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**REPORT TO ARTS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2012**

SUBJECT **Second Year Review of IDEA Grants – Arts Advisory Council
Recommendations**

ISSUE

Proposed changes following the completion of the 2nd year of the IDEA grant pilot program

BACKGROUND

The IDEA grant program was launched as a three-year pilot program in March of 2011. Following the completion of its second year the Arts Committee requested that the AAC review the program and provide any recommendations in time for the program's third year.

An Arts Advisory subcommittee consisting of Lara Tomaszewska, Robert Thompson, Patrick Fleck and James Lam (staff) met on October 9, 2012. The subcommittee reviewed the goals of the program, a list of grant recipients, the final reports of finished projects, and a summary of evaluations received to date. There was a discussion on the scope and intent of the program, the variables affecting the number and types of organizations who have applied to the program in the first and second years, and how to increase the number of applications.

The following points were noted:

- All IDEA grants from 2011 were complete; only one IDEA grant from 2012 was complete at the time of the review.
- The number of applications received and funds granted in both years was less than the original allocation from the reserve fund allowed.
- Overall promotions were increased in the second year however the total number of applications were the same as the first year.
- Increased web-based promotions appeared to double the number of applications at the second deadline of the 2nd year (this is the reverse pattern of the 1st year and as is generally found in Project Grants).
- Based on the reported outcomes the program appears to have been successful in achieving its goals of encouraging arts programming by non-arts mandated organizations as outlined in the guidelines.
- One organization funded by an IDEA grant has subsequently become eligible for and received Project Grant funding.
- 25% of completed grants reported the maximum grant was sufficient; 67% reported it wasn't enough; 8% didn't know. On average, evaluations reported that \$2200 would have been "the right amount" for a maximum grant.

Two thirds of the applicants reported that the maximum grant amount was insufficient. Following similar feedback after the first year the maximum grant was raised from \$1000 to \$1500 for the 2nd year. While it was noted that applicants may tend to simply apply for the maximum grant there was further discussion about the possibility that an increased maximum grant may provide incentive for more organizations to apply. The maximum grant amount needs to be balanced with a view to the scale of the projects which the program hopes to encourage.

At their November 6, 2012 meeting the Arts Advisory Council approved the subcommittee's recommendation to increase the maximum grant in the third year of the pilot and to forward the recommendation to the Arts Committee for consideration.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the maximum grant amount be raised to \$2000 to encourage more applications.
2. That the program be maintained in its current form.

CONCLUSION

The data collected from final report evaluations indicates that the IDEA program appears to be fulfilling its goal of encouraging the creation of new, innovative or developmental arts activity by organizations not eligible under other Arts Service programs. The annual allocation from reserve allows 33 maximum grants of \$1500. Raising the maximum grant amount would permit as many as 25 grants, still below the current number of applications.

That the second year of the program yielded the same number of applications as in the first year may be an indication of having reached the saturation point for the program.

In other aspects of the program it was determined that it would be advisable to maintain continuity in the original IDEA guidelines. The receipt of final reports following the completion of the third year will provide a larger and more reliable basis upon which to recommend whether the program should be continued and if so whether any significant policy changes should be made.

RECOMMENDATION

That the maximum grant amount for IDEA grants be raised to \$2000 in the third year of the pilot.



James Lam
Manager
CRD Arts Development Service