

AOC Grants Subcommittee Meeting

Date:

September 20, 2023 from 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Attendees:

Jenn Falco, AOC Chair

Jeff Hawthorne, City Arts Manager

Dawn Isaacs, City AEAF Coordinator

Margo Norton, AOC TSCC Member

Carlee Smith, AOC Committee Member

Discussion:

Margo discussed the subcommittee's focus on what the voters wanted, and making sure that future grants administrators are accountable to the voters' intent. The committee discussed the need for more accountability for quantitative and qualitative data and demonstrated impact.

The subcommittee discussed several ideas and prompts that Margo shared in writing prior to the meeting:

(From Margo's email dated 9/20/23):

1. AEAF Oversight Role

Grants administrator must share the values of the Oversight Committee

- a. Accountability to the voters' intent*
- b. Accountability to quantitative and qualitative, impactful results*

2. Clear and consistent grant selection and evaluation process: require bidders to provide sample grant solicitation, grantee contracts and grantee reporting as part of bid packet. Also grant administrator summary report to a major grant funding source

3. Folding in with another grant solicitation

Q for Jeff: Jeff mentioned at prior meeting that City agreed to RACC folding in Arts Tax grant programs with existing grant protocols -i.e. no separate process for Arts Tax grants. Will this continue?

Q for Jeff: Will Arts Tax funds be blended with other funds as RACC does now? If funds are blended with other city funds, or other funds of the grant administrator, what are we giving up in terms of grantee requirements? Should grants administrator be required to meet more city/AOC requirements when Arts Tax money is the majority/sole source of a grant's funding?

4. *Grant administrator costs* Will contract set a limit on admin costs and/or types of admin costs?

Bidders to supply current admin costs charged to grants??

5. *City Policy* 95%/5% minimum split

a. *95/5 split is a city policy that AEAF is considering recommending for city change. Since it is a minimum split in code, can this happen as soon as the next grant cycle, maybe to 90/10 minimum or better?*

b. *“Access” and “underserved” must be consistent with city definitions. Further definitions or characteristics could include... see Values: accountability to intent and impact*

c. *Currently GOS recipients cannot apply for the access pot of funds. Continue?? Or should this be converted to a “size of budget” threshold so that organizations with a budget of > \$xxx be ineligible for Access/underserved grants? This would likely eliminate school districts if the district is the applicant. Maybe carve an exception for Title 1 schools or schools with xx% demographics?*

d. *GOS are conducting access, K-12 and underserved activities without getting “credit” for these activities. Do we want to see them tracked separately and reported separately? (see SMU Data Art Advocacy report)*

Carlee noted that the City could provide actual templates for its grants administrator to use in collecting data from grantees.

Jeff explained the rationale for why the City has blended General Fund and AEAF money in the past: the AEAF does not provide an allowance for grants administration, rather the City assumed when it established the Fund in 2012 that the same contractor who was already providing grantmaking services (RACC) would add AEAF funds to their existing systems with no additional administrative fees beyond what the City was already paying RACC through its existing contract and General Fund allocation to RACC.

The subcommittee highlighted the opportunity to consider a recommendation that the City not blend these funds in the future, in an effort to create distinct goals and reporting requirements for AEAF dollars. The City would need to determine how to pay for a separate grants administration process like this – whether charged to the AEAF or charged to the General Fund. City Code may need to be amended accordingly. Carlee noted that a standard grants administration fee is 10%.

The subcommittee discussed who besides RACC might be expected to perform this work. The City has not identified any other potential bidders.

There is a sense that arts organizations receiving GOS support from RACC (including AEAF funds) are doing a lot of community engagement, education, and connecting with underrepresented communities, but their activities have not been quantified. This makes it difficult for the committee to access how well

underserved communities are being served. Does the SMU Data Arts database make it easy to report this information? The City could bake new reporting requirements into its new RFPs.

The City plans to have a draft of the new RFPs in early October and will share these drafts with the Committee. In the meantime, the subcommittee will discuss some of these topics at the full AOC meeting on October 12.

Next meeting: September 27, 2023 at 11:00 am.

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