

Raw Data from FY17 OSP and CCSD Final Performance Reports – August 31, 2017

The Commission's question:

Help us to use your time and our time wisely; share any suggestions that could make the application, contract or payment process more user-friendly for your organization.

Answers from FY17 contractors as of August 31, 2017:

1. The application is fine, the entire process gets more streamlined, easier and more focused every time.
2. Adopting the recommendations from The San Diego Regional Arts & Culture Coalition for improving the application guidelines and process would provide significant benefits for all applicants. A consistent annual calendar that incorporates more time for each step in the process would be helpful. The OSP-18 application process provided only 12 business days to complete the RFQ and 17 business days to complete the RFP. Most funders allow more time to complete applications
3. Annual contract calendar & deadlines issued all at once and issued within the last months of the previous fiscal year.
4. The detailed timelines are greatly appreciated. However, many organizations depend on the funding and need the payments to be paid out quarterly to coincide with annual budgets.
5. OSP application is much easier since it's accessible online. Payment reimbursements could also be submitted online so everything is integrated into one system.
6. The new OSP process for FY18 is quite good. I applaud your efforts to make it more efficient and less time consuming. The online forms work well. I really like that the Data Arts is done at a separate time from the OSP application. (in the old days they were at the same time). For OSP FY17 final report, the reporting questions and request for information are appropriate, direct and complete. Thanks for all your hard work.
7. The contracting process is getting smoother and we appreciate being able to invoice for the complete amount. It would be helpful to host past applications and contracts on the on-line portal so we could refer back, etc. It would also be more beneficial to have the application due before December 1st.

8. Overall I think the process has improved over past years; however, small organizations are still at a disadvantage in meeting the requirements to participate in the program and in the expectations of the panelists. The \$5000 minimum funding level (and corresponding 3:1 match requirement) is excessive for organizations that have low expenses due to dedicated volunteers.
9. This is my first time filling this out - so won't know until I am completely done. But so far its been very easy!
10. We appreciate all the efforts the Commission is making toward streamlining the application and reporting process. We look forward to continued innovations in these processes, i.e. Nonprofit Academy, technical assistance workshops, etc. We respectfully request more notice on deadlines and extensions (when given). Thank you.
11. We appreciate all you do, sincerely, but since you asked: 1.The payment process is still snail pace. Orgs have to carry the expenses most of the year before being reimbursed.2. The process and rules continue to change every year at the commission, and often not flexible and therefore not impactful nor reflective of communities discourages smaller organizations that truly serve diverse audiences and that do not have full time Development TEAMS, from applying at all.
12. The contract payment process is very user-friendly on the contractor's end; however, because the submission is made via email only, sometimes a follow-up email is needed to ensure it was received. To eliminate the follow-up email, perhaps the invoice can be sent to a specific email address or can be uploaded in an online portal.
13. The Museum feels that, even with the transitions in staffing and the changes in process/form related to the OSP application this year, those in charge were helpful and responsive. If any significant changes in the application process will be put in place in the coming cycle, it always will be helpful to have some indication of that as early as possible so that we can be as prepared as possible to develop a competitive application.
14. Our major response is that OSP and CCSD grants processes need stabilizing. The FY17 application was a radical shift from FY16, FY18 another huge turn from FY17. This plays havoc with those of us in the field who do many other grant writing and fund raising functions and need to plan our year. Working in the for-purpose/nonprofit field is challenging enough without having continued uncertainty in the Commission's process and shifting deadlines. You are vital to us all. We need more consistency.
15. The process and application itself is much improved, and the Commission's staffers are very responsive to questions. It's appreciated!
16. Create a consistent format that builds upon prior year institutional information.
17. We believe the OSP program is a strong important program for the City of San Diego Arts & Culture Commission. The RFP and application process was clear and precise this year. We do not have any recommendations to improve the application, contract, or payment process

and are grateful for the Commission addressing feedback on the process from previous years.

18. A suggestion would be to create the annual application with a consistent format and questions. Issuing new questions and requirements annually translates in more time for the Commission to explain the new process and procedures and the nonprofits struggle to understand the application. A consistent scoring method would also be beneficial to the nonprofits and perhaps the review panelists as well.
19. We thank the Arts and Culture Commission for your support, and suggest that the process and time to approve contracts and disburse funds be shortened. Funding from the Arts and Culture commission is critical to our ability to serve San Diego's vibrant community.
20. OVERALL Process is MUCH IMPROVED as is access to administrative staff. Thank you for all your effort. FY18 Application was more abstract than usual, not sure if better however was nice to give more reflective answers than just quantifiable and qualification exclusively for a change.
21. Additional training for panelists with the opportunity to review/score and discuss applications would be helpful, with a focus on looking at the big picture of an organization and its responses instead of using a microscope to determine if, for example, there was no evaluation comment for one objective. With space limitations it is very difficult to cover everything, and in an effort to include as much as possible it can be very tough to not eliminate something.
22. When you set a deadline, please make it reasonable and don't keep changing it. Please remember that our grantwriters and executives schedule time off well in advance for their Holidays and that should be respected.
23. Distribute Commission announcements & program information to contractors & general public with ample notice and in a timely manner, i.e. 30 to 90 days prior to deadlines using contractor input & guidance in your timeline More transparency in the development of the funding application process Develop a process for contractor involvement and input in the development of OSP policy & application guidelines Keep the Commission website updated regarding meeting notices, agenda, & minutes
24. The annual OSP application process is time-consuming and complex for smaller organizations (could be streamlined). Commission administrative staff are very helpful and accessible to grantees (much appreciated).
25. The process is much improved--thank you! My main suggestion is borne of my fear of missing a deadline. I'd love a master calendar! It could include deadlines...but also upcoming workshops. Thanks!
26. We appreciate the new application process which reduces the amount of narrative we need to provide before submittal, although the LUNA process was a bit difficult at first. However, we had some trouble with submitting invoices through USPS (we later found out that they

