

## Feasibility Assessment Tool for City Council recommendations for H/L QOL RAC

Commissioner's Name: Carmen Llanes Pulido Date: July 10, 2017

**Purpose:** This tool will assist HLQOLRAC Commissioners make data driven decisions when making recommendations to the Austin City Council.

### PROBLEM ALIGNMENT

**Instructions:** Fill out this form for each recommendation. Put NA for sections that are not applicable.

Purposed Project Title:

Strategic Planning and Capacity Building Grant for the Center for Mexican American Cultural Arts, Inc. (CMACA)

Issue Area:	Education and cult arts	Dollars Amount	\$75,000
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Does this recommendation address a FY17 priority area?	YES
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Targeted population	The Latino community in Austin.
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Example: Low-income, youth, elderly, etc.

History of Organization (if applicable)

The Center for Mexican American Cultural Arts (CMACA), Inc. formed in 1998 as a direct outgrowth of the previous MACC Task Force created by the City of Austin, (COA) to offer recommendations for building a Mexican American cultural center (MACC) in Austin. CMACA was also instrumental in passing the \$10.9 million bond to build the MACC. Like the Waller Creek Conservancy, the COA initially contracted CMACA to be the non-profit responsible for the operation and maintenance of a city property, e.g. the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (ESB-MACC). Unlike Waller Creek, however, the city did not offer financial support for the endeavor, CMACA would be responsible for raising all the O&M funds needed. CMACA conducted research and planning with city staff and the community to create the final design and mission of the ESB-MACC. The city ultimately took control of the ESB-MACC project. CMACA remains a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization and is an advocate for Latino arts and culture.

CMACA has sponsored arts programs like a serape weaving demonstration to children at Sanchez and Zavala elementary schools, website development that allows arts organizations to post events directly to the site, www. a social media presence on Facebook, and a partnership with the ESB-MACC to produce the annual Día de los Muertos celebration where we invited Austin Latino artists to perform, and covered the cost for artisans to sell there wares in the Mercado, guaranteeing a profitable day for all, providing much needed exposure to the artists, and building their audience.

This recommendation continues CMACA's mission of advancing Latino arts in Austin.

#### Proposed Project Summary:

A capacity building grant in the amount of \$750,000, to be released to CMACA with the objective of growing the organization into one that can better advocate for the needs of Latino artists and organizations in Austin. The funding would assist in the following deliverables:

- Develop 10 year strategic and financial plan
- Recruit key stakeholders, supporters and endorsements, achieving equitable representation of the directly impacted communities
- Recruit strategic partnerships and collaborators
- Recruit financial supporters and anchor investors
- Recruit key steering team or board members
- Build a framework for organizing regular (monthly) mercados for Latino artisans.

#### Specific problem the recommendation addresses (provide data and references)

Latino artists and organizations continue to struggle to gain funding through the COA Cultural Contracts process. According to Cultural Contracts records, last year, Latino artists and art groups made up 11 percent of the groups funded and ?? percent of total available funds yet the Latino population—a growing audience for the programming Latino artists provide—is nearly 40 percent. Even Latino institutions, like La Peña and the Aztlan Dance Company organizations with more than 30 years of history) in Austin have seen funding levels drop dramatically. At the same time, Latino art organizations struggle to find a home, Cine Las Americas just became

homeless when the landlords decided to refurbish the building they were officed out of. For years, CMACA has lobbied for a review of the cultural contracts process and an audit of city-owned properties that could be used for artists a favor the city has granted to groups like Ballet Austin and Zachary Scott. Latino organizations, however, are too busy to lobby council. CMACA would like to step into this role and develop research and data to help sway council to consider equity in arts funding and support.

Who else is working in this space and what specific gap does this recommendation fill?

CMACA is the only organization with a history and a mission to support Latino art and culture across disciplines, not as a chiefly as a presenter, but as an advocate.

While many Latino non-profit arts organizations exists, they all focus on supporting particular disciplines as presenters or venues, e.g. Mexic-Arte (visual arts), La Peña (multidiscipline), Teatro Vivo (theater), Red Salmon Arts (literature), Ballet East (dance), Cine Las Americas (film).

The Artisan Mercado outside of Mexic-Arte was initiated this year. Vendors are charged \$50 to participate. This could present a possible partnering opportunity but as it has just begun, it remains to be seen if it will succeed. I sent information about it to all of our vendors and only two responded, one was rejected.

The number of other supporting documents attached, if any?	3
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## FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

**Instructions:** Include notes under each of the criterion and then rank the proposed recommendation on a scale of 1-5, with 5 representing the best score. Record the scores on the Recommendation Ranking excel spreadsheet.

### 1. Alignment

### Score

*To what extent does the recommendation align with FY16 priorities? How well does the recommendation address the problem it is trying to solve or improve?*

As a non-profit, CMACA has more capacity as an advocate of Latino art and culture to promote development, growth, and sustainability among the Latino arts community.

### 2. Demand

### Score

*To what extent is the recommendation likely to be used; how much demand exists? Is this something the community wants? Is there data that shows need?*

If the CMACA were to achieve its mission, it would have a tremendous impact on the Latino community by providing relevant artistic and cultural programming to a growing but underserved audience. It would also have a tremendous economic impact on Latino artists and organizations by creating economic opportunities, exposing their work to a wider audience, and building future patronage. If CMACA receives this seed money, data collection and a strategic plan will be one of the deliverables.

As for current data, we know Latino artists are not receiving an equitable amount of bed tax money distributed by the COA Cultural Contracts office. The Hispanic Quality of Life confirmed it and the latest list of funded projects for 2016/2017 confirms it. Access to performance space is also limited, even at the ESB-MACC. Furthermore, excessive facility fees and charges continue to impede venue use by the larger Latino arts community. CMACA's role as an advocate will open the door for expanded participation

and interorganizational collaboration for greater program leveraging for Austin audiences.

The Latino arts community needs a service organization to help them grow. As a co-presenter of the annual Día de los Muertos celebration at the ESB-MACC, CMACA remained committed to guaranteeing profits for its artisans but covering the \$50 permit fee required by the city. At other festivals, vendors are charged even more, e.g. \$250 by Mexic-Arte to be a vendor at their Día de los Muertos event. Barriers, however, continue to emerge for vendors, many of whom sell low-cost handmade items like jewelry or t-shirts or books. Last year, the city enforced its requirement that vendors carry insurance, a prohibitive cost for many of our vendors. Once again, CMACA found a solution by purchasing insurance to cover the entire Mercado. We'd like to do this again, but at a new venue, like the Plaza Saltillo, which is fairly dormant but about to see massive development, and may be more open to regular programming, unlike the ESB-MACC. It would also bring Latino activity back into what's left of our barrio.

### 3. Implementation

### Score

*To what extent can the recommendation be successfully delivered to intended participants? Will it be difficult to implement?*

For CMACA to grow as an organization and achieves its mission to advocate for Latino artists and organizations, this strategic development and capacity building funding is essential. With funding secured, CMACA's directives are to increase board development and staffing and produce a strategic and financial plan. This funding affords a rare opportunity to invest substantively in board development, staffing, and research to achieve the goal of preparing CMACA for a stronger position as an advocate for Latino artists and organizations, working to improve sustainability and viability of

the Latino arts community.

#### 4. Practicality

#### Score

*To what extent can the recommendation be carried out with few resources? Is the cost in line with the estimated benefits? Can it be carried out using existing community resources? Is one year of funding enough to implement?*

The proposed capacity building funds for CMACA cannot be achieved with insufficient resources, which necessitates this development funding. The amount requested estimates the benefits of building CMACA into an active and productive community-based non-profit organization. The return on investment from the development funding includes establishing a vibrant board for the non-profit, indentifying prospective funding sources open to a non-profit organization for continued sustainability, employment opportunities, and economic opportunities for Latino artists and organizations. In its 19-year history, CMACA has developed a core group of patrons that will form the base of its fundraising efforts. With additional staffing, more funds and grant opportunities will become available, such as, the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, Hispanics in Philanthropy, Impact Austin, etc. CMACA has also worked well with corporate sponsors, e.g. AT&T, Chevrolet, and H-E-B, and we hope to pursue more corporate sponsors at the local level, e.g. Dell, Google, and IBM.

The one-year funding will be enough to implement and continued funding will be modeled upon the city's arrangement with other non-profits, e.g. Waller Creek Conservancy, Zachary Scott Theater, that will be revealed through the research conducted by CMACA to flesh them out. CMACA's research through this exercise, should also reveal new funding sources and partnerships.

**5. Integration****Score**

*To what extent can the recommendation be integrated with existing programming in the community? Or within an organization's current programming?*

The recommendation integrates with existing community-based programming and CMACA's current programming, particularly the Mercado that we hope to expand.

**6. Evaluation****Score**

*To what extent will the recommendation be easy to evaluate, in terms of assessing its impact on the identified problem? How long will it take to see results?*

After each Día de los Muertos Mercado, we have asked artisans to complete surveys. They have revealed a great need for economic opportunities like the Mercado which is why we hope to expand it. We will continue to use surveys but also expand that concept to utilize online methods to reach a broader audience.

At the end of the fiscal cycle, the recommendation will have produced several deliverables:

- CMACA will be larger, stronger, and prepared to advocate for Latino artists and organizations,
- Relevant research and data that will help impact policy at the city,
- Third-party consultants will also produce strategic and financial plans and a state of Latino art in Austin field report, based on stakeholder feedback from town hall meetings, funding equity data compiled from the city of Austin, and audience demographics and identified needs that address those outlined in the Austin Hispanic Latino Quality of Life report.

## 8. Sustainability

## Score

*To what extent could this program sustain itself at some point?*

Based on the current agreement between the city and groups like the Waller Creek Conservancy, the partnership between CMACA and the city will be ongoing. As a non-profit, however, CMACA will be able to pursue additional foundational and corporate funding to potentially grow the project

**Additional information and/or next steps:**

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