



GRANTS

METRO ARTS / NASHVILLE

MINUTES

Grants and Funding Committee

Monday, July 10, 2023

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

Metro Southeast

Bordeaux Room

1417 Murfreesboro Pike,

Nashville, TN 37217

If you have any questions, please e-mail arts@nashville.gov

Committee Members Present: Sheri Nichols Bucy (Chair), Clarence Edwards, Marianne Byrd, Carol McCoy, and Matia Powell (Ex-Officio)

Metro Arts Staff: Daniel Singh, Dana Parsons, Chuck Beard, & Vivian Foxx

Guests: Cynthia Harris, Stephanie Silverman, Daniel Jones, James Lauderdale

METRO ARTS MISSION:

Drive an Equitable and Vibrant Community through the Arts

A. **Welcome and Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 12:31 p.m.

B. **Public Comments**

- a. **Cynthia Harris:** As a Nashville native currently residing in Madison, Tennessee, emphasized the significance of transparent community engagement in the review of proposals. She highlighted the importance of considering the THRIVE funding model, particularly for individual artists who often go unrecognized. Additionally, she proposed prioritizing smaller organizations for funding, focusing on those with budgets under 5 billion. Harris questioned the feasibility of

this approach as funding is distributed, given the rising demand for operational support and THRIVE initiatives.

- b. **Stephanie Silverman:** In the submitted comment, the speaker acknowledged the positive trends of increased applicants, projects, and funding for the current year. However, they highlighted the ensuing challenges, notably the impact on grantee budgets due to the timing of mid-fiscal or beginning-of-year allocations. The speaker's organization, having anticipated reduced Metro Arts funding, adjusted its budget accordingly. They brought attention to ongoing discussions about gradually reducing funding for organizations to ensure fiscal stability amidst ongoing operations and staff and project commitments. The speaker proposed a formula that considers these complexities. Moreover, they pointed out numerous mural projects within the THRIVE application. They suggested reallocating these projects to an existing public art funding source, potentially freeing up funds for other purposes. The speaker expressed gratitude for the committee's diligent efforts during challenging times.
- c. **Daniel Jones:** The speaker extensively reviewed the spreadsheet and explored various scenarios, acknowledging that the committee likely did the same. They pointed out the challenge arising from Metro Arts' consistent assurance of maintaining funding levels and allocating extra funds over the past 8 months, which now appears uncertain. The speaker proposed considering scenarios that align with the promise while accommodating THRIVE applications, as discussed by Cynthia. They expressed concern about potential scenarios causing significant harm, particularly a 50% funding reduction for smaller organizations that could result in job losses. Despite this, they acknowledged the pursuit of equity and emphasized the importance of not squandering available resources. The speaker made a fervent plea for the committee and Metro Arts to avoid leaving any money unallocated, highlighting that one scenario might leave over a million dollars untapped, which could greatly benefit struggling organizations.
- d. **James Lauderdale:** The speaker expressed gratitude for Nashville's commitment to promoting arts, such as integrating art into schools and extracurricular programs. However, they highlighted a decline in government support for the arts since the 1980s. Given Nashville's musical heritage, the speaker expressed a genuine desire for the city to continue thriving as a music hub and evolve into a center for various visual art forms.

C. Approval of Minutes: May 8, 2023

Chair Sheri Nichols Bucy offered a motion to approve the May 8th minutes, Committee member Marianne Byrd seconded, and the motion passed.

