



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**  
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**Agenda Item Number:** {{item.number}}

**Agenda Date:** December 4, 2023

**In Control:** Community Health Committee

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**DEPARTMENT:** Department of Arts and Culture

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Krystal Jones

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

**SUBJECT:**

Arts Funding Guidelines for Nonprofits and Individual Artists

**SUMMARY:**

Briefing and possible action on the Department of Arts & Culture's Funding Guidelines for Nonprofits and Individual Artists.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

In 2017, the Department of Arts & Culture led a public input process to develop Arts Funding Guidelines that support a diverse portfolio of art organizations working across the City of San Antonio in the production of on-going, sustainable, high quality artistic activities. The guidelines focused on grant allocations being distributed equitably. In 2017, the department also committed to reviewing the grant funding guidelines every three years prior to the start of a new three-year funding cycle. The Arts Funding Guidelines were adopted by City Council in February 2018.

In 2020, the department conducted a public input process to revise the Arts Funding Guidelines. The guidelines policy included Base Operational Support, Culturally Specific Support, Project Grants for Individual Artists, Artist Regranting, and Events grants. The department also manages Performing Arts Venue Improvement Grants and Performing Arts Production Cost Grants, as well as grants for Film Festivals.

In 2023, the department began a public input process to review all grant funding programs prior to the next three-year funding cycle opening in the spring of 2024. Eight community input sessions were held from August 15 to September 15 and an SA Speak Up online survey was open from July to September to gather feedback on all current granting programs. Feedback was used to inform the Arts Funding Guidelines and develop one streamlined document containing all grant offerings managed by the Department of Arts & Culture.

## **ISSUE:**

The San Antonio Arts Commission, appointed by the Mayor and City Council, oversees the Arts Funding Process for Nonprofits and Individual Artists. Their role is to advise, review and make final funding recommendations for City Council consideration based on the adopted guidelines. The San Antonio Arts Commission's Arts Funding Committee provides recommendations on evaluation panelists, reviews eligible appeals, and develops the preliminary funding recommendation for the Commission's consideration.

The Department of Arts & Culture invests in San Antonio nonprofit organizations and artists in the production of arts programming for residents and visitors. The funds distributed through the Arts Funding process comes from Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT). By state law, up to 15% of the local HOT collections can be utilized to fund arts and cultural activities.

The Department of Arts & Culture has committed to reviewing the Arts Funding Guidelines every three years, prior to the next three-year cycle opening. The community input process allows for revisions to be made to the guidelines before the application processes begin for the next cycle of grants. The department held eight community input meetings and had an online survey available through SA Speak Up. The feedback informed the changes that are reflected in the updated funding policy.

The consolidated policy includes Operational Support, Culturally Specific Support, Events, Artists, Performing Arts Production Costs, Performing Arts Venue Improvements, and Film Festival Funding grant programs.

Changes to the guidelines include:

- Increased grant amounts and tiers for select programs
- 12-month waiting period for previous artist grantees to allow others access to the grant
- Preference points for applicants with disabilities
- Annual opening for newly eligible organizations for Operational and Culturally Specific
- New organizations are "phased in" at 33% in Year 1/66% in Year 2/100% in Year 3 of their eligible funding amount
- Addition of Middle Eastern for Culturally Specific Grants

On November 9, the San Antonio Arts Commission's Arts Funding Committee approved the updated Arts Funding Guidelines and the San Antonio Arts Commission approved on November 14. If approved by Community Health, the Arts Funding Guidelines will go to City Council "A" Session in December for consideration.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

**This item has no fiscal impact as these guidelines will be used to award funding for nonprofits arts and culture agencies and individual artists in the FY 2025 Budget as part of the Department of Arts & Culture allocation of Hotel Occupancy Tax revenue.**

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Should City Council choose not to approve the updated and consolidated Arts Funding Guidelines, the department will continue to operate under the three current policy guidelines that are in place.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The Department of Arts & Culture and the San Antonio Arts Commission recommends approval of this item.