

CDF Round One Focus Group

DCLA, 31 Chambers St, KDL

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Nisha Baliga, HSC

Risa Shoup, Spaceworks

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Eddie Torres, DCLA

Stacey McMath, DCLA - Programs

Email Hawkins, DCLA - Programs

Stephanie LaFroschia, DCLA - Programs

Kathi Hughes, DCLA - Programs

Daniel Tuss, DCLA - Programs

Ashley Firestone, DCLA - Programs

King Manor Museum

Kelly Scar, Bx Doc Center

Susan Fenley, Sundog theater SI

Franklin, CUP

Ah-Ha Media

Maria , Standby Program

Alice Austin House

Meg, Jacque Martee House SI

Michael Robinson, The Lark

Susie Meyers Jackson, Opening Act

Charles Rice Gonzolace, BAAD

Ariana, Tibetan Art Museum

Risa Shoup - introduction and summary of the larger process, focus groups as part of the public engagement phase. Lots of meetings, events, interviews, research of other Cultural Plans, draft plan released at end of April, at which time we will solicit more feedback from the public. Wrap up the process by June 30 with a final plan delivered to City Council and City Hall.

Office Hours, Focus Groups, meetings, surveys, etc. as part of the larger cultural ecosystem – plan for all of NYC. This is part of a long-term process of listening to the public, cultural producers and workers, artists, etc. The Plan will cover lots of issue areas, we will speak about some of these in today's discussion.

Kathi Hughes – look at how DCLA funds organizations and decisions with regard of that.

All organizations in the room have budgets under \$2M, only two have budgets over \$1M.

What role DCLA plays in your organization, in the context of the broader realm in the City and other funders. How does our funding have an impact in your overall funding structure? What are your other funding supports? What impact do we have on your programming? How do you use our funds to leverage other supports?

- DCLA has the most consistent support, even though we are not supposed to rely on this funding. Consistent of the programming, some base we feel. The funding dovetails what we do, connecting with community groups, organizations, we understand this is expected from DCLA and find this aligns with our mission naturally, and makes us go an extra step to make sure we are public facing.
 - Making the commitment to prioritize having a public interface, this could fall away without the DCLA push.
- We greatly appreciate funding from DCLA, you are one of only two sources of funding we get, extremely difficult to find funding for theater.
- The opportunity for multi-year is great, very rare in funding, the democratic process is unlike any other. Love the structure, very helpful and democratic. Respects the public idea of DCLA. Most of philanthropy are very exclusive, know a program officer, someone on the board.
 - My strategy with private philanthropy is to
 - Who, Why, When, Where helps us be very specific in knowing what we are respecting, funding, etc. METRICS are philosophically ideal – not only focused on numbers served.
 - Private phil. Can learn from DCLA process.
 - NYSCA sometimes provides quality, detailed feedback like DCLA does consistently, but no one else in funding world
 - The power of multi-year funding is critical. Consistent, general operating support is fundamental and significant to support and sustain small organizations. This is helpful in how we can take on new projects or programs. DCLA is a fairly significant portion of our orgs funding structure. We are trying to diversify (Alice Austin House). DCLA finding is a legitimizer to acquiring other funding. If not getting from governmental channels, it is a disservice to acquiring other funding (\$300,000 >> \$450,000).

