

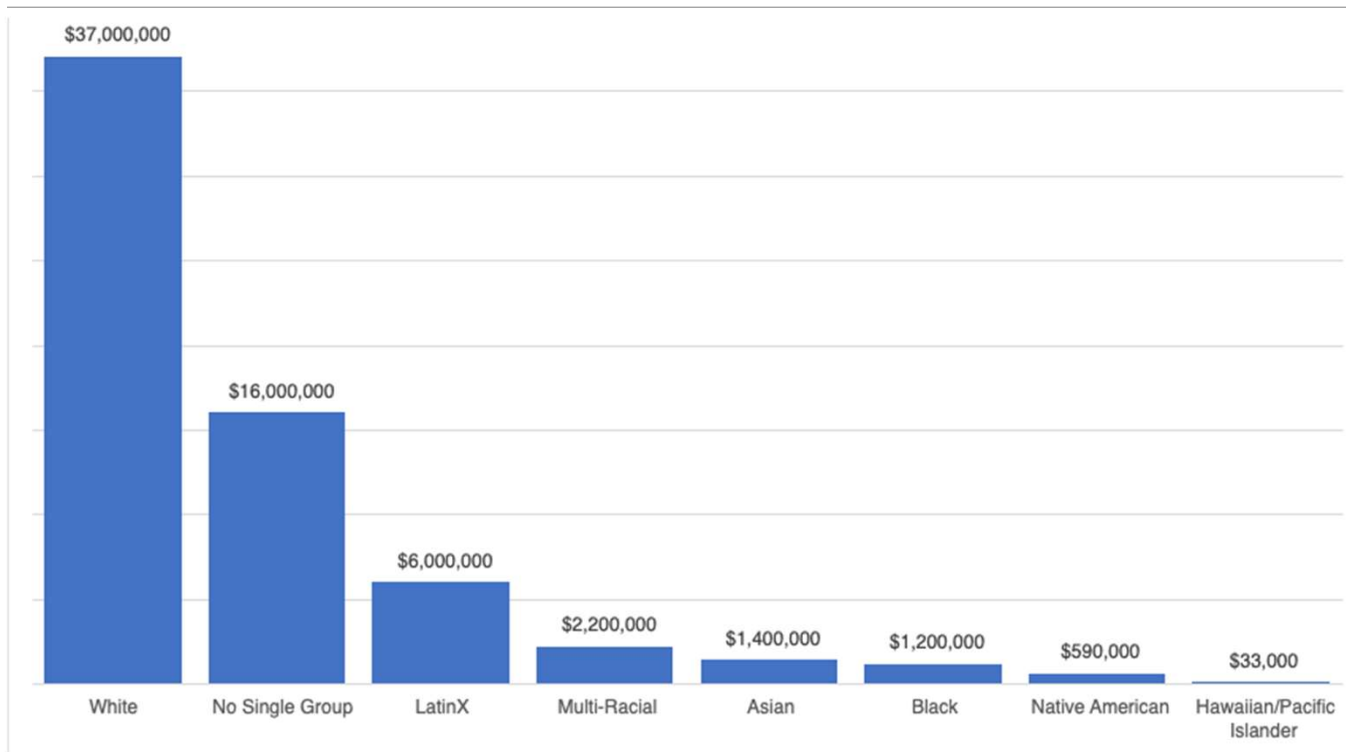
Cultural Arts Funding Review Process Update

ARTS COMMISSION

MAY 31, 2022



Concerns of Inequitable Distribution*



*Data shows leadership/staff demographics FY15-FY 21 only. We recognize this is only one indicator.

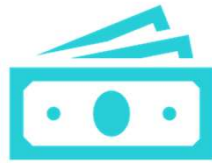


Problem: we are trying to address 50 years of inequitable distribution of funding through the Cultural Funding programs due to the historical policies, practices, and (in)accessibility of our programs.

