



Making a difference...together

## **REPORT TO ARTS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2013**

---

### **SUBJECT**

#### **THREE YEAR REVIEW OF THE IDEA GRANT PROGRAM**

### **ISSUE**

Recommendations for the future of the IDEA grant program.

### **BACKGROUND**

The IDEA grant program was created as a three year pilot program in 2011. Following the third year the Arts Committee directed the Advisory Council to review the program and provide recommendations for future implementation.

A subcommittee of the Arts Advisory Council met on June 18, 2013, to consider the following questions:

1. Did the program fulfil its original purpose and if so, what was the evidence?
2. Should the program be continued and if so, why?
3. If the program were to continue what changes, if any, should be implemented?
4. If the program continued, how should it be funded?

In making recommendations, the subcommittee examined the current program guidelines, reviewed staff reports, documented changes that were made following years one and two, reviewed the final reports received to date. Their recommendations were ratified at the Arts Advisory Council meeting of September 3, 2013.

### **COMMENTS**

#### **1. Fulfillment of Purpose**

The purpose of the IDEA grant program was to encourage new, innovative or developmental arts activities and events, to enable access to support organizations not served by other Capital Regional District, Arts Development programs or to provide access to underserved communities.

- Over three years, 37 community groups accessed funding
- 90% of funded organizations were non-arts organizations. Most noted that without IDEA grant program support they would not have initiated arts programming.
- In the first two years of the program, 42 events were created.
- The first two years involved:
  - 11,504 participants (audience or beneficiaries of programming) and;
  - 118 artists.

## **Report to the Arts Committee – September 11, 2013**

### **Three year review of the IDEA Grant Program**

---

Four arts organizations who did not meet the minimum six months of operation required to apply to Project grants, received funding under this IDEA grant program. The extent to which this diverted funding from the primary target cohort of non-arts organizations was discussed.

Providing seed funding for new arts organizations was seen as positive and it was noted that once an arts organization meets the business history requirement it is no longer eligible under IDEA grants and must apply to Project grants. It was also noted that the issue can be managed through the adjudication process. The openness of the criteria was seen as a desirable aspect of the program.

The first year of the program allowed for a maximum of 50 grants and although response to the program did not reach the target allowance, the program showed steady growth and increased awareness:

- 2011 – 16 applications, 15 grants, total awards \$12,250
- 2012 – 18 applications, 17 grants, total awards \$19,626
- 2013 -- 22 applications, 22 grants, total awards \$31,500

A comparison to the smART Ventures program in Seattle, upon which IDEAs was modeled showed that when adjusted for population and with funding to individuals taken out, the application rate was similar.

#### Conclusion:

The program has been largely successful in fulfilling its original purpose.

## **2. Continuation of the Program**

The following observations were made:

- Facilitating the creation of arts programming in a non-arts context reinforces the value of the arts in the broader community.
- The growing awareness of the program and the incentive provided by the existence of the program indicates a desire by non-arts organizations to implement arts programming.
- The program was a cost-effective way for the Arts Service to encourage arts initiatives within sectors of the community not served by its core programs.

In addition to the number of events created and participation attained, the IDEA program has:

- Provided a service to the community and furthered the goals of the Arts Service
- Engaged a wide range of community-based organizations and created new audiences
- Encouraged the development of new arts activities and the exploration of the use of the arts in other fields
- Increased awareness of the Arts Service and endorsed the importance of the arts within the community.

#### Conclusion:

The outcomes and purpose of IDEAs supports the mission and goals of the Service in an underserved segment of the community and should be continued.

**Report to the Arts Committee – September 11, 2013**  
**Three year review of the IDEA Grant Program**

---

### **3. Changes to the Program**

The assumption is that the program's goals would remain unchanged. Therefore this discussion centred on eligibility criteria and the maximum grant amount.

Arts organizations that are ineligible to apply for Project grants are currently allowed to apply to the IDEA grant program. Four arts organizations have been supported during the pilot phase. It was felt that the capacity to support the main target group - non-arts organizations - had not been significantly impacted and that general eligibility should remain as open as possible. This issue can be managed through the adjudication process but should be monitored and reassessed if necessary.

Unlike Project grants, schools may apply to the IDEA grant program, however support should be limited for events that would normally be part of regular activities.

The maximum grant has been increased following reviews of both first and second years from an initial \$1000 to \$1500 and finally, \$2000. It was felt that increasing the maximum grant again would only result in commensurate increases in requests. Further, it was felt the size and scale of projects that have been funded to date is appropriate for the current goals of the program.

Conclusion:

Assuming the goals remain unchanged, retain the program in its current form.

### **4. Funding**

The program was allocated \$50,000 per year for a maximum of \$150,000 however, only \$64,000 was distributed during the 3 year pilot. The reserve is still seen as an appropriate source of funds for a recommended cycle of three years at a maximum of \$35,000 per year.

Conclusion:

Pending assessment of the program towards the end of a further three-year cycle the Arts Committee should consider funding the IDEA grants program through requisition.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Assuming the maximum annual allocation is granted, over three years the reserve will be reduced by \$105,000. The current staffing level is adequate to resource the program at this scale.

### **SUMMARY**

There are significant reasons to continue the program. The IDEA grant program has been successful in fulfilling its purpose to encourage arts programming in non-arts mandated organizations. This success can be attributed in part to the program goals and application criteria being well defined from the outset. Final reports indicate that organizations had little or no difficulty in understanding the program guidelines or using the forms.

The steady growth in the number of applications indicates a need and a desire by the target cohort to explore the use of the arts in their activities. Further, the program is a relatively low cost means to serve a sector within the community that is ineligible for other Arts Service programs in a way that supports the goals of the Arts Service.

**Report to the Arts Committee – September 11, 2013**  
**Three year review of the IDEA Grant Program**

---

Ending the IDEA grant program would leave the reserve available for other purposes however; no other purposes have been identified at this time.

A further three years with an annual \$35,000 allocation from reserve will permit longer term assessment of the value of the program to the community. A review should take place near the end of the three years and, if renewed at that time, consideration should be given to funding the program from requisition.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Arts Committee:

1. Continue the IDEA grant program for a further three years beginning in 2014.
2. Cap a single grant at \$2000 with an annual program allocation of \$35,000 to be funded from reserve.
3. Amend the guidelines to exclude the support of events that would normally be considered part of an organization's regular activities.
4. Assess the program towards the end of three years with consideration to funding it from requisition.



---

James Lam  
Manager, Arts Development Service