

San Francisco Arts Commission Narrative for Subgranting Program

a. Organizational Background

The San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) is the City and County agency that champions the arts in San Francisco. We believe that a creative cultural environment is essential to the City's well-being. Established by charter in 1932, SFAC programs integrate the arts into all aspects of City life. Programs are: Civic Art Collection, Civic Design Review, Community Arts & Education, Cultural Equity Grants, Public Art, SFAC Gallery, Street Artists Licensing, and Summer in the City Concert Series.

The agency's mission is to ensure that all residents have equal access to arts experiences in all disciplines, that programs are delivered evenly throughout the City, and that they are innovative and of the highest quality. The SFAC's operating budget for FY 2007-2008 was \$10,861,062. The agency's fiscal year is July 1-June 30.

b. Proposed Subgranting Program

The SFAC will establish a local arts recovery grant initiative that has two components: 1) direct grants of up to \$35,000 to arts organizations; and 2) knowledge-building forums and management trainings to promote the longer-term sustainability of the field.

A total of \$200,000 in grants will be awarded to arts organizations that effectively demonstrate they have lost, or are at risk of losing, staff due to diminishing income in this fiscal year or in FY 2009-2010, thereby compromising their artistic missions. This initiative will be administered by SFAC's Cultural Equity Grants (CEG) Program, and will be open to all applicants eligible for Cultural Equity Initiative (CEI) grants, a pool of almost 100 organizations. CEI's legislated purpose is to support administrative and programmatic capacity building of organizations with budgets under \$1 million, rooted in historically underserved communities.

In addition, \$30,000 will be used for knowledge building for initiative grantees and for San Francisco's artists and arts organizations facing financial hardships, loss of jobs and/or artistic programming due to the economic recession. By hosting workshops, panels and knowledge-sharing opportunities where experts in the arts and non-arts sectors can share research, strategies and best practices, SFAC will help mitigate additional crises within the arts community. SFAC has convened similar forums (with Jeremy Nowak on arts and the recession for 250+ people in January 2009; and Michael Kaiser will present "The Art of the Turnaround" this May). CEG has existing partnerships with service providers (Center for Cultural Innovation, Theatre Bay Area, the Foundation Center, Bay Area Video Coalition, CompassPoint, etc.) and funders (Grants for the Arts, SF Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Irvine Foundation, etc.) who are eager to continue collaboratively developing relevant innovative services and programs. This component of the initiative will help many more organizations move towards adaptive strategic planning as they gain skills to become more nimble, and will help ensure that NEA Recovery funds have an even deeper, and broader, impact than job retention for one year.

Applicant Pool: An estimated 100 organizations will be eligible. This pool represents the full range of arts and culture disciplines, as well as multi-functional artist-run companies and presenting organizations. The demographic profile of the past three years of applicants are: Asian (30%); African/ Black (8%); Latino (14%); Native American (4%); Pacific Islander (3%); Arab/Middle Eastern (4%); Bi-/Multi-racial (10%); Immigrant/Refugees (4%); Women (9%); LGBTI (12%); and Disabled (2%). Grantee budgets range as follows: up to \$35,000—17%; \$35,000-150,000—35%; \$150,000-500,000—35%; and \$500,000-1 million—13%.

What follows is a representative though small sample of recent CEI grantees: 3rd I South Asian Independent Film Festival; American Indian Film Festival; Asian American Women Artists Association; Aunt Lute Books; Brava! For Women in the Arts; Croatian American Cultural Center; Galeria de la Raza; Manilatown Heritage Foundation; Na Lei Hulu I Ka Wekiu; Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project; Sangati Community Center for South Asian Music; Seventh Native American Generation; Women's Audio Mission; Zaccho Dance Theatre.

Applicant Outreach: SFAC has an established and rigorous outreach network. In addition to the agency's listserv which includes all applicants and grantees, this announcement will be publicized through community-based service providers, culturally-specific listservs and media, and funder colleagues. CEG will also seek help from community leaders to identify potential new applicants. CEG staff offer application workshops (co-hosted by community partners), one-to-one technical assistance in person and via telephone, and review of draft budgets, narratives and project design.

Receiving and Reviewing Requests: Seven CEG programs currently distribute approximately \$3 million in funds to San Francisco arts organizations, all by a peer panel review process. The same methodology will apply to this grant program. Review criteria will include: 1) Quality of the organization's artistic work and relationship with community; 2) Likelihood that funds will maintain jobs and the ability of the applicant to measure job performance; 3) Significance of the identified job/s in strengthening the organization's programming, sustainability, capacity and/or addressing community needs; 4) Ability of the organization to fulfill all the grant requirements including sharing successes, challenges and sustainability strategies in community forums, and all necessary reporting; 5) Clarity of the organization's goals and personnel qualifications.

c. Appropriateness of Project

Both elements of this proposed program—direct grants and knowledge development /sharing—are critical to this agency's mission as they address the immediate need to sustain the local arts workforce *and* provide support services to help stabilize and strengthen the field over time. The SFAC, as a public agency in service to the cultural field and the City of San Francisco (with one of the strongest non-profit arts industries in the nation) believes this recession provides another opportunity to be stewards of the arts as an economic engine for our local economy.

And the need has been documented: In a recent survey of local arts groups, 56% reported reducing administrative, artistic and/or technical/production staff; 42% reported the need for furloughs. Since CEI grants seek to foster an environment in which all cultures of San Francisco are represented in thriving, visible arts organizations, with programs reflecting the experiences of historically underserved communities, this program aligns well with SFAC's mission and goals.

d. Impact of Administering the Program

The impact of this granting program on CEG staff is significant, and the budget reflects how costs will be covered. The majority of work will be at the front end of the process: Creating guidelines; announcing the program and conducting outreach; processing applications; ensuring panelists are well prepared. Once grants are awarded, the workload will shift to the knowledge-building activities and forums and to ongoing tracking and reporting. The CEG Program Director will allocate 12% of her time to oversee the project and staff; two mid-level staff will each allocate 5% time and two junior staff will each allocate 3% time to the program; and accounting support is reflected in the budget. A consultant will also be hired to help with guidelines and criteria development, panelist selection, community forums on best practices and knowledge acquisition, and the design of reporting mechanisms for grantees based on NEA requirements.