



Recommendation for Action

File #: 23-1236, **Agenda Item #:** 12.

2/23/2023

Posting Language

Approve a resolution authorizing the City Manager to award, negotiate, and execute Cultural Arts Fund grant agreements and allocations for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 in an amount not to exceed \$3,935,000 for Thrive grants.

Lead Department:

Economic Development.

Fiscal Note:

Funding in the amount of \$3,935,000 is available in the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Economic Development Department's Cultural Arts Fund Budget.

Prior Council Action:

August 24, 2021 - Council Work Session briefing on the Cultural Funding Review Process and proposed funding programs. 20210824-D001, Agenda Backup: Presentation
<<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=366418>>.

September 22, 2021-City Council Audit & Finance Committee briefing Agenda Item #5:
<<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=367207>> Economic Development Department update on Cultural Arts Fund and Historic Preservation Fund. Sponsors: Council Member Alison Alter, and Council Member Leslie Pool. Economic Development and Equity Office presented an update on the Cultural Arts Fund and Historic Preservation Fund and answered questions from the committee. No action was taken.

May 25, 2022- City Council Audit & Finance Committee briefing Agenda Item #4. Sponsors: Mayor Pro Tem Alison Alter, and Council Member Leslie Pool. Economic Development Department presented an update on the Cultural Arts Funding Program Guidelines and answered questions from the committee. No action was taken. 20220615-AFC001 Minutes <<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=384867>>.

For More Information:

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Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

June 29, 2022 <<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=388322>> - Arts Commission approved the framework of the Cultural Funding Review Process, including Pilot Program guidelines (Thrive, Elevate, Nexus). Motioned: Barnes, Seconded: Mok Approved 9-0, Commissioners Gray and Keeton absent.

October 17, 2022 <<https://services.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=399352>> - Arts Commission approved the Thrive grant review panelists. Motioned: Polgar; Seconded: Flores, Approved 7-0, Commissioners Garza and Schmalbach absent.

Additional Backup Information:

This agenda item seeks City Council approval of the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Thrive grant agreements and allocations in the amount of \$3,935,000 from the Cultural Arts Fund.

The Cultural Arts Division of the Economic Development Department (EDD) manages programs to provide funding for arts and culture practitioners through a competitive application and review process. Funds for Thrive grant agreements are derived from a portion of the revenues from the City's Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT). Texas Code, Chapter 351.101(a)(4) authorizes HOT to be used for the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts. HOT funded programs, facilities, and/or events must be advertised and open to the general public and must be expended in a matter directly enhancing and promoting tourism.

Thrive will provide focused investment to sustain and grow arts organizations that are deeply rooted in and reflective of Austin's diverse cultures. This program seeks to directly correct the historical under-funding, displacement, and cultural erasure of vulnerable communities within Austin by offering substantial funding for these organizations to self-determine and invest in their own sustainability and growth. Awards range from \$85,000 to \$150,000.

Following a competitive process, staff evaluated Thrive Grant applications to ensure proposals meet state mandates, grant eligibility, and program requirements. Applications from arts and culture non-profits that met the criteria were evaluated and scored by an external review panel. The two-stage review panel scored eligible applicants based on mission and key constituencies, history of service, cultural leadership, cultural activities relevance and responsiveness, intersectionality and inclusion, community relationships, opportunity creation and community benefit, accessibility, and cultural institution status.

Exhibit A includes a list of organizations and allocations recommended for a Fiscal Year 2023 Cultural Arts Fund - Thrive Grant. Exhibit A is organized alphabetically by organization name.

Strategic Outcome(s):

Economic Opportunity and Affordability; Culture and Lifelong Learning Strategy.