



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: September 24, 2013
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Meeting Date: October 23, 2013

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services
FROM: General Manager, Community Services
SUBJECT: 2013 Cultural Services Grants Allocation for Capacity Building and Implementation of the Cultural Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

- A. That Council approve grants up to a total of \$24,500 (\$250 each to 98 organizations who were approved for Operating assistance, April 10, 2013, RTS 9924) for the completion of a pilot capacity self-assessment tool to increase understanding of organizations' capacity and to identify priority areas for further development and as a first phase of change towards a new support program model.
- B. That Council approve a grant of \$238,100 to Vantage Point for a renewed partnership agreement and capacity building framework to foster leadership excellence in the community (as detailed in this report) by addressing priority needs identified through a pilot assessment framework and new support program model and to support the first phase of transition informed by the Cultural Strategy.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report requests approval to allocate the remaining Cultural Grants budget to cultural organizations as part of a cultural support program model within the context of a revised Cultural Strategy.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Approval of a grant requires eight affirmative votes of Council.

REPORT

Background/Context

The City of Vancouver has been investing in organizational development in the cultural non-profit sector since 1989. Driven by the cumulative impact of the economic downturn, public sector funding shifts, an increase in the number of non-profit arts and cultural groups, and the impacts of growth in technology on artists and audiences, the City has been working closely with community partners to support a comprehensive, higher impact capacity building investment to support organizational resilience in a changing environment.

In December 2011 City Council approved a grant to Vantage Point and a partnership to support leadership development in the non-profit sector (in partnership with Social Policy) through workshops and labs on governance, executive management, and strategic planning. In Dec. 2012 City Council approved a grant to Vancity Community Foundation and a partnership to support a financial literacy framework consisting of workshops, technical assistance and financial planning. A series of Financial Literacy workshops will be delivered this fall and available to all grantees. In June 2012 the City partnered with Artscape providing capacity building learning opportunities in space development, maintenance and preservation in the city through a Creative Space Making conference and workshop series.

An allocation of \$62,600 is earmarked for capacity building initiatives in the 2013 Cultural Grants budget and earlier this year, Council approved an increase of \$200,000 to the Cultural Grants budget to cultural organizations as part of a support program model within the context of a revised Cultural Strategy. The total allocation of \$262,600 is the subject of this report.

Evaluation of partnership with Vantage Point

The shared goal of the partnership with Vantage Point is to cultivate excellence in non-profit leadership towards strengthening and creating positive change in our communities. The partnership allows the City to lever its resources strategically (funds with knowledge experts) and have a greater impact in capacity building for the sector with the intent of making our cultural organizations more sustainable over time. An evaluation was conducted by the Howe Group - Public Sector Consultants, between the period of March 2012 to April 2013. In that time the program supported 222 individuals from 118 organizations from both departments (24% of the 500 eligible organizations). The 2012 grant to Vantage Point to support the framework was \$124,000 from Cultural Services and \$80,000 from Social Policy for a total of \$204,000.

Highlights from the evaluation include:

- 91% support the City investing in capacity building while maintaining operating and project support.
- 83% would recommend the learning opportunity to a colleague/client.
- 71% indicate it impacted their capacity to lead the organization; improved ability to think strategically, increased knowledge through networks, ability to seek more diversified revenue sources, helped build mentorship opportunities.
- Two thirds indicate that it allowed them to perform their role more effectively, support their team more effectively over the long term, and were able to apply major learning in their organization.
- Key trends across the sector in the improved capacity of not-for-profit organizations to fulfill their missions include: enabling leaders to think strategically about the big picture, have meaningful conversations with their board, and to take the time to build trusting relationships ('taking the time to learn together').

Key recommendations arising from the evaluation are:

- Continue to fund capacity building learning opportunities including workshops and advanced labs.
- Create more networking and mentorship opportunities for program participants.
- Have a better understanding of individual organizational challenges and aspirations in order to better assist them with the appropriate support and be able to communicate the bigger picture continuum of learning opportunities.
- Consider programming focused on mid-career managers as the community's upcoming leaders and capacity builders.

This evaluation will help inform ongoing qualitative and quantitative metrics to assess the impact of the City's investment in the cultural sector over time.