Impetus to Revise the Guidelines



2017: Cultural Funding Program
Responsiveness Working Group



2018: Funding cuts for the first
time (11%)



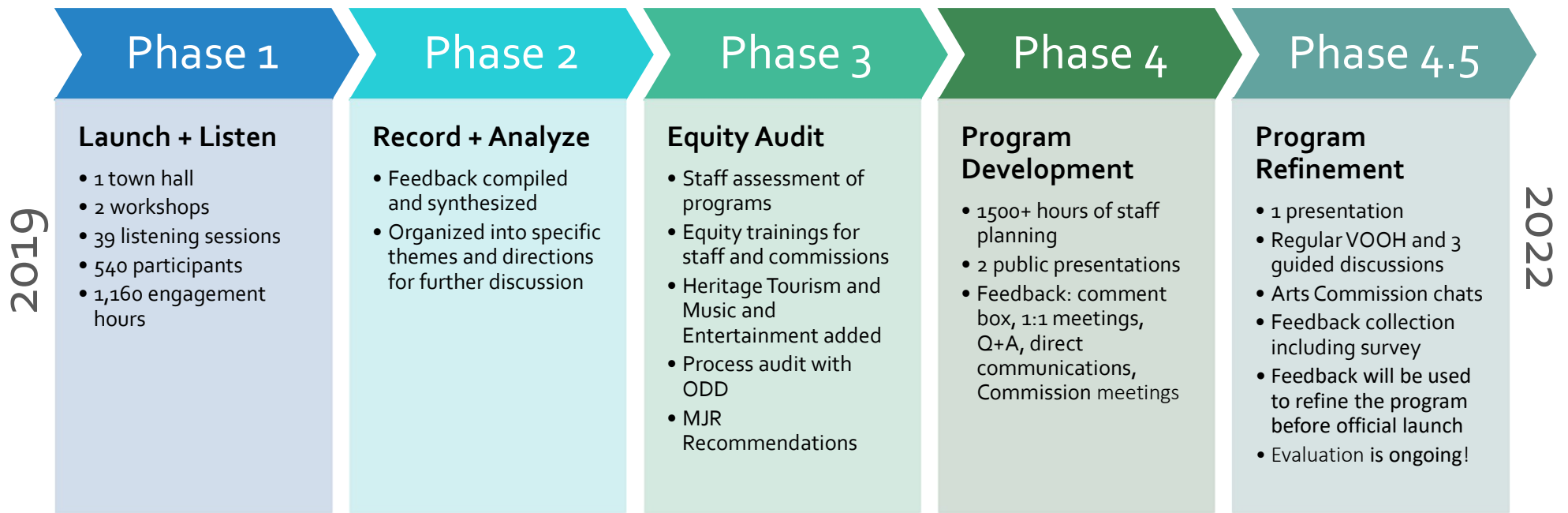
COA Equity Statement:
Strategic Direction 2023

Cultural Funding Review Goal



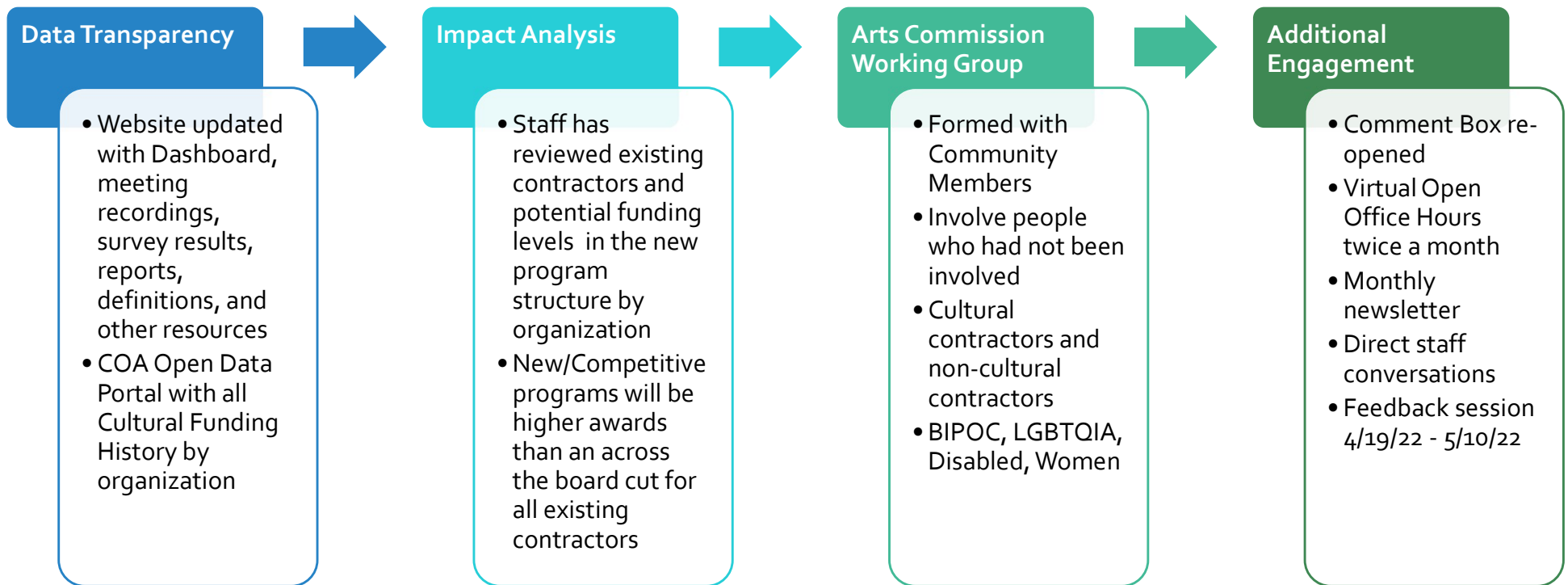
The desired goal is to **sustain** and **grow** Austin's **cultural infrastructure** so that all may share in the **economic** and **employment** benefits of the heritage preservation and creative sectors, as well as upholding the City's **commitment** to racial **equity** per the City of Austin's Equity Office standards and goals.

