



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:21-1408

Agenda Item Number: 2

Agenda Date: 2/12/2021

In Control: Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee

DEPARTMENT: Department of Arts & Culture

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Debbie Racca-Sittre

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: All

SUBJECT:

Briefing and possible action on the Department of Arts & Culture's pre-qualified list of public art professionals.

SUMMARY:

Briefing and possible action on the pre-qualified list of public art professionals whose services may be used to implement art projects established by the San Antonio Arts Commission and/or the Department of Arts & Culture in an amount not-to-exceed the budget allocation for public art and arts programming through the department.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Department of Arts & Culture has issued an open call for artists since 2012 to create a pre-qualified list of public art professionals to be available for selection by the San Antonio Arts Commission and/or contracting and payment through the Department of Arts & Culture. In January 2020, City Council approved a list that is valid for three years and remains active for two more years.

In November 2020, the department issued an open call as part of a competitive and curated process to update the City's pre-qualified list of public art professionals comprised of public artists and art support services. Extensive outreach including: weekly emails to art professionals and organizations requesting they apply, such as local universities, community colleges, neighborhood associations, arts agencies, galleries and museums in San Antonio and Texas, SA CARES 4 Art grantees, Americans for the Arts, and the Texas Public Art Association. Information regarding the open call was included in the department's newsletter which has a distribution of 5,000+ recipients, posted on the department's website and social media accounts, and placed in advertisements through various local media with an emphasis on targeting artists of color and residing in

underrepresented areas of the city. In addition to these outreach efforts City Council offices also assisted with outreach through their newsletters and social media. These efforts resulted in four times as many applications being received for 2021 as compared to 2020.

The department held two virtual information sessions on the annual call. During these session staff provided an informational presentation on what it means to be pre-qualified, followed by a step-by-step tutorial on how to apply. The first session was held on December 8, 2020 with 186 registered attendees and the second was held on December 17, 2020 with 60 registered attendees. The department also hosted a virtual “Ask a Public Artist” informational session, where staff moderated a panel of current public artists which provided applicants with access to their peers for a virtual “mentoring” session. The session took place on January 12, 2021 with 54 registered attendees. The community was able to participate and ask questions in all three of these events by registering in WebEx. The goal of this open call and the outreach process was to seek new art professionals to be added to the already active list with a specific focus on attracting a more diverse artist pool.

The Department of Arts & Culture evaluated the submitted qualifications of artists and art support service providers and recommend the addition of 158 public art professionals, which includes 100 public artists, 45 art support services and 13 who applied in both categories. In February, the San Antonio Arts Commission and its Public Art subcommittee are scheduled to consider the recommended list of public art professionals.

ISSUE:

The Department of Arts & Culture recommends the addition of 158 public art professionals to its prequalified list. Of those artists who identified their gender and race in the new application, 45% identified as women and 48% identified as artists of color. The Department of Arts & Culture’s pre-qualified list of public art professionals, once approved by City Council, is used for services to implement art projects established by the department in an amount not-to-exceed the eligible budget allocation for arts.

The Department of Arts & Culture may contract with the artists for design services, selection, acquisition, fabrication, installation, conservation, and display of artworks. Support services includes written descriptions, photography and video documentation of art projects, curatorial services, art fabrication, transportation, installation, maintenance, and conservation as well as other art related professional services. Inclusion in the pre-qualified list does not guarantee a contracting opportunity. Public art professionals who are approved for the pre-qualified list will remain on the list for a 3-year period.

Final selections for public art project commissions will be made through an evaluation process that will include representatives of the Public Art Committee, the San Antonio Arts Commission, stakeholders such as local art professionals, neighborhood and community members, and representatives of City departments where the art will be located. Final artist selections and projects are reviewed and approved by the Public Art Committee and the San Antonio Arts Commission. Once an artist is selected for a public art project commission, the artist establishes a concept which must be reviewed by stakeholders and approved by the Public Art Committee. Final designs of all public art are approved by the San Antonio Arts Commission before the artwork may be fabricated. The Public Art Division of the Department of Arts & Culture manages the entire process from artist selection to installation.

ALTERNATIVES:

Should the Culture & Neighborhood Services Committee choose not to approve moving forward with updating

the pre-qualified list of public art professionals, the department will be required to continue to use the 2020 pre-qualified list and would lose the opportunity to select and contract with 158 new artist and art professionals.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with this item. Any public artist contracts are subject to the Public Art Policy adopted by City Council in 2011, as may be subsequently amended. In September 2011, City Council adopted a policy that 1% of all eligible capital projects would be available for public art. Additionally, the Department's operational budget includes funds for public art maintenance and art programming. All contracts are subject to the availability of funds in the adopted city budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends moving forward with the additions to the pre-qualified artist and art support services list for City Council consideration.