

AOC Grants Subcommittee Meeting

Date:

September 27, 2023 from 11:00 am – 12:00 pm.

Attendees:

Jeff Hawthorne, City Arts Manager

Margo Norton, AOC TSCC Member

Ellen Thomas, AOC Committee Member

Carlee Smith, AOC Committee Member

Dawn Isaacs, City AEAF Coordinator

Discussion:

The subcommittee discussed RACC's current reporting requirements, which include:

- A current strategic plan or strategic framework including how the organization addresses equity and access in all aspects of their grantmaking process.
- Performance goals and metrics for its grant programs, and for outreach and equity.
- Demographics for:
 - RACC staff and board
 - Artists participating in percent-for-art projects
 - All grant applicants and grant recipients (both individuals and organizations)
- An annual reporting requirement to discuss how the organization addressed equity and access.

The RACC contract also states that the AEAF Oversight Committee may request demographic information for AEAF grant applicants and recipients at any time, and RACC must provide within 30 days.

The subcommittee would like more information about what RACC collects from its grantees. There is a sense that RACC may have much of the information we are looking for in its SMU Data Arts database and otherwise, we just haven't seen it. RACC clearly knows how to distribute funds but they are not communicating what arts organizations are achieving with those funds, and how the goals of the AEAF are being met. We all need to do a better job telling these stories.

As the City prepares new RFPs for arts service providers, the AOC has an opportunity to lay out broad guidelines on what information they expect to see from AEAF grantees. The timeline for these new RFPs are: drafted in October, published in November, responses due in January. The AOC will receive drafts when they are available.

The subcommittee recommends that the City vet organizations in its RFP process to identify which respondents are qualified to perform grantmaking services, and then work with them in the selection and contracting phases to discuss how they would actually approach this work.

The City Arts Program shared it would be helpful to have from the subcommittee:

- Things in code or in reporting requirements that should be considered.
- Recommendations from the committee for data collection regarding grants

The subcommittee does not wish for the City to communicate that the 95/5 threshold discussed in City Code is the required threshold. The Committee is still examining what the actual threshold has been in practice with RACC.

The subcommittee would like to know if there is a possibility that there would be more than one grant administrator for the AEAF? (The answer is yes, it's possible, although this has not been determined yet. For example, the City could split "General Operating Support" and "Access Grants" into two separate RFPs.)

The committee would also like to know if public art acquisition/management/maintenance will continue to be part of a contract that includes grant administration for the AEAF? (The answer is no. The City will create a separate RFP(s) for public art acquisition/management/maintenance. It is possible, however, that an organization could successfully bid for both public art and grant administration.)

The subcommittee discussed the full AOC weighing in on the responses to these questions:

- If there is going to be more than one grant administrator, what are the pros and cons?
- Should the AEAF be given to one grant administrator to consolidate costs of administration?
- If public art is part of a contract for AEAF grants administration, what are the pros and cons?

As next steps, the grants subcommittee will:

- Provide guideposts for the RFP
- Recommend requirements and deliverables for the grant administrator and grantees, including what should be the minimum grant size
- Review draft RFP and provide feedback (ETA mid-October)

And, the subcommittee will provide the following updates to the full AOC on October 12:

- Discussion of the charge of the subcommittee
- Input on metrics
- Input on the answers to Jeff's questions

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