could not find the City's mail room) and had to keep on changing the dates of our invoices to match City needs. Not sure if there is a way to streamline the request/payment process or how we can make it easier for both of us.

27. Your streamlining of the OSP process is a good direction to continue.
28. *Clarify that you want quantitative data.*Questions required repetitious answers, especially Section 3.*Instructions were confusing and we wondered what you really wanted.Section 2: Difference between objectives & measurable impacts = confusing-Goal = Broad statement of effect of solving problem -Objective = Measurable (SMART) results; Measurable Impact = seems same as objective?*Emphasis on reaching underserved populations is tough for an all-volunteer organization of mostly senior artists.
29. The OSP grant application was much more manageable this year. Thank you for taking time to ask this question and consider/implement the feedback given.
30. It would be nice to have the augmented funds process built into the site so we can submit a request for those funds within the platform here.
31. The character limit makes it very difficult to provide complete information in the application. Also, please have an organization test changes to the online process before launching to all organizations. We began working online as soon as the system was available and experienced several glitches.
32. Please be sensitive to the amount of time needed to complete Data Arts profiles in relation to your application timeline. The transparency and standardized scoring process of the application process is commendable. However, issues remain. The panelists seem to need more preparation and training, and I would also suggest that staff be more consistent in correcting panelists when they make inappropriate or irrelevant remarks. During the panels, I was concerned listening to some of the comments.
33. Application - After 30 years of granting to many of the SAME contractors, consider having applicants measure success in achieving individual missions and report annual progress based on their metrics with contracts renewed unless there are major changes. Contract - The County's TOT contracting concise and simple when compared to the City. If the default rate at the County on TOT contracts is not higher than the City's, consider replicating the County's process.
34. Expectations from panel reviewers could be made clearer. Perhaps a very descriptive explanation as to how the application is rated and or judged would help the organizations better represent their contributions to the arts and culture community. Not receiving panel comments in a timely manner is detrimental to helping organizations understand where they could improve the grant writing process. The review process could be improved greatly.
35. We feel that the commission is moving in the right direction with the streamlining of the application process for OSP funding.

36. Consistency from year to year will make the application process much easier. The online application, information sessions, and staff over the last two years have made this process immensely more user-friendly. I still think that the panel selection criteria should be made public.
37. The Arts & Culture Commission does a fabulous job communicating and explaining contract provisions in an easy manner. The new grant application is an improvement over the previous one (the one that this report covers). Thank you!
38. In an effort to make systems more efficient, the way in which grant materials are submitted seems to change from cycle to cycle. It is my hope that the OSP process becomes more uniform over time so that the submission process becomes easier to manage.
39. -Improve method for collecting feedback from organizations, providing opportunities throughout application, contracting and reporting process-Reinstate post-ranking appeal process-More consistency in application requirements and questions year-to-year-Additional lead-time for organizations to complete requirements and for technical assistance workshops/meetings-Reinstate application long form every 3 years-Make staff reports accessible to organizations and community prior to meetings
40. The Data Arts submission was very time consuming. It is good information if it is being used. Also, with regards to the narrative, I would recommend having a check box, "met"/"not met"/"partially met."
41. It would be helpful if there was a calendar that was consistent from year to year so that staff could plan time more effectively. If there are new requirements or if a previous timeline changes (as was the case with the CDP this year), please let everyone know far in advance. While the time needed to complete something new or adapt to a new timeline may seem insignificant, most non-profits are working with limited staff and have to balance many variables in order to react to these changes.
42. Some repetition especially when discussing programs. Especially for small organizations who do have have a lot of special programming, it feels like saying the same things different ways. Possibly there could be different applications for different sized programs.
43. We thank the Commission and its staff for their hard work and dedication to improving these processes. Detailed suggestions were submitted as part of a recent survey conducted by the Commission and the USD Nonprofit Institute.
44. Online access to materials is helpful when completing the application, contracting and reporting processes.
45. We most appreciated help from staff in obtaining the required insurance documents. She also shared copies of the requests and the documents so FLHF will be able to obtain the necessary documents in future years without help. Giving the most time possible to complete the application would be appreciated. If possible, making available an early draft of the

application, with the understanding that questions and requirements might change, would be helpful.

46. Continue to the use of online application and reports. This method helps us streamline the process.
47. Two things to reinstate: 1) short form; 2) ability to reshape goals and objectives to what is feasible when we receive less funding than hoