



# City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council  
Chambers  
9770 Culver Blvd.  
Culver City, CA 90232

## Staff Report

---

**File #:** 20-472, **Version:** 1

**Item #:** A-1.

---

**CAC - Consideration of (1) a Recommendation from the Ad Hoc 2020 Performing Arts Grant Program Subcommittee; and, (2) a Recommendation to the City Council Related to the 2020 Performing Arts Grant Program Awards.**

**Meeting Date:** November 19, 2019

**Contact Person/Dept:** Susan Obrow / Nancy Lawlor - Cultural Affairs/Administrative Services

**Phone Number:** Susan Obrow (310) 253-6628

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes ☒ No ☐ **General Fund:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Public Hearing:** ☐ **Action Item:** ☒ **Attachments:** Yes ☒ No ☐

**Public Notification:** (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Cultural Affairs Commission (11/14/19); Sony Pictures Entertainment (11/11/19), Culver City Arts Foundation (11/11/19), 2020 Performing Arts Grants Program Applicants (11/05/19 and 11/11/19)

**Department Approval:** Serena Wright-Black, Assistant City Manager (11/13/19)

---

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The Ad Hoc 2020 Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program Subcommittee (Subcommittee) recommends that the Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC): (1) consider the recommendation of the Subcommittee; and, (2) make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the 2020 Performing Arts Grant Program awards.

### **BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION**

Culver City's Performing Arts Grant Program (Program) was established in 1994. The Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) stipulates that no more than 25% of the money deposited into the Cultural Trust Fund in the prior fiscal year be allocated for performing arts in the subsequent year. \$100,000 has been allocated in Fiscal Year 2019/2020. Further, contributions have been made in support of the 2020 Program by Sony Pictures Entertainment (\$25,000) and Culver City Arts Foundation (\$25,000). The Subcommittee considered it prudent to reserve some funding for future years. Also, they acknowledged the responsibility to use the full amount of \$50,000 from Sony Pictures Entertainment

and Culver City Arts Foundation as requested. Consequently, the Subcommittee proposed allocating only \$50,000 from the Cultural Trust Fund, resulting in a total of \$100,000 in grants available for the 2020 Program.

Staff issued the 2020 notice of funding availability to the public during the week of July 26, 2019. The guidelines and application included the following statement on cultural equity:

*The City of Culver City is dedicated to achieving cultural equity and inclusion through the Performing Arts Grant Program. Cultural equity and inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people - including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion - are represented in the development of arts policy; the support of artists; the nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression; and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources.*

Additionally, the Subcommittee endorsed new language for the application sections regarding Cultural Equity, Outreach and Promotion.

Also, the application guidelines stated that grants were projected to be up to \$6,500 per organization, and applicants must provide matching funds that are greater than (or equal to) their requested grant amount. The application was posted on the City's website, and notices were distributed electronically to Culver City-based performing arts organizations, current grantees, and through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture's arts listserv. A current list of potential performance venues in Culver City was also posted on the City's website.

On August 8, 2019 staff held a workshop at Veterans Memorial Building during which the grant guidelines, the application, the electronic submittal process, and possible performance venues were reviewed in detail. Eighteen complete applications were received by the deadline on September 12, 2019.

On October 24, 2019, applications were reviewed by a Peer Review Panel. Five distinguished panelists were joined by Subcommittee members Tania Fleischer and Jeannine Wisnosky Stehlin. The Subcommittee attended the panel meetings as observers and as an additional resource for questions.

The 2020 Performing Arts Grant Peer Review Panel Members included:

- Juliette Carrillo, Theatre Director and Playwright
- Brad Keimach, Conductor Emeritus of Glendale Youth Orchestra
- David Mack, Executive Director of Invertigo Dance Theatre
- Tony Spano, Jr. DMA, Creative Director of Music and Executive Director, Culver City High School Academy of Visual & Performing Arts/Board Member, Culver City Arts Foundation
- Catherine Rotunno, Manager, Global Corporate Social Responsibility of Sony Pictures Entertainment

The 18 applications were submitted electronically via the City website. An email was then sent to the panelists, prior to the review panel meeting, with a link to a digital folder that contained all of the grant applications. The panelists were also provided a sample score sheet. The following four scoring criteria were identified in the application:

- Artistic excellence and cultural merit of proposed project (45 points)
- Outreach and engagement with the Culver City community (20 points)
- Realistic project budget and funding base (20 points)
- Contribution to cultural equity and inclusion (15 points)

The members of the Peer Review Panel and the Subcommittee convened on October 24, 2019 in City Hall. Staff opened the panel discussion by providing a brief overview of the grant program's history, guidelines, conflict of interest policy and discussion of the four review criteria listed above. After the overview, each application was reviewed, with its corresponding artistic samples, in alphabetical order. Staff provided updated information, then panelists took turns in leading the discussion about the applications. Each panelist had the opportunity to ask questions and then offer comments to the group. This was followed by panelists providing scores in each of the four categories, resulting in an average score for each criteria and a total score for that applicant. Only the peer panelists provided scores during the peer review session. If a panelist perceived that they had a conflict of interest with any of the applicants, the panelist stepped out of the room during the discussion and did not score the application.

Once the review of the individual applications was completed, the score for the applicants were tallied by staff, which resulted in a ranking of the applications from highest to lowest. The Peer Review Panel discussed the scores and made general recommendations for full or partial funding allocations.

On November 4, 2019, the Subcommittee convened and reviewed the total scores and the requested grant amounts for all 18 applications. The Subcommittee recommended that those applicants with total scores between 79 and 100 should receive 100% of their requested funding and applicants with

total scores between 65 and 78 should receive 80% of their requested funding. Subcommittee did not recommend funding for applicants with scores below 60 points.

Further, the Subcommittee recommended that the total score for Culver City Symphony Orchestra be increased by five points to demonstrate support for recent programming in Culver City. The Subcommittee also recommended that the total score for Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival be increased by five points in recognition of their achievements in cultural equity and inclusion.

The Subcommittee supported a plan for staff to review the application process with the organizations which were not recommended for awards this year. This review would better prepare the organizations for the next application process.

The total amount recommended for all grant awards is \$83,670. A chart, noting the amounts requested and the recommendations for awards, is included as Attachment 1. Staff will work closely with the grant recipients on the promotional plans for their performances and provide them with a performance survey as well. Marketing options are provided below.

**Logo Availability:**

- City of Culver City
- Sony Pictures Entertainment
- Culver Arts Foundation

**Website Promotion:**

- City of Culver City: Home Page, Performing Arts Pages, Community Calendar (self-service)

**Social Media:**

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Nextdoor

**Public, Educational, and Governmental Access Channel Promotion:**

- Spectrum Subscribers, Frontier FiOS Subscribers, AT&T U-verse Subscribers

**Email Blasts:**

- City of Culver City Email Subscribers
- Sony Pictures Entertainment (employee newsletter)

**Public Announcements:**

- Announcements at City Council and Cultural Affairs Commission Meetings

A brief summary of the 18 applications (ranked from highest to lowest) is attached (Attachment 2). The City Council will consider the Commission's recommendation for grant awards on Monday, December 9, 2019.

**FISCAL ANALYSIS:**

The Subcommittee recommends a total amount of \$83,670 to be allocated for the 2020 Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program. The funding includes monies from the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Art in Public Places Program (Cultural Trust Fund - 41322400.619800 PZ614) budget in the amount of \$50,000, as allocated pursuant to the CCMC; \$25,000 from the 2019 contribution from Sony Pictures Entertainment (42080000.619800 PZ614); and, \$25,000 from the 2019 contribution by Culver City Arts Foundation to be deposited to Fund 413 and expended from account 41322400.619800 PZ614).

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. 19-11-19\_ATT\_Overview of 2020 PAG Request Amounts
2. 19-11-19\_ATT\_PAG Summary of Recommendations

The completed Performing Arts Grant applications are available in the City Clerk's office during regular City Hall business hours.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION(S):**

That the Cultural Affairs Commission:

1. Consistent with the recommendation from the Ad Hoc 2020 Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program Subcommittee, recommend to the City Council that 2020 Performing Arts Grant Program awards be allocated as outlined in the staff report.

**OR**

2. Recommend to the City Council that 2020 Performing Arts Grant awards be allocated as amended.