D. Action/Discussion Items

c. FY24 Program Updates

i. A. Operating Support proposed allocations

1. Chair Bucy provided a comprehensive presentation on Operating Support's proposed allocations for FY24, emphasizing the need for transparent and specific distribution in alignment with equity goals. The vision centers around achieving an equitable scenario contingent on the Advocacy Committee raising an additional 1.9 million within the next six months. Despite the challenge, the committee is optimistic about the feasibility of this goal. With a total of 4.7 million available for distribution, two significant factors influence the decision-making process: the results of a disparity study and a substantial 600% increase in THRIVE applications. The disparity study underscores the necessity for increased funding for BIPOC organizations.
2. Scenario A resonates strongly, echoing the recommendations of the CARE committee over the past 8 years and aligning with the findings of the disparity study. Collaborating with the Advocacy committee to bridge the funding gap is a priority, with confidence that this can be achieved.
3. The emphasis is on inclusivity, ensuring that no artist or art organization is left behind. Cynthia Harris' public comment also highlighted the potential to reallocate funds from Public Art to support murals, allowing resources to be freed up for THRIVE initiatives.
4. Equity is a key consideration, with Scenarios A and G offering the potential to maximize the impact on BIPOC organizations. The proposal of Scenario G was clarified by Daniel, who noted that its feasibility would need to be verified before it becomes a viable funding option.
5. In terms of application statistics, there were 92 submissions, of which 88 were deemed qualified for review. The funding categories are segmented into Large (arts organizations with operational budgets of more than \$3,000,000), Midsize (arts organizations with operational budgets of \$500,000 -

\$3,000,000), Medium (arts organizations with operational budgets of \$100,000 - \$500,000), Small (arts organizations with operational budgets of \$25,000 - \$100,000), and Micro-arts organizations (arts organizations with operational budgets less than \$25,000), based on their operational budgets. The recommendation is to prioritize Scenarios A and G, informed by collaboration with committees like CARE and a commitment to overall equity.

- ii. B. Thrive Call for Artist Services proposed allocations
 1. A total of 155 submissions were received, categorized as follows:
 - a. 10 Large organizations
 - b. 16 Mid organizations
 - c. 22 Medium organizations
 - d. 22 Small organizations
 - e. 18 Micro organizations
 - f. 31 mural projects
 2. Commissioner Carol McCoy inquired about the breakdown of grant amounts requested by individuals and whether there was a pattern in the requested amounts. Daniel explained that recipients were given the amounts they had asked for. Carol sought a detailed breakdown of individual amounts, prompting a discussion on potential bias and the need to focus on the broader framework rather than specific applicants' needs.
 3. Chair Sheri Bucy emphasized the importance of avoiding bias and mentioned that providing a list of application numbers and corresponding amounts could address Carol's query.
 4. Chair Sheri Bucy requested compiling numbers for the upcoming meeting, including applicant counts, funding amounts, and category breakdowns (micro, small, medium, and large).
 5. Marianne Boyd suggested creating clear and equitable scenarios (Scenario 1 or 2) for presentation to the larger commission. She leaned towards focusing on small and micro organizations, as this approach could contribute to bridging inequities within the BIPOC community.
 6. Chair Bucy inquired about preferences for scenarios:
 - a. Carol McCoy favored Scenario A.

- b. Matia Powell leaned towards a modified version of Scenarios A and B, aiming to allocate more funding to operating costs rather than THRIVE projects, with consideration for both new and existing organizations.

7. Sheri motioned to present both Scenario A and a modified Scenario B to the full commission for consideration while still evaluating other potential scenarios. Marianne Boyd seconded the motion, which was subsequently passed.

iii. C. Timeline of funds disbursement

- 1. The discussion was moved to the next meeting.

iv. D. FY25 Grant Editing Process

- 1. A community-led grant editing process is scheduled for July 2023, involving representatives from the Grants and CARE committees. Additionally, either the chair or vice-chair will be in attendance.
- 2. The Grant Editing Session is slated for July 10, 2023.
- 3. Another Grant Editing Session is scheduled for July 11, 2023.
- 4. Phase 2 of the editing process is set to occur on July 25, 2023.
- 5. The grant applications for FY25 are set to open in October 2023.

F. **Staff Report**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, **August 14, 2023.**

G. **Old/New Business**

There was no new or old business discussion during this session, and these topics have been deferred to the next meeting for further consideration.

H. **Adjourn Meeting**

Chair **Sheri Nichols Bucy** made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The the meeting was adjourned at **1:34 PM.**