Cultural Funding Review Process



Feedback informed every aspect of program development including program **priorities**, application **scoring**, **rubrics**, and process **improvements**.

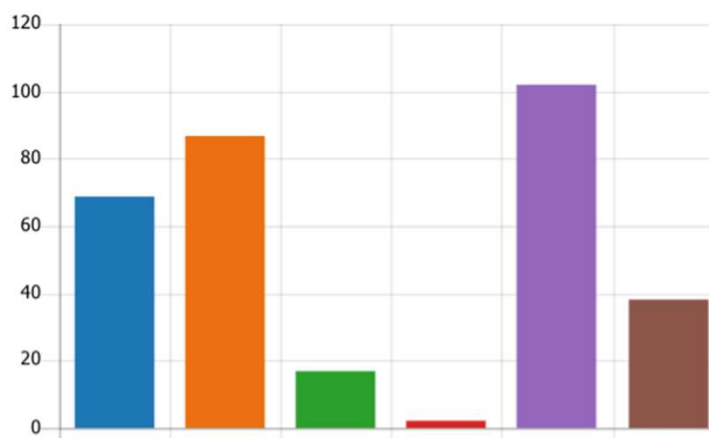
Milestones since September 2021



Revised Draft Feedback Recap

- Survey open from April 19th – May 10th (3 weeks)
- 206 Responses

● A person of color	69
● LGBTQIA+ community member	87
● Disability community member	17
● A person with Limited English ...	2
● Woman or woman-identifying	102
● None of the above	38



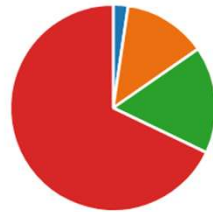
- On a Scale of 1-5, how likely are you to apply for at least one of the pilot programs? **2.71** (1 = not likely to apply; 5 = definitely applying!)

Revised Draft Feedback Continued

If you said you are not likely to apply, what changes or support would change your mind?

[More Details](#)

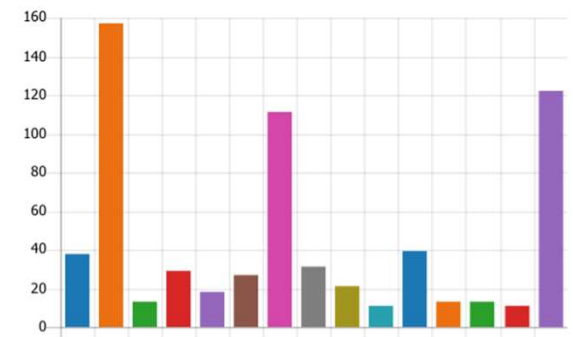
Help filling out the application	5
Clearer language (I don't unde...	28
Higher funding levels	36
Other	146



What changes do you like about the Pilot Cultural Funding programs?

[More Details](#)

No matching funds required	38
Focused on equity	157
Managed in house by CF team	13
Move to actuals vs projections	29
Request/Award amounts	18
Not basing award amounts on...	27
Increased training for review p...	111
More competitive application ...	31
Applicants in the Austin Metro...	21
Optional cohort activities for T...	11
Allows for operating support (...)	39
Optional Fiscal Sponsorship in...	13
Prioritization of new applicant...	13
Collaboration <i>optional</i> for Nex...	11
Other	122



What areas of these pilot programs need additional conversation in future years?

[More Details](#)

Award amounts	130
Evaluation criteria	159
Language access	33
Other	157



NEW Changes from Feedback

Tentative Award Amounts increased!

- Elevate: \$7,500 - \$50,000 is now **\$10,000 - \$75,000**
- Thrive: \$70,000 - \$120,000 is now **\$80,000 - \$150,000**

Removed the "**\$100k or less average COA award over time**" eligibility requirement.

Creating **two categories in Elevate** so artists are not competing against nonprofits.

Interactive tool for identifying "**What is the best program for me?**" in development.

Any single **purchase over \$2,000** must be pre-approved by staff.

Mission statement will *not* be determining eligibility for Thrive.

Reworked **scoring rubric** and **guideline language**, in keeping with community feedback, Equity Office consultation, and legal guidance. (No scoring on immutable characteristics and looking more broadly at mission and community served).



Holistic Funding Ecosystem

Nexus

Nurture new and emerging applicants by funding creative public projects developed through community activation and/or collaboration.

Elevate

Creative and administrative expenses of cultural producers that amplify equity and prioritize inclusive programming.

Thrive

Focused investment to sustain and grow arts organizations that are deeply rooted in, and reflective of Austin's diverse cultures.

Pilot Program **Nexus** in Detail

	Nexus
Goal	Encourage new talent
Contract Term	6 Months
Type of Funding	Project Funding Only
Who can apply?	Individuals/ Groups* (*cooperatives, non-profit organizations, businesses, partnerships, etc.)
Selection Process	3 COA Staff + Rubric
Draft Total Available Funds	~\$500,000
Draft Award Amounts	\$5,000
Draft Number of Awardees	100 (50 per cycle; 2 cycles/year)

Pilot Program **Elevate** in Detail

	Elevate	
	Elevate (Non-501c)	Elevate+ (501c only)
Goal	Support established cultural producers	
Contract Term	1 year	1 year
Type of Funding	Flexible: Project/Operating	Flexible: Project/Operating
Who can apply?	Artists; Arts/Culture Groups* w/ budgets <\$500k	Arts/Culture 501(c) s only
Selection Process	Panel	Panel
Draft Total Available Funds	~\$1,000,000	~\$3,000,000
Draft Award Amounts	\$10,000 - \$30,000	\$10,000 - \$75,000
Draft Number of Awardees	35	65

Pilot Program **Thrive** in Detail

	Thrive
Goal	Invest in diverse cultural institutions
Contract Term	2 years
Type of Funding	Flexible: Project/Operating (+Optional Networking/ Coaching/ Classes)
Who can apply?	501(c) only with 5-year operating history in Austin
Selection Process	Panel
Draft Total Available Funds	~\$3,000,000
Draft Award Amounts	\$80,000 - \$150,000
Draft Number of Awardees	35

Pilot Programs Solutions



OPEN TO
EVERYONE



NO MATCHING
FUNDS



AWARD NOT
BASED ON
EXISTING BUDGET



COMPETITIVE
PROCESS



TRANSITION PLAN

Target Concern: HOT Funds



Why are you moving from Projections to Actuals?

- Limited HOT funds
- Err on the side of caution
- Have wanted to make this change for years

Target Concern: Fiscal Sponsorship



Why are you getting rid of Fiscal Sponsorship?

- We are not!
- It is **optional** for increased flexibility.
- Applicant can decide what is best for them.

Target Concern: Location



Why are non-Austinites able to apply for funding?

- Affordability of Austin
- All HOT-programs are moving to MSA
- Even if someone lives or is based in the surrounding MSA, the **activities** receiving HOT funds must take place in Austin

Target Concern: History



Why do Thrive applicants have to be a 501c for 5+ years?

- They don't!
- Thrive applicants must have a history of operating in Austin, but they do not have to have been a 501c for all 5 of those years.

Target Concern: Thrive Expenses



Why are capital expenditures eligible?

- Practice not Policy
- Assets = sustainability and growth
- I.e. equipment purchases like speaker systems, theater seats, artwork
- Must get pre-approval from staff for expenses >\$2,000

Target Concern: CFP Management



How are you fixing internal issues?

- Stagger Program Schedule
- Fewer total contracts
- Limit Pre-Contract Materials
- Automate Contracting Processes

Target Concern: Support



How are you supporting applicants?

- Workshops and videos
- Materials (application checklist)
- Increased open office hours
- Community Navigator Program

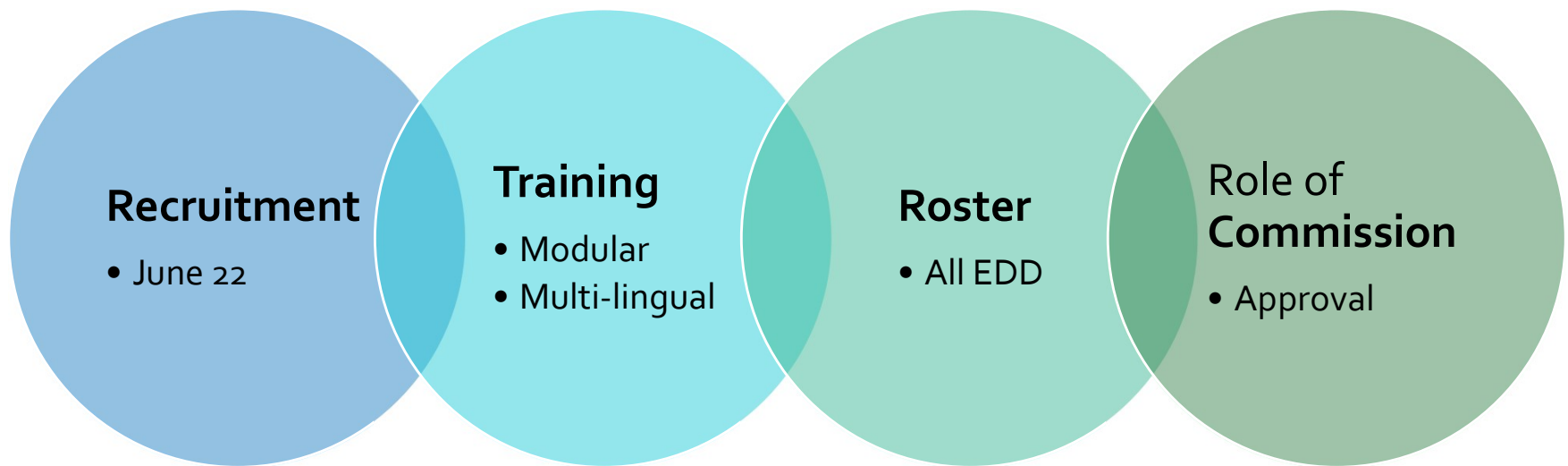
Target Concern: Review Panels



How are you improving the Panel Review process?

- Department-wide recruitment starting in June
- Formalized training
- Detailed scoring rubric to reduce subjectivity
- Fewer Narrative questions

Panel Process Recommendations



Panel Training



Paid Training (\$300)

Multi-lingual; Videos and pdfs

Three modules:

- Equity and Unconscious bias (including an Austin context and guided discussion)
- Panel Expectations, Program Guidelines, Rubrics
- Technical Training for using the portal system to score applications

Application assignments after training

Panel Composition + Selection

Panels will include:

- A mix of local and out of town panelists (including community members)
- A mix of arts administrators and practicing arts professionals
- A mix of artistic discipline expertise
- Equity expertise
- Community-based artistic practice expertise
- Non-profit expertise

Selection Process:

- 1+ month before close of an application, staff will select a minimum of 15 potential panelists per panel
- Secondary form (detailed experience, availability)
- All panels will have an odd number of panelists
- 7-9 candidates must be available on the day-of meeting(s)

Panel Operations

Operations:

- Public can watch the "day-of" panels
- There will be no interaction between panelists and applicants
- Panelists will be **paid** for reviewing applications and also paid per meeting day
- There will not be discipline specific panels
- Nonprofit applications will be reviewed separately from individual/creative groups.