- CDP – constantly changing, rubrics in new formats, confusing, we are lucky to have staff in our organization who are good at figuring this out, but can imagine others struggling.
 - There was a time that this wasn't part of the application process, is this necessary? Feels like doing double work.
 - Do any of you use the CDP reports? Mostly NO. Only 2 yes.
 - Originally, this seemed like a great opportunity, but it's incredibly burdensome, now. The promise from the beginning was across public and private, there would be one standardized budget process. Due to our size, we would elect not to use this, even though it has the great potential to be useful
 - Don't use because we don't have interest, time, or much knowledge about the CDP reports. Another funder asks us (Sundog Theater) to report in DCLA format.
 - CDP is very geared toward to arts programs, we are a service organization, so
- Lot of platforms in which orgs have to register, again and again. Databases for NFP in general, to register for state, city funding – MOCS, etc. We don't have the capacity to continually complete this information, in new formats, in new
- BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD DCLA SHOULD LOOK TO?
 - Private funders, entry point can be very difficult. Once in, program officers know your work. The relationship of the Program Officer and the organization (high touch knowledge) is not incorporated into the DCLA panel as much as I would like.
 - Lack of a budget threshold - \$250,000. The range of budget sizes is really important to the DCLA process.
 - Not having to start from scratch every three years.
- What is challenging or time consuming about the DCLA application process – reporting?
 - Difficult to get on board with presenting 18 months in advance, as an org and our programs being responsive to the community, this nimbleness makes it challenging when we need to reporting any changes as to what is being programmed – at least once we've established a track record in the multi-year grants, projects.
 - The format of a revision submission, three different budgets to submit for programmatic changes (anything over 20%).
 - Q: Would this be better communicated thought an online format, ongoing conversation? Organizational profile NYSCA does is really helpful – operating budgets, mission statement, constantly up to date. Not redone each time there is a revision, edit.
 - Supplementary documentation – same for CDF and initiatives, can we not submit twice?
 - Some funders, scan and submit online, not in hard copy. This is better. Links can be entered, much more streamlined to how we operate.
 - Some of the good rigor is the advanced planning – this helps small organizations stay sustainable. The overall budget is a little tricky, making an ask above the level you might actually get. Then needing to carry-out based on a lower level of funding, still asked to carry out program at lower level.

- This inherently leads to scope changes process.
- Budget – issue in panels: When org operating fiscal year doesn't line up with DCLA fiscal year, this becomes really confusing. Calendar year, not City FY. Some way to clarify application process for two options.
 - To make the shift for City FY, short or long FY and double pay accountant.
- Reference to the degree with changes in scope. In multi-year funding, by year 3 the scope may change dramatically. At The Lark, internationally programs can change dramatically bc of global dynamics. How to streamline this process to accommodate multi-year shifts.
 - Panels are very focused on comparative data, what is everyone doing NEXT YEAR? Obligation is that the City is getting what it pays for over the multi-year grant? The mechanism to doing scope changes is cumbersome. Was the scope of service maintained? Scope expanded? Scope reduced? Very rarely scope canceled.
- General Operating Support Grants:
 - No one will say no!
 - Q: when submitting proposed project or program, being assessed on that. When submitting for general operating, isn't the panel process mostly based on how many panelists know the organization?
 - NYCSA program and general operating – process is based on organizational strength. Model for DCLA?
 - Q: How does this operate differently when planning for general operating than program support?
 - Move funds around to different program when new, additional funding is awarded.
 - Would Gen. Ops. Budget be tied to CDF funding? At NYSCA – need to get program support for 3 years in a row and then can apply for general operating. If not 3 yrs consistently, cannot apply for Gen. Ops. Funding. Who pays when the door breaks, or energy bills?
 - DCLA funding has helped leverage private funding support.
 - Q:Sustainability: how much are people getting paid at small cultural organizations? How long can this be sustained? Where do we get the money to get staff paid decently if funding only comes in for programs? How can the health of the field thrive? How can the granting, funding process support this?
 - Looking to hire someone next year, arts and ed. – can't afford staff salary for new hires; not being able to pay better health benefits – so we lose good people to spaces, orgs that can afford that.
 - Really need Full-Time staff, can only afford PT bc (Alice Austin House) can't afford the additional \$10,000 in benefits. This is directly tied to diversifying staff, City “We support you fundamentally” through gen. op. funding as
 - Capacity building support – could this be a considered a project or program?
 - Question on application about sustainability – openness about administrative health and capacity building, professional development support.
 - Best practice, a percentage of funding is allowed for overhead (programmatic

- costs built into your budget)
 - Something to be more well clarified, to have someone's salary as part of a project programmatic budget.
 - Can small arts orgs have some kind of union (freelancers union) to buy health care, energy, insurance, workers comp (had to get this insurance bc of DCLA grant)? Used to do this with the City for office supplies .
 - Have you looked for PEOs?
 - Have you looked at ArtsPool? More useful for navigating administrative support, DCLA as center for providing the information to grantees
 - Directly tied to Equity Issue: You need some kind of external security to work in organizations like this. GOS – necessary for capacity building and sustainability. The Lark would not be able to grow without capacity building
 - More than 25% have no paid staff. Roughly, 50% have budgets under \$250,000. Allowing for that growth is key, what can DCLA do to facilitate this?
- Public Service aspect of DCLA support – ties to GOS?
 - Equity and Need – sitting on panel, we weren't allowed to discuss the NEED. Only assessing who filled out the application best. Need program officer in room to provide deep insight to orgs. Goes back to who is in the room, do we know the group, org, need of community, need for geographic and cultural service provision?
 - Need for the work was somewhat getting taken off the table – the project looks good, and application is good.
 - Panels did feel a bit arbitrary, filling more urgent and pressing need for community vs. strength of org to complete application.
 - It doesn't matter if we've grown twice as big or are serving more people, we are being put in a similar comparative situation, even if it is not applicable.
 - The panels are not always consistent – in my panel, we were ruthless about taking away money from orgs as we felt necessary.
- Need for capacity building grants – DCLA process as very democratic is key to this. We have to choose between GOS and Programs support.
- If you had to choose: either / or situation – keep until more money or change with no guarantee of more money/
 - KEEP AS IS UNTIL MORE FUNDING GUARENTEED.
- Multi-year grants: streamlining workload for small orgs. Going into panel yearly is difficult, proving every time. Streamline application and reporting process for every funder is part of this process for small orgs. The workload can be extreme for DCLA application, if we need to apply for more
- What can we fund, explicitly addressed in panels? What are we missing?
- What else do you need, the City could potentially address?
 - The cultural sector is predominantly white-led sector, historically and presently. People are responding, waking up, to be a more equitable and open organization. Open to systemic and structural change. Look at greater racist, sexist, abelist structures we are perpetuating. Race Forward, orgs doing trainings and professional development.
 - Over next 5-10 years, can there be a series of trainings through DCLA to address

- systemic change and racist structures? Funding for the training!
- Additional question(s) in application? How does your organization, internally, address Equity, Access, Inclusion.
 - Best practice – look at Ford Foundation application
 - Funded paid-fellowships and internships for college students of color in cultural field. We can't pay people, so how can DCLA support this institutionally. Help us do this. Give us money to create positions that are funded.
 - REDC / NYSCA funding for creating position for historically under supported individuals in organizations
 - There are organizations already hiring people of color. We have to make the statement and follow through. Any money going toward training and expanding diversity of staff at other cultural orgs, money also needs to go to organizations of color already doing this.
 - City council funding process? Differences, Similarities, struggles?
 - Speaking with colleague, she couldn't get answers from City Council office. Unclear, lack of transparency around whether City Council even reads the applications, or base decisions on whether they remember your org.
 - Seems like the dedicated CDF budget is under-valued as compared to CIG operating.
 - Staten Island – BP and 3 CMs did application seminar to ask for very specific requests for application reporting, but Council initiatives go through different agencies, DYCD, DCLA, etc. lots of extra work in applications, is it really worth the \$3K?
 - We can't seem to crack why we don't get Council funding. HS students we serve don't necessarily live in CD.
 - Mysterious in some CDs. More clear, responsive in some geographies, Staten Island.
 - Locational! Good relationship with our local CM, but when we moved we have had a difficult time cultivating a relationship with our new CM. Site visit was fundamental to securing confidence to initiative funding.
 - We only found out about initiative funding now (January) we are scrambling bc we found out about funding so late, so for small groups, it is a lot of heavy lifting to get artists, programs staff on board to execute program for which we received funding. It takes resources to jump start projects at a late stage, and we don't want to burn the relationship with the CMs. Difficult to navigate.

