 44 Recommendations developed by the Task Force that were subsequently formally adopted by the Commission.

The work of the Task Force included both a view of past Commission work as well as a focus on how to improve IDEA practices in the future. In reviewing the past, the Task Force identified opportunities to improve on past shortcomings around the equitable distribution of funding, for example with the National Capital Arts Cohort (NCAC), which provided non-competitive funds to organizations with budgets exceeding \$1 million. This excluded and disadvantaged smaller organizations. This is to acknowledge that CAH, as with many other American institutions, contributed to these inequities. At its April 19, 2021 meeting, the Commission passed a resolution asking the Council to repeal the NCAC mandate.

The Task Force Recommendations are hereby incorporated by reference into this 2021-23 Strategic Plan, and they appear in full in the Appendix. These Recommendations are to be integrated into the implementation planning undertaken by the Agency staff to fulfill the goals and strategies of this Plan. Additionally, because IDEA values must figure in all operations of the Commission, many of these Recommendations are woven throughout this Plan.

The Recommendations are the strategies and specific implementation steps (timeline, cost, person/group responsible) the Agency commits to undertake in furtherance of this goal.

Progress against these implementation steps will be overseen by the Executive Director and by the Commission's newly constituted IDEA Committee (its formation was one of the Task Force Recommendations), which reports to the full Commission. The Executive Director and the IDEA Committee Chair will make progress reports to the full Commission at least quarterly and will share this progress publicly.

Understanding that equity in contemporary America is better described as an ongoing quest, rather than a final destination, the Task Force employed the following definition of equity in its surveys and focus groups:

EQUITY is giving everyone what they need to be successful. Equity is not the same as treating everyone the same. Equity is operating from the understanding that individuals arrive in a given situation from very different starting points.

These starting points are determined by certain social hierarchies often involving race, class, gender, age, sexual identity, disability, etc. An equitable framework centers on awareness of these hierarchies, and creates systems that are actively anti-racist, anti-classist, anti-sexist, anti-ageist, and anti-homophobic/transphobic/queerphobic, anti-ableist, etc.

1. As a first priority in implementing this goal, the IDEA Committee should develop an Anti-Racism and Cultural Transformation Plan of the type exemplified by the [Public Theater](#), for adoption by the full Commission
2. Review and align current grantmaking policies with Task Force Recommendations
3. Develop and implement a metrics-based IDEA system for grant scoring
 - a. Require demographic data relating to the diversity of organizations' programs, boards, staff, public communications, and audience
 - b. Give extra consideration to organizations that demonstrate commitment to IDEA
4. Strengthen data collection efforts and utilize such data to analyze the efficacy and impact of grant programs
5. Ensure a diverse group of grant review panelists (including a diversity of art forms represented, including new art forms) and train them in accordance with Task Force Recommendations; pay panelists to ensure greater diversity in the panelist pool
6. Create mentorship opportunities whereby larger organizations can assist smaller organizations by sharing knowledge, resources, and program collaborations; consider a Mentorship Fund to support mentorship of individuals



Energize the 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

1. Update grantmaking procedures to:
 - a. Increase the efficiency of program delivery and adapt to evolution in the field such as increasing multi-disciplinarity and new art forms
 - b. Simplify the application process (and provide technical assistance) consistent with Task Force Recommendations, including multilingualism
 - c. Ensure a diversity of types of projects are funded, e.g., new art forms
2. Focus on capacity building for organizations so they can scale successfully and over time become more self-sustaining and less dependent on a concentrated number of donors, including CAH, recognizing that corporate and foundation donations to the arts and humanities in DC are dwindling
3. Focus on growth, resilience and preparedness in the DC arts and humanities communities, anticipating future exogenous shocks incapable of prediction or prevention
4. With the state arts agencies of Maryland and Virginia, explore the benefits of coordinating policies and programs and cultivating shared resources that address the needs of resident artists and arts organizations that draw audiences from all three of the jurisdictions comprising the DC Metropolitan Area
5. Make multi-year funding available in as many grant programs as appropriate, helping to stabilize funding that is key to the sustainability of the cultural sector, while also ensuring each year includes new grantees, including both individuals and smaller organizations.
6. When grants are announced, proactively set up meeting times with named grant managers for those who did not succeed, offering constructive feedback and technical assistance with future applications
7. Advocate and explore financial incentives for arts and cultural uses of vacant and underused commercial and public-owned real estate as a means of neighborhood revitalization, anti-displacement efforts, and creative placemaking in the altered post-pandemic urban landscape