Program-Specific Panel Details

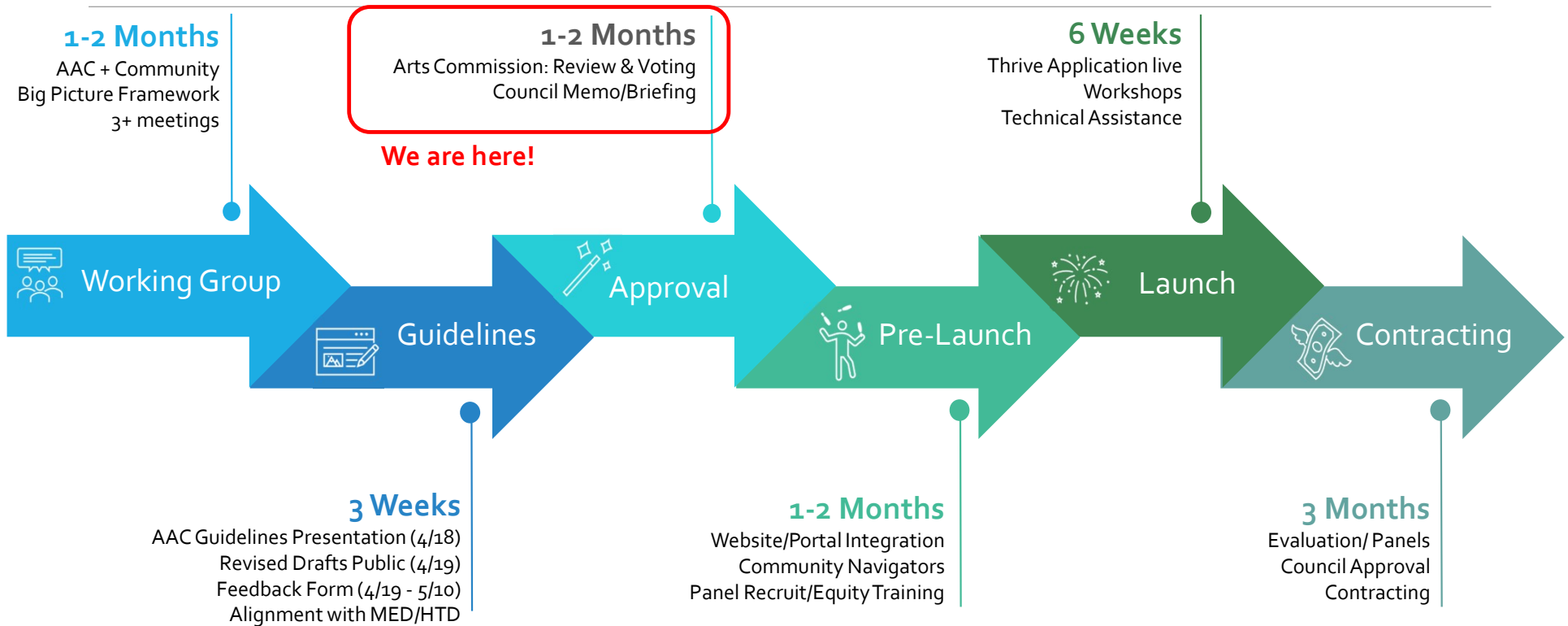
Thrive

- One multidisciplinary panel (5-9) will review all Thrive applications
- The panel will review and score applications prior to the day-of panel meeting
- The 50 top scoring applications will be reviewed/discussed during the panel meeting
- Panelists have the option to make a passion plea for an applicant (not top scoring) they feel has merit to be discussed at the virtual panel meeting

Elevate

- **ROUND 1**
 - Minimum of 3 people will review each application. Panelists must provide comments that justify the score.
 - A minimum of 100 top scoring Nonprofit applications will move on to round 2
 - A minimum of 50 top scoring Individual/Creative Groups will move on to round 2
 - Panelist will have two weeks to review a max of 15 applications each
 - Round 1 panelists will receive payment for completing the panelist training as well as reviewing the assigned applications
- **ROUND 2**
 - Minimum of 5 people review each application (3-4 weeks to review)
 - A single panel will be held for top-scoring nonprofit applications and a separate single panel will be held for individual/creative groups
 - Round 2 panelists will receive payment for completing the panelist training, reviewing the assigned applications as well as the day-of meeting(s)

Next steps



Process Timeframe

May 25th – Council Audit & Finance Committee Meeting

May 31st – Arts Commission meeting

June 7th – African American Resource Advisory Commission presentation

June 13th – LGBTQIA+ QOL Commission presentation

June 21st – Asian American QOL Commission presentation

June 21st – Arts Commission meeting

June 22nd – Panel Recruitment begins

June 28th – Hispanic/Latino QOL Commission presentation

October 12th – Cultural Funding Pilot Program: **Thrive** launches

February 2023 – Tentative **Nexus** launch

March 2023 – Tentative **Elevate** launch