Strategic Analysis

Cultural Strategy Context and Context for Change

A revised Cultural Strategy is being introduced to provide a more adaptive and flexible framework for the City to invest strategically for greater impact in arts and culture. The strategy contains four key priorities in support of a diverse, thriving cultural ecology. These include: increase community participation and engagement; foster leadership (artistic excellence and capacity); optimize investment in assets; invest in the creative economy.

The first phase of implementation will see the development of an adaptable support program framework (client-centred, evidence-based information, self-assessment tools, on-line data-base support) and a greater investment in capacity building to foster leadership excellence in the cultural sector. Further, the grant allocation to Vantage Point allows the City to expand its partnerships thus leveraging the city's contribution to arts and culture and further investing in the creative economy.

Adaptable and Sustainable Support Programs

Starting with groups who receive on-going support through the Operating program, a pilot assessment framework is being introduced. The first iteration introduces self-assessment tools to survey organizational health and lifecycle stages (growth, maturity, turn-around, decline) and requests evidence-based information (established policy, plans, programs and practice) with a focus on impact (how the organization is measuring their programs and overall performance) within the application request for funds for 2014. This will gather more explicit information on the sector such as clarity of missions, program alignment to missions, staff and board expertise, governance structure, artistic impact on public and participants, and lifecycle stage of an organization.

The next phase of implementation will be to adapt this framework for those organizations who receive other forms of assistance (project-based, theatre rental, space) and focus support to groups who are working in new, innovative or emerging practices who have been not been supported by the City in the past.

Foster Leadership

Concurrent with the introduction of this change will be a focus in support to organizations with identified priority areas for development or transition. Once the assessment is complete and a greater understanding of the group's organizational and artistic capacity is understood, the City can augment its on-going assistance with focused investment in priority areas. For example, these areas will include a continuum of support from basic leadership development and planning for organizations who are in growth or mature lifecycle stages to more in-depth planning for groups in turn-around or transition where innovative planning may be required such as adaptive leadership models or sustainability planning. In some cases groups in decline who are no longer able to meet their missions or have an impact in the community, exit transition plans will be set, leading to a discontinuation of grants support.

Proposed Allocation and Framework

The proposed allocation and framework (see Table 1) supports the recommendations arising from the evaluation of the Vantage Point programs and also looks to provide a continuum of support from basic leadership development to more in-depth planning. The latter include customized sustainability planning and the development of an adaptive change leadership lab for organizations that are proactively looking to innovate around new models of programming and operations in order to adapt effectively to complex challenges as a result of a rapidly changing environment. In all cases, this work will lay the foundation for significant change and innovation in organizational resilience and allow the City to make focused investments in organizations who are contributing to a diverse, thriving cultural ecology.

Based on the results of the new assessment framework (peer review will continue to be part of the assessment), staff and organizations will have a clearer understanding of organizational and artistic capacity, lifecycle stages, and imminent and longer-term issues and opportunities. This will form the basis of longer-term planning with organizations that may require further assistance.

TABLE 1

Priority	2012 Allocation	2013 Allocation	Grantee
<i>Adaptable Support Program Model</i>			
Pilot capacity self-assessment tool to increase understanding of org development priorities		\$24,500	98 Orgs \$250 each
<i>Foster Leadership</i>			
Basic leadership development and planning through existing workshops, governance and leadership Labs	\$124,000	\$100,000*	Vantage Point
Customized in-depth development and planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sustainability Planning o Adaptive Change Leadership Lab 		\$75,500 \$62,600	Vantage Point
Total Allocation	\$124,000	\$262,600	

*2013 level sustains core activity in 2012 but doesn't include costs for a one-off Leadership Forum and a significant evaluation process, although ongoing evaluation will be conducted.

Financial

This report recommends the final allocation of the remaining funds in the Cultural Grants Budget: \$62,600 earmarked for organizational development and capacity building and the \$200,000 increase.

CONCLUSION

Approval of this report supports a new cultural support program model within the context of a revised Cultural Strategy that will allow the City to make more focused investments in organizations who are contributing to a diverse, thriving cultural ecology.

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