



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:20-6437

Agenda Item Number: 2

Agenda Date: 12/7/2020

In Control: Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee

DEPARTMENT: Arts & Culture

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Debbie Racca-Sittre, Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing and Overview of the Arts Core Grants Policy Update and discussion on timeline and next steps to update the Guidelines for the FY22-24 Funding Cycle.

SUMMARY:

Briefing and Overview of the Arts Core Grants Policy Update and discussion on timeline and next steps to update the Guidelines for the FY22-24 Funding Cycle.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since 2016, the Department of Arts & Culture developed components of its Cul-TÚ-Art Cultural Plan, a coordinated planning document to guide investments in the arts to provide equitable opportunities that encourage San Antonio's arts community, residents and visitors to thrive in a culturally inclusive environment. The eight individual strategic plans included in the Cultural Plan are: Film (2017), Centro de Artes (2017), Arts Agency Funding (2018), Public Art (2018), Music (2019), Cultural Districts (2019), Performing Arts (2020) and Individual Artists (2020). The San Antonio Arts Commission serves as the steering committee for the Cul-TÚ-Art Cultural Plan.

In 2017, the Department of Arts & Culture led a public process to develop Arts Agency Funding Guidelines that are focused on funding allocations being distributed equitably. The Arts Agency Funding Guidelines were adopted by City Council in February 2018. Grant funding programs, in priority order, include: Festivals, Artist Re-Granting, Culturally Specific Support, Capacity Building and Base Operational Support. These grants are aimed to support a diverse portfolio of art organizations working across the City of San Antonio in the production of on-going, sustainable, high quality artistic activities.

In 2018, when the Arts Agency Funding Guidelines were adopted, the Department of Arts & Culture committed to reviewing the guidelines after their first 3-year implementation to determine if the policy changes were accomplishing the goals they set out to, which include: strengthening the arts organizations receiving Base Operational Support that fall in the small budget category and organizations receiving Culturally Specific Support.

In October 2019, the department hosted two community and stakeholder work sessions to gather input for a Performing Arts Strategic Plan. The Vision for the Performing Arts Strategic Plan is for *San Antonio to be a place where Performing Arts thrive*. The plan focuses on four goals with both short- and long-term strategies to support these goals as well as a Grant Funding Program.

In January 2020, the department began a multifaceted strategic planning process including analysis of the creative economy, a community and visitor survey, past artist programs, the researching of peer cities best practices, and hosting a series of Individual Artist Focus Groups to identify needs, gaps in services, potential new programs and improvements to the current artist regranting and technical assistance programs. In March 2020, the Individual Artist Strategic Plan was approved by the San Antonio Arts Commission with four goal areas and several strategies to accomplish the plan's vision - *San Antonio is a place where Artists thrive*.

ISSUE:

The San Antonio Arts Commission (SAAC), appointed by the Mayor and City Council, oversees the Art Agency Funding Process. Their role is to advise, review and make final funding recommendations for City Council consideration based on the adopted guidelines. The San Antonio Arts Commission's Arts Funding Committee provides recommendations to the San Antonio Arts Commission on evaluation panelists, reviews eligible appeals, and develops the preliminary funding recommendation for SAAC consideration.

The Department of Arts & Culture distributes funds to local non-profit arts organizations to enrich the quality of life in San Antonio for residents and visitors. The funds distributed through the Arts Funding process comes from Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT). By state law, up to 15% of the local HOT collections can be utilized to fund arts and cultural activities.

The Arts Agency Funding Guidelines were adopted by City Council in February 2018, after an extensive review of best practices, benchmarking with other cities, surveying the community and visitors, as well as collecting community input. In 2018, the Department of Arts & Culture committed to reviewing the newly adopted guidelines after the first 3-year grant cycle. In 2020, the department began an extensive review and input process to determine the impact of the 2018 arts funding policy changes and determine if updates are needed prior to opening the next 3-year funding cycle in January 2021 for FY22-24 funding. In order to gather this data, the department again released a professionally administered survey of a representative sample of San Antonio residents and recent visitors to San Antonio. Three other surveys were also administered including a survey specifically on the Arts Funding Guidelines which went to delegate agencies, the San Antonio Arts Commission, and the Arts Funding Committee. A survey of Individual Artists as well as an additional Community Survey, that was made available online and through the phone, were administered. All surveys were available in English and Spanish.

In addition to surveying, the department began benchmarking with other cities, comparing 3 years of funding data from delegate agencies (FY17 - FY19), and hosted virtual stakeholder feedback sessions to collect feedback on the arts agency funding guidelines. The strategic plans for Individual Artists and Performing Arts will also be taken into consideration as policy changes are being recommended for the Arts Funding

Guidelines. The final policy recommendations would go to the San Antonio Arts Commission and its Arts Funding sub-committee for approval, to the Culture & Neighborhood Services Committee next month and finally to City Council for consideration.

ALTERNATIVES:

Should the Culture & Neighborhood Services Committee choose not to approve moving forward with updating the Arts Core Grants Policy Guidelines, the department will continue to operate under its current policy guidelines which do not include the funding goals of the Individual Artists.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with this briefing item. Any funding for the awarded programs will be included as part of the Department of Arts & Culture FY2022 budget ordinance and annually thereafter for the next year period.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff and the San Antonio Arts Commission recommend the Arts Core Grant policy moving forward for City Council consideration.