8. In the Arts Education Program, promote sequential programming and filling gaps in arts instruction; provide professional development, capacity building, and a community of practice among arts education providers; expand existing partnerships to improve arts education delivery



Improve communications, raise awareness of CAH programs, strengthen community connections between and among stakeholders in the field, and elevate the role of the arts and humanities throughout the District

1. Build a powerful social media presence, forging stronger connections with more diverse and younger audiences
2. Ensure the new website facilitates easy uploading, interfaces smoothly with social media and mobile applications, and is friendly to all users, e.g., by using ALT-text for the visually impaired
3. Explore the possibility of developing or acquiring a website, possibly with non-governmental partners, that would serve as a calendar of local arts and cultural events, heavily marketed to both residents and visitors, on the model of Philadelphia's *Uwishunu*; in the alternative, explore an online partnership with *The Washington Post* to similar ends
4. Strengthen connections between and among stakeholders in the field to elevate the arts and humanities and connect them to other sectors such as education (including higher education institutions), real estate and neighborhoods, e.g., building more active partnerships with Business Improvement Districts and District government initiatives such as Art All Night, and providing resources of artists available to hire
5. Serve as a convener for the field, to allow artists to speak directly to administrators, to potential supporters, and to each other about the needs of artists, and to advocate for legal and wage protections for artists
6. Proactively expand the audience of people who are notified about agency opportunities using DC creative agencies representing Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises; Black, Brown, and other historically marginalized groups; and by placing ads in Councilmembers' communications, ANCs, community organizations, and neighborhood newspapers; close the gap between internal and external stakeholders' perception of Agency work
7. Continue offering professional development opportunities for arts workers through the agency's 'Business of the Arts' series and sponsor participation in similar programs offered by other organizations; explore the possibility of developing a professional development internship/mentorship program or an advanced certificate program in association with the University of the District of Columbia

8. Promote the agency's technical assistance in grant writing programs as well as in-person workshops offered periodically in the community year-round, e.g., by using social media to greater degree, compiling and circulating lists of pay-for-hire grant-writers, considering ways to specially fund this capacity-building activity, etc.
9. Consider a program offering technical assistance to artists and arts organizations that need help growing earned income or better utilizing new technologies for audience engagement and program development
10. Quantify costs to achieve the above objectives and prioritize communications investments in budget and human resource planning



GOAL FOUR ALIGNMENT WITH DISTRICT GOVERNMENT

Strengthen alignment with both the Executive and Legislative branches of District government

1. Ensure that a senior member of CAH staff is tasked with responsibility for governmental relations, i.e., the newly established Chief of Staff position; create clear success metrics and funding requirements for this role
2. Utilize Commissioners to help improve relations with other branches of government, enhancing the position of the CAH arts and culture agenda at senior levels of District government, e.g., by spearheading annual arts constituent visits with Councilmembers in each of the District's Wards
3. Leverage the Chief of Staff position and the existing Legislative and Community Affairs Office to support and coordinate Commissioner activity in identifying critical arts and cultural development issues and in the pursuit of policy initiatives and partnerships across DC government departmental and agency lines
4. Build better relationships with other sectors of District government to address key needs for arts and humanities practitioners, such as:
 - a. Affordable housing
 - b. Affordable studio, rehearsal, and performance spaces
 - c. Healthcare
 - d. Pandemic recovery in all sectors, including creative placemaking and neighborhood revitalization throughout the District that will re-enliven civic spaces

Since existing CAH resources are insufficient for these purposes, such efforts must be funded through partnering units of DC government.

5. Actively soliciting the Mayor's support, deepen and expand partnerships with other DC Government agencies:
 - a. Department of Housing and Community Development
 - b. DC Public Library
 - c. Department of Parks and Recreation
 - d. Office of the State Superintendent
 - 1) DC Public Schools
 - 2) Public Charter School Board
 - e. Department of Public Works
 - f. Office of Zoning
 - g. Office of Planning

- h. Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments
- i. Mayor's Office of Community Affairs
 - 1) Mayor's Office on African Affairs
 - 2) Mayor's Office on African American Affairs
 - 3) Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs
 - 4) Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs
 - 5) Mayor's Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Affairs
- j. Department of Aging and Community Living
- k. Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development - DMPED
- l. Office of Disability Rights
- m. Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement
- n. DC Youth Advisory Commission
- o. Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment (OCTFME)
- p. DC Housing Authority

and, though not DC Government agencies:

- q. Coalition for Nonprofit Housing & Economic Development
- r. Chamber of Commerce
- s. Greater Washington Board of Trade

6. Assemble the Steering Committee (per D.C. Official Code) to proactively suggest next steps for the Cultural Plan, e.g.:

- a. Better align the District's support for both the for-profit and nonprofit arts sectors, focusing on entrepreneurship and the creative community served, rather than on tax status, e.g., street, hip hop, and guerilla artists who also pursue their work in the commercial pop culture market
- b. Better align arts and culture with the District's economic development goals



GOAL FIVE GOVERNANCE & 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

1. As necessary, pursue legislation to clarify the role of the Commission, and individual Commissioners, in the oversight of the Agency, resolving any ambiguities that blur the lines of authority between Commission oversight and day-to-day operations of the agency that are the responsibility of the Executive Director and staff reporting to the Executive Director, conforming D.C. Code with NEA requirements for state arts agencies
2. Revise CAH Bylaws to clarify that:
 - a. Only the Chair and Executive Director have authority to commit or represent the agency in communication with the public or other units of DC Government
 - b. The Executive Director reports to the Commission in the person of its Chair
 - c. Committees of the Commission report to the full Commission
 - d. Agency staff report to the Executive Director, who is responsible and accountable for managing all day-to-day operations and performance of the agency, including its staff and budget, including the implementation of this Plan; as the Executive Director's supervisor, the CAH Chair will evaluate the performance of the Executive Director annually
 - e. A Governance and Nominating Committee should be formed to facilitate communication among Commissioners on governance matters
 - i. Commissioner appointments should be based on the current mix of Commissioner skills and an assessment of the attributes and skills desirable in new Commissioners, balancing the need for experienced Commissioners with the need to add new energies and skills to the Commission, as well as a balance between representatives of large and small organizations and diverse individual artists
 - ii. Based on Governance Committee input, the CAH Chair will confer with the Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments regarding appointments to the Commission
 - iii. As facilitated by the Chair and with the assistance of a third-party professional with governance expertise, the Governance Committee will conduct an annual evaluation of Commission and Commissioner performance, including performance in implementation of this Plan

- f. Commissioners should be limited in the number of consecutive terms they can serve before a forced rotation, and a maximum length of service should be established
- 3. Augment and clarify conflict-of-interest policies and procedures to help Commissioners avoid any appearance of impropriety or the exercise of undue personal influence over the agency's day-to-day operations, grants, policies or governmental affairs
- 4. Undertake an annual retreat/program of orientation and onboarding for all new Commission members, led by the Governance Committee with CAH staff assistance; one of the most important themes to be stressed in such programs is the interdependence of CAH with DC government, between Commissioners and staff, and between the Commissioners themselves
- 5. Reduce the number of Commission meetings from monthly to bi-monthly or fewer
- 6. Substantially reduce the number of Commissioners
- 7. Provide professional training in respectful confrontation and board development for all Commissioners, as a group, to promote a culture of dialogue and collaboration; provide professional IDEA training for all Commissioners and staff
- 8. Require all grant managers and agency leadership to complete grants management training through the Office of the City Administrator, and plan for a regular review of agency grantmaking processes with the OCA in order to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and best practices



The Public Art Program is a discreetly funded and integral element of agency work. In a parallel planning process, the Public Art Program is developing a multi-year Public Art Master Plan whose results will be reported on the same timeline as this plan. For future planning, at least at intervals, it would be ideal to merge the processes around both the Strategic Plan and the Public Art Master Plan.

The Public Art Master Plan will utilize these specific lenses for considering Public Art and creative placemaking:

1. Artists and Curators
2. Arts and Community Organizations
3. Agency Partnerships
4. Public Audiences
5. Urban Design Legacy
6. Artistic Legacy

The Public Art Master Plan will guide the agency's decision-making and focus resource allocation. IDEA values will be embedded into all proposed outcomes specified by the Public Art Master Plan.

