CITY OF ALAMEDA
Memorandum

To: Amanda Gehrke

From: Kathleen Livermore, AICP
        Planner

Date: August 21, 2018

Re: Cultural Arts Small Grants Application

BACKGROUND
The City of Alameda's Cultural Arts Small Grants Application is currently complex and may benefit from a more expedited process. A review of other Cities small cultural arts grants application process was undertaken.

I reviewed the Synergy, Public Art for Alameda report and The City of Alameda Cultural Arts Proposals as background, and then did the following:

- I performed internet searches on the 47 cities included in the Synergy report, pages 65-67. I looked at each cities website and reviewed their arts/cultural arts application process to determine if it was complex or simplified.

- I did several internet searches to see if I could find additional information. I searched "cultural arts application in California" and "small cultural art grants."

- I reviewed the Alameda Municipal Power (AMP) application process and set up a meeting with Rebecca Irwin, AMP sponsorship administrator.

- Following the July 24, 2018 meeting with Amanda and Lois, key points were identified and I concentrated on the application process in several jurisdictions, including AMP, Alameda County Arts Commission, and the City of Emeryville.

- I sent an email questionnaire to cultural arts administrators of the Alameda County Arts Commission and the City of Emeryville on August 8, 2018.

DISCUSSION

I identified several cities with simpler processes and forms: Emeryville, Alameda County Arts Commission and Alameda Municipal Power. The following discussion provides some context for the summary recommendations section.

Several cities had portals for their application process and some had a downloadable application. I recommend against a portal because the portal is closed when the application process is not pending. This could cause more questions to be asked of staff in the 9 or more months when the application period is closed. Also, a portal

application process could penalize organizations that are less tech-savvy. I think having a portal would add considerable time to administration of the grant process.

A start up budget of $15,000 would be sufficient for this small grants project, with a minimum of $500 and maximum of $2,000 for the grant awards. So, an example of how this could work out is 10 grants of $500, 6 grants of $1,000 and 2 grants of $2,000 with a total of 18 grants awarded each year. This lower budget amount would allow for an annual program, which provides continuity of service, and is explained further below.

An annual program would be beneficial. The vast majority of cities and other organizations reviewed had an annual program. This provides certainty and transparency about the process. Also, staff might tend to forget the procedures and have to spend a considerable amount of time ramping up to a less frequent program. Different organizations could be rotated through every two years. So organization A might get the grant one year and organization B would get the grant the following year. Maybe an open application period of two months would be sufficient and allow for some competition for the groups applying for the grants. The shorter window could also decrease the amount of time staff spends on the process. The City of Emeryville project administrator explained it takes about 80 hours during the three month time frame when the application process is open, and about 20 hours the other nine months of the year, to administer the annual grant process.

Have a cap of 20 grants per year. This would work well with the $15,000 annual budget example above.

Having a fixed deadline, rather than a continual process, is the most cost-efficient procedure. Although AMP provides an open process, this feature is the exception, not the norm. The vast majority of cities and organizations had a fixed deadline.

Have the application period be open for two months to reduce administrative time. Choose the time period that is the least busy for staff to accommodate the increased, temporary, workload. Don't have a workshop. Not needed for these short forms for the small grants.

The application form should be short, no more than two pages. There should be a one or two page budget attached. Many of the applications were up to 20 pages in length, with 10 pages of explanations and 10 pages of application. This should be avoided. The AMP, Emeryville and Alameda County Arts Commission were all good examples of short applications.

Require recognition of the City of Alameda in promotional materials and/or signage. This could be left open-ended.

Require each recipient to provide a summary report following the event for which they received the grant. The City of Emeryville had a good example to use. It is in the Recommendations folder.

Have the City Council approve the annual budget of $15,000 and empower a subcommittee of one member of DABA, WABA and GABA to review the applications. One City staff member would attend meetings to facilitate but the staff member would not be a voting member.

Have the new process called a pilot project. This allows for transparency and an easy way to make modifications to the process as needed.

Other considerations:

The City of Emeryville has a good example of a grant program description and requirements. Here is their Grant Program Description:

The City of Emeryville awards monies to programs or specific community projects that improve the quality of life and build civic pride in Emeryville. The categories covered by this funding are cultural arts, visual arts, education programs or similar activities.

Their Requirements for Grant Consideration are:

- *Organizations or individuals wishing to apply for a Community Grant must comply with the following requirements:*
    1. *Organization or individual must be located in Emeryville, or the activity for which the request is being made must occur in Emeryville.*
    2. *Program or project must directly benefit the Emeryville community and provide long-term community benefit.*
    3. *Organization or individual must demonstrate community support.*
    4. *Organization or individual must be non-profit and provide a copy of non-profit status [501(c)(3) tax-exemption form] along with this application, or be sponsored by a non-profit fiscal agent.*

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

- Have a downloadable application – don't have a portal.
- Start program when the budget has reached $15,000, with minimum of $500 and maximum of $2,000 for the grants.
- Have an annual program.
- Have a cap of 20 grants per year.
- Have a fixed deadline.
- Have an application period of two months.
- Limit application to two pages with a max two page budget.
- Require recognition of the City of Alameda in promotional materials and/or signage.
- Require each recipient to provide a summary report within one month following the event.
- Have the City Council approve the annual budget of $15,000 and empower a subcommittee of one member of DABA, WABA and GABA to review the

applications. One City staff member would facilitate the meetings and would not be a voting member.

- Call the new process a pilot for ease of modification of the procedure.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Livermore, AICP
Planner