



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

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Item #: A-1.

CAC - Consideration of (1) a Recommendation from the 2022 Performing Arts Grant Program Subcommittee Pertaining to the 2022 Performing Arts Grant Program Awards; and (2) Make a Recommendation to the City Council.

Meeting Date: November 16, 2021

Contact Person/Dept: Lee Lawlor - Administrative Services / Cultural Affairs

Phone Number: (310) 253-5772

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 (11/11/21); Sony Pictures Entertainment (11/11/21); Culver City Arts Foundation (11/11/21); 2022 Performing Arts Grant Program Applicants (11/11/21)

Department Approval: Serena Wright-Black, Assistant City Manager (11/08/21)

RECOMMENDATION

The Cultural Affairs Commission 2022 Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program Subcommittee (Subcommittee) recommends that the Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC): (1) approve the recommendation of the Subcommittee to award \$170,015 for the 2022 Performing Arts Grant Program to 23 organizations; and, (2) recommend that City Council approve the 2022 Performing Arts Grant Program awards and related grantee contracts; and (3) recommend that City Council designate the related performances as City-sponsored.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Arts grant programs are considered a central component to programs and services provided by local arts agencies throughout the United States and provide cultural services to its community. Arts grants help subsidize free or reduced ticket prices and encourage public cultural participation. Arts grants are an investment in the community and in the quality-of-life residents and visitors can enjoy in Culver City.

The Cultural Affairs Commission and staff have implemented Culver City's Performing Arts Grant

Program (Program) since its inception in 1994. Culver City Municipal Code (CCMC) Section 15.06.160 stipulates that no more than 25% of the money deposited into the Cultural Trust Fund (CTF) in the prior fiscal year be allocated for performing arts in the subsequent year. \$86,000 has been appropriated from the CTF for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and is supplemented with \$49,015 in carryover money from prior fiscal year CTF allocations. Additionally, contributions have been made in support of the 2022 Program by Sony Pictures Entertainment (\$25,000) and Culver City Arts Foundation (\$10,000). The Subcommittee (Tania Fleischer and Jeannine Wisnosky Stehlin) acknowledged the responsibility to use all of the \$25,000 from Sony Pictures Entertainment and all of the \$10,000 from Culver City Arts Foundation. Consequently, the Subcommittee proposed allocating \$135,015 from the Cultural Trust Fund, resulting in a total of \$170,015 in grant funding for the 2022 Program.

Staff issued the 2022 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) to the public during the week of August 9, 2021. The application guidelines stated that there was a grant limit of \$10,000 per organization, and applicants must provide matching funds that are equal to, or greater than, their requested grant amount. A copy of the guidelines is attached to this staff report.

The electronic application was posted on the City's website, and notices were distributed by email, social media, email message groups, and other appropriate third-party sites, including the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture. A current list of potential performance venues in Culver City was also posted on the City's website. Twenty-four (24) performing arts organizations submitted signed applications electronically on the City's website by the published deadline of September 17, 2021. This is consistent with the number of applications submitted in prior years.

On October 13, 2021, applications were reviewed by a Peer Review Panel. Four distinguished panelists were joined by the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee attended the panel meeting as observers and as an additional resource for questions.

The 2022 Performing Arts Grant Peer Review Panel Members included:

- **Virginia Figueiredo** - Clarinetist, Educator and Recording Artist
- **Christie Lesinski** - Fundraising and Development Consultant
- **Catherine Rotunno** - Global Corporate Social Responsibility, Sony Pictures Entertainment
- **Joes Segal** - Chief Curator and Director of Programming, Wende Museum

In advance of the panel meeting of October 13, 2021, panelists were instructed to review electronic copies of the grant applications, to view artistic video samples that were provided by applicants, and to provide preliminary scores. The panelists were provided a scoring template and criteria. The following four scoring criteria, with a total possible score of 100 points, were also identified in the application:

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

Members of the Peer Review Panel and Subcommittee convened virtually via WebEx. Staff opened the panel discussion by providing a brief overview of the grant program's history, guidelines, and its contributions to the Culver City community as relate to cultural equity and inclusion. After the overview, panelists discussed each application and its corresponding artistic samples. Staff provided updated information as needed, and panelists took turns in leading the conversation about the individual applications. Each panelist had the opportunity to ask questions and offer comments to the group. This was followed by panelists discussing scores in each of the four criteria, resulting in an average score for each criterion and a total score for each 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, that panelist would leave the meeting during that part of the discussion and would not score that application. For the 2022 grant program, no such conflicts were identified.

Once the review of the individual applications was completed, the scores for all 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 discussed general recommendations for full and partial funding allocations based on total scores. The panel did not recommend funding for applications that scored below 70.

On October 22, 2021, the Subcommittee met and reviewed the total panel scores and the requested grant amounts for all applicants. The Subcommittee recommended that those applicants with total scores between 95 and 100 should receive 95% of their requested funding; applicants with total scores between 88 and 94 should receive 90% of their requested funding; applicants with total scores between 85 and 87 should receive 85% of their requested funding; applicants with total scores between 80 and 84 should receive 80% of their requested funding; and applicants with total scores between 70 and 79 should receive 70% of their requested funding. The Subcommittee concurred with the Panel's recommendation that applicants with scores below 70 points do not receive any funding.

The Subcommittee supported a recommendation that staff review the application process with the organization not recommended for an award this year. This review would better prepare the organization for the next grant application cycle.

The total amount recommended for all grant awards is \$170,015. Staff will work closely with the grant recipients on the public outreach and promotional plans for their performances. Each organization will submit an evaluation after their performance.

Attached is a chart of the 24 submitted applications, panel scores, recommended grant awards and a brief description of each proposed performance.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The Subcommittee recommends a total amount of \$170,015 be allocated for the 2022 Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program. The funding includes monies from the Art in Public Places Program (Cultural Trust Fund - 41322400.619800 PZ614) budget in the amount of \$135,015, as allocated pursuant to the CCMC; \$25,000 from the 2021 contribution from Sony Pictures Entertainment; and

\$10,000 from the 2021 contribution by Culver City Arts Foundation.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 21-11-16_ATT 1_2022 Performing Arts Grant Program Guidelines and Notice of Funding Availability
2. 21-11-16_ATT 2_Overview of 2022 Performing Arts Grant Program Applications with Scores

The completed Performing Arts Grant electronic applications are available for public review by sending a written request by email to cultural.affairs@culvercity.org

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S)

That the Cultural Affairs Commission:

1. Consistent with the recommendation from the 2022 Culver City Performing Arts Grant Program Subcommittee, recommend that City Council approve the 2022 Performing Arts Grant Program awards and related grantee contracts as outlined in the staff report; and recommend that City Council designate the related performances as City-sponsored.

OR

2. Recommend to the City Council that 2022 Performing Arts Grant awards be allocated as amended.