

THE DIVERSITY COMMITMENT AND THE OSP APPLICATION EVALUATION PROCESS

Diversity, and the inclusive environment that it engenders, is a core value of the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture (Commission). This is a commitment shared by both board and staff as it informs policies and practices and improves the Commission's ability to fulfill its mission. Diversity and freedom of expression are intrinsically connected; artists and arts organizations must be free to express diverse views and people should be able to experience a wide range of artwork and cultural offerings. For the purposes of the Organizational Support Program (OSP) and this application, diversity refers to differences in gender, age, socio-economic class, geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, skills and abilities, political persuasion, and ethnicity, among other qualities.

As San Diego grows more diverse, the Commission realizes that in order for the arts and culture community to succeed in an increasingly competitive marketplace, becoming more inclusive – that is, engaging the full spectrum of the community in all aspects of an organization's culture and structure - is no longer just “the right thing to do” – it is also good business practice. These guidelines and application represent the Commission's attempt to establish diversity and inclusiveness as indicators of organizational excellence and, as a part of the OSP application review process, a criterion for evaluation.

Applicants to the FY09 OSP may address how diversity, in all its dimensions, is realized as an organization-wide commitment. As it is applicable, this commitment may be evidenced throughout the application – in the mission statement, goals and objectives, the responses to the Narrative section, the Budget Summaries, Demographics and Education and Access Tables, and in the required and optional attachments. An applicant's diversity commitment may be demonstrated in action that is quantitative and qualitative in nature, evidenced by outcomes that are both of measurable and immeasurable value to the

organization. This discussion must, of course, be balanced with the discussion of all other criteria that attests to the applicant's excellence.

Currently in our third year of engaging applicants in a more thorough discussion of diversity, the diversity commitment emerged from and advances as a long and thoughtful learning process involving Commissioners, arts and culture organizations and their boards and other community stakeholders. Application review panelists will be instructed to look for evidence that the organization is aware of diversity and its benefits, that a commitment to diversity has been made and that steps to become more inclusive, if this is necessary, are being considered and implemented. For each applicant, the OSP review panel will consider this third year reporting as mapping an organization's continuity and evolution— answering the question of “where is our diversity commitment now?” Panel determinations of how well the commitment is being fulfilled can impact rank, given an applicant's capabilities, relative to those of competing applicants of similar stature, budget size and discipline. Additionally, this will be the third and final year that organizations in Short Form will be reviewed by a Panel.

For examples of how an organization's diversity commitment might be evidenced in the OSP application and for more technical assistance, please visit the Commission's website at www.sandiego.gov/arts-culture, click on the **Diversity Initiative**.

The Commission believes that building an inclusive organization is an exciting, rewarding process that takes time, commitment and intentional action toward the fulfillment of short and long range goals. Organizations that welcome this challenge and are ready to embrace diversity will be better positioned to grow and become more vital, which ultimately benefits us all.