

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: FEBRUARY 18, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER 

SUBJECT: SUBMISSION OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS FOR THE SERVICES TO THE FIELD GRANT; FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, OFFICE OF THE ARTS

ISSUE: City Council consideration of a grant application to the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) for funding, in the amount of \$15,000, for the Services to the Field grant program, for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Office of the Arts. The grant application deadline is March 2, 2009.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council authorize the City Manager to:

- (1) Submit a grant application, in the amount of \$15,000, to the Virginia Commission for the Arts' Services to the Field grant program;
- (2) Execute all necessary documents that may be required; and
- (3) Due to severe City budget constraints, note that no additional City funds will be requested to fund this program in FY 2010 or future years.

DISCUSSION: In 2008, the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) instituted the Services to the Field Grant Program as a means to provide additional State funding to municipalities. Services to the Field Grants support the work of local arts agencies and other organizations that provide services to artists and arts organizations that focus on the development of the arts as a whole in the community or region, and that work to integrate the arts more fully into the community or region.

For Fiscal Year 2010, the City is seeking \$15,000 in grant funds. These funds, if awarded to the City, will be allocated to the Office of the Arts and help to provide the following services to Alexandria arts organizations.

- Enhanced marketing
- Enhanced fundraising opportunity
- Administrative office space with the creation of a Community Arts Space

To enhance marketing services, the Office of the Arts will create an umbrella membership to CultureCapital.com. Launched this past year and administered by the Cultural Alliance of Greater Washington, *CultureCapital.com* is an on-line arts marketplace that offers a regional event calendar and ticket-purchase options. An umbrella membership will enable participation by Alexandria Commission for the Arts' grant recipients that have a budget of under \$500,000. Neighboring organizations with umbrella memberships in CultureCapital.com include Arlington Cultural Affairs, Arts Council of Fairfax County, Arts and Cultural Heritage Division/Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Prince George's County Arts Council, Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County, and District of Columbia Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

To draw traffic to its site, *CultureCapital.com* advertises in the WashingtonPost.com, Washington Blade and Washington City Paper. By providing arts organizations with this membership, the City will be able to promote Alexandria events to a wider regional audience.

To enhance fundraising services for Alexandria arts organizations, the Office of the Arts will create an umbrella membership to the *Foundation Center's Online Directory* of corporate and private granting organizations. The membership will enable participation by Alexandria Commission for the Arts grant recipients. The Foundation Center's Directory is the nation's leading online resource for funding research. It provides up-to-date and comprehensive information available on U.S. grant makers and their grants. With this membership, Alexandria arts organizations will have direct access from their computers to the directory of granting organizations. Most Alexandria arts organizations cannot afford this membership on their own.

With the opening of the new Charles Houston Recreation Center, office space that was originally intended for community art group space has become available in the Dr. Oswald Durant Memorial Center. This office space, will be reconfigured as a Community Arts Space with a conference room, computer work station and file storage space and will be available for the use of Alexandria arts organizations who are funded by the City. Organizations will be able to use this space for board meetings during regular Center hours and groups without a designated office, will be able to store files in the room.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Virginia Commission for the Arts provides up to 50% of program costs under this grant program. The Office of the Arts has identified existing budgeted funds in the form of seasonal and supplies and materials funding that they will realign to support and cover the required match of 50%.

The City is responsible for normal administrative costs associated with this grant. These costs include financial and reporting oversight provided by the administering agency, the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities. It should be noted that no monies are available in the City's Budget to continue these activities once the grant funds are expended. It is anticipated that additional funding will be sought for the continuation of these three services from private sponsorships in future years.

If the grant is awarded on an ongoing basis, it is unlikely the grant award will increase in future years to cover the cost of normal salary and benefit increases. In that case the total costs of this initiative would be reduced to fit entirely within whatever the available state grant amount is in future years. It is intended, because of severe City budget constraints, that no additional City funds will be requested to supplement this program in future years if the grant funding does not 100% support all costs of this initiative.

STAFF:

Kirk Kincannon, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Alisa Carrel, RPCA, Director of the Office of the Arts, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Cheryl Anne Colton, Cultural Arts Administrator, Office of the Arts, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities