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STAFF REPORT TO ARTS COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2014

SUBJECT

2014 CRD Arts Development Operating Grant Recommendations

ISSUE

Review and Approval of 2014 Operating Grant recommendations

BACKGROUND

At a meeting on November 30, 2013 the Arts Advisory Council met to evaluate applications received at the September deadline for 2014 Arts Development Operating Grants. Thirty-four applications were received, 32 from current recipients and two from “new” organizations i.e. not currently funded through operating grants. For the first time since 2009 there was an increase in the Operating Grant budget.

The Arts Advisory Council focused their adjudication around the following principles:

1. Recommendations would be based on the merits of each organization as evaluated against the published criteria of artistic merit, administrative competence, and community impact
2. Grant recommendations would be subject to review throughout the process to ensure consistency with assessed scores and evaluations.
3. Consideration would be given to weighing the merits of the investment in currently funded organizations versus the applications by “new” applicants i.e. those not currently receiving operating grants

In addition to the primary grant recommendations for 2014 reconciled to the approved budget, a secondary set of recommendations was created. Secondary recommendations were hypothetical and based on the viable “aspirational” need of an organization. Their purpose is to provide an indication to the Arts Committee of the potential gap between the available funding and the ideal level of support currently needed by the sector.

The adjudication process included the following:

- staff vetting of applicant eligibility
- staff review and reporting on all applications summarizing history and mandate, financial information, program information and noting potential issues
- distribution of staff reports, full applications and other adjudication materials to AAC members for review
- distribution of staff reports to the Arts Committee for information
- in-person interviews between AAC member-teams and representatives of applicant organizations
- circulation of AAC interviewers’ notes to all AAC members

- plenary discussion of applications and interviews
- recommendation of grant amounts reconciled to the approved allocation
- recommendation of secondary grant amounts
- notification to organizations of their primary grants recommendation
- consideration of appeals
- final reporting to Arts Committee

COMMENTS

In making 2014 recommendations the Arts Advisory Council considered:

- the relative merits of each organization assessed against the evaluation criteria of artistic merit, administrative competence, and community impact;
- the role of each organization within the community ;
- the capacity and sustainability of the organization in the pursuit of its purposes and goals;
- the amount of the grant request in relation to the projected program, to other organizations, and whether the current funding level was appropriate.

The total recommended grants were reconciled to the 2014 allocated budget for operating grants. The total of secondary recommendations suggests an estimated funding gap of \$39,280.

Total requests exceeded the budgeted allocation by \$270,780.

Grant Recommendations

Three organizations are recommended for reductions. They received overall lower assessments in one or more areas and have been given grant recommendations determined to be in line with their level of performance and community impact.

Twenty-nine organizations received recommendations for stable or increased support. In general they demonstrate a level of sustainability and/or ongoing development in what continues to be a challenging environment. These organizations fulfill diverse roles within the broader community and may be at significantly different levels of development. Of these 15 are recommended for stable support and 14 are recommended for increased support.

Neither of the two “new” organizations is recommended for funding through operating grants at this time. Although one was scored higher than the other neither was seen to have sufficient capacity to merit support through operating grant funding. An emphasis on supporting the investment in currently funded organizations as well as insufficient overall funds contributed to the support of this recommendation. Both organizations should be encouraged to seek continued support through the Project Grant program.

Appeal Process

The grounds for appeal are narrow given the extensive information provided by the organizations both in the applications and the in-person interviews. According to the policy, appeals are only heard in-person if there is significant new information, or, a reason to believe there was a significant misunderstanding of the application. There was one application for an appeal which was assessed as having failed to contain sufficient reasons to proceed.

These recommendations are expected to be ratified at the regular Arts Advisory Council meeting on January 7, 2014. Staff will advise the Arts Committee if any changes take place that materially affect this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Approval of the in-budget recommendations will result in the disbursement of the approved allocation for 2014 Arts Development operating grants. The secondary recommendations are provided for information only.

SUMMARY

Of 34 applicants 14 are recommended for increased support; 15 are recommended for stable support; three are recommended for reductions; two are not recommended for support but should be encouraged to seek continued support through Project Grants. There was one appeal application which was found to have insufficient cause to proceed.

The Arts Advisory Council's role in grant adjudication provides adjudication that is arms-length from the political process. The operating grant adjudication is extensive and is the main activity of staff and the Advisory Council from September through December.

The attachment accompanying this report contains comments specific to each organization.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Arts Advisory Council recommendations for 2014 Operating Grants be approved as presented.

James Lam, Manager
CRD Arts Development Service