APPENDIX A – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE ON EQUITY, INCLUSION & BELONGING

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Reginald Van Lee, Task Force Chair
Kay Kendall, Task Force Co-Chair and CAH Chairperson
Cora Masters Barry, Task Force Co-Chair and CAH Commissioner
Heran Sereke-Brhan, CAH Executive Director
Rhona Wolfe Friedman, 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 David
Markey, CAH Deputy Director
Khalid Randolph, CAH Grants Programs Manager Jeffrey
Scott, CAH Chief of External Affairs
J. Carl Wilson, Jr., CAH General Counsel

Elaine Harris, Consultant, Golden Rule Technology
Bryan Dumont, Consultant

CAH TASK FORCE EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING RECOMMENDATIONS

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
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
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
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
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
DIRECT FINANCIAL SUPPORT			
Create a category of grants/direct financial support for disabled, BIPOC, LGBTQ+ arts administrators and organizations	2Q/3Q	TBD	Grants staff

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
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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

APPENDIX B – STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

2021-23 DC CAH STRATEGIC PLAN INTERVIEW LIST

Commissioners and Task Force Members

NAME	POSITION/ROLE	AGENCY/ORG
Kay Kendall	Chairperson	CAH-Board
Gretchen Wharton	Grants Committee Chair	CAH-Board
Alma Gates	Public Art Committee Chair	CAH-Board
Cora Masters Barry	Commissioner	CAH-Board
Natalie Hopkinson	Commissioner	CAH-Board
Rhona Friedman	Commissioner	CAH-Board
Jose Ucles	Commissioner	CAH-Board
KyMBER Menkiti	Commissioner	CAH-Board
Hector Torres	Commissioner	CAH Board
Maggie Fitzpatrick	Commissioner	CAH IDEA Task Force
Reggie Van Lee	Community Member	CAH IDEA Task Force
Elaine Harris	Community Member	CAH IDEA Task Force
Monica T. Ray	Community Member	CAH IDEA Task Force
Davey Yarborough	Community Member	CAH IDEA Task Force

DC Government Officials

NAME	POSITION/ROLE	AGENCY/ORG
Andrew Trueblood	Director	DC Office of Planning
Angie Gates	Director	DC Office of Cable TV, Film, Music, and Entertainment
Maryann Lombardi	Associate Director	DC Creative Affairs Office
Richard Reyes-Gavilan	Executive Director	DC Public Library
Christine V. Davis	Interim Director	DC Dept Public Works
Nancee Lyons	MuralsDC Coordinator	DC Dept Public Works

Sandy Bellamy	Percent for Art Program Manager	DC Dept General Services
John Falcicchio	Deputy Mayor	Planning and Economic Development
Sharon Carney	Chief of Staff	Planning and Economic Development
Beverly Perry	Senior Advisor	Executive Office of the Mayor
Phil Mendelson	Chairman	DC Council
Brianne Nadeau	Councilmember Ward 1	DC Council
Brooke Pinto	Councilmember Ward 2	DC Council
Robert White	Councilmember At Large	DC Council
Christina Henderson	Councilmember At Large	DC Council

Community Members

NAME	POSITION/ROLE	AGENCY/ORG
Anthony Williams	CEO of Federal City Council / Former Mayor of DC	
Marvin Bowser	Former CAH Commissioner	
Jack Evans	Former Councilmember Ward 2	
Arthur Espinoza	Former Executive Director of CAH	
Neil Albert	President and Executive Director	DowntownDC
Edgar Dobie	Executive Director	Arena Stage
Peter Nesbett	Executive Director	Washington Project for the Arts
Maureen Dwyer	Executive Director	Sitar Arts Center
Peter Jablow	President and CEO	Levine Music
Chris Naoum	Founder	Listen Local First DC
Victoria Baatin	Director of Social Impact	Kennedy Center
Sandra Beasley	Poet and Lecturer at American University	
Margery E. Goldberg	Founder and Creator	Zenith Gallery

CAH Staff

NAME	POSITION/ROLE	AGENCY/ORG
Heran Sereke-Brhan	Executive Director	CAH
Jeffrey Scott	Chief of Staff	CAH
Lauren Dugas Glover	Public Art Manager	CAH
Valerie Best	Operations Director	CAH
Brian Allende	Resource Allocation Officer	CAH
Carl Wilson	General Counsel	CAH
David Markey	Deputy Director	CAH
Sarah Gordon	Curator	CAH
Alissa Maru	Public Art Program Coordinator	CAH
Alorie Clark	Arts Learning Coordinator	CAH
Kevin Hasser	Grants Programs Manager	CAH
Khalid Randolph	Grants Programs Manager	CAH
Robert Nunez	Grants Programs Manager	CAH

Participants in March 30 and 31, 2021 Public Meetings

NAME
Adele Robey
Adriana Babic
Alejandro Gongora
Anne Troy
Benisse Lester
Beth Akiyama
Bridget Zangueneh
Chuck Hicks
Dennis Houlihan
Diana Movius
Donnell Kie
George Lima
Gillian Drake
Graham Smith-White
Gwydion Suilebhan
Jackie Carter
Janice Marks
Jeri Green
Jessica Teachey
John Good
Jonathan B. Tucker
Jordana Mishory
Julio Valdez
Karen L. Harris
Liz Ashe
Mac Norton

Marilyn Thomas
Mark Chalfant
Maureen Dunn
Micha Winkler Thomas
Michele Banks
Mollie Salah
Nancy Miyahira
Noel Schroeder
Pamela Wessing
Patricia Wheeler
Paula Coleman
Sally Canzoneri
Sara McDonough
Sara Trautman-Yegenoglu
Sarah J. Ewing
Shaina Kuhn
Shanara Gabrielle
Sondra N. Arkin
Susan Lynskey
Sveta Wilkson
Tara Campbell
Tara Compton
Tehvon Fowler-Chapman
Terri O'Donnell
Tyrone Giordano
Valerie Chisholm

APPENDIX C – CAH COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF AS OF JUNE 21, 2021

CAH Commissioners

Kay Kendall, *Chairperson*
Stacie Lee Banks, *Vice Chairperson*
Cicie Sattarnilasskorn, *Treasurer*
Alma H. Gates, *Public Art Committee Chair*
Gretchen B. Wharton, *Grants Committee Chair*
Cora Masters Barry
Maggie Fitzpatrick
Quanice Floyd
Rhona Wolfe Friedman
Natalie Hopkinson
Kymber Menkiti
MaryAnn Miller
Maria Hall Rooney
Carla Sims
Hector Torres
Jose Alberto Ucles
Derek Younger

CAH Staff

Executive Office

Heran Sereke-Brhan, PhD, *Executive Director*
Calenthia “Lynn” Banks

Arts Education

Alorie Clark
Camille Ashford

Communications

Jeffrey Scott, PhD, *Chief of Staff*
Teresa Boersma
Devon Lesesne
Patrick Realiza
Melvin Witten

Finance

Brian Allende, *Resource Allocation Officer*

Kia King

Melisa Leonard

Grants

David Markey, *Deputy Director*

Kevin Hasser

Kerry Kaleba

Kamanzi Kalisa

Travis Marcus

Robert Nuñez

Khalid Randolph

Legal

J. Carl Wilson, Jr., JD, *General Counsel*

Jocelyn de Castro

Robin Carr McClure

Operations/Human Resources

Carolyn Parker

Public Art

Lauren Douglas Glover, *Public Art Manager*

vEnessa Achem

Sarah Gordon

Ron Humbertson

Alissa Maru

IMAGES

- Front Cover: *The Wailin' Mailman: A Portrait of Buck Hill* by Joe Pagac.
- Page 3: *Kindred* by Leguina Alberto Clerencia.
- Page 6: DC Alley Museum Collective, Bill Warrell and Kelly Towels.
- Page 7: *The Watcher* by Words, Beats, and Life.
- Page 8: The Historic Lincoln Theatre. U Street NW, Washington, DC.
- Page 9: AZTEC SUN. Photo by Jati Lindsay.
- Page 11: Batalá Washington. Photo by the Mayor's Office on LGBTQ Affairs.
- Page 13: I LOVE DANCE. Photo by Jati Lindsay.
- Page 15: The John A. Wilson Building. Washington, DC.
- Page 17: Mayor-Commissioner Walter Washington administers the oath of office to the first members of the DC Commission on the Arts, 1968.
- Page 19: *Waste Not* by Nicole Hamam

ABOUT THE DC ARTS COMMISSION

The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (CAH) is an independent agency in the District of Columbia government that evaluates and initiates action on matters relating to the arts and humanities and encourages programs and the development of programs that promote progress in the arts and humanities. CAH is the designated state arts agency for the District of Columbia and is supported primarily through District government funds and in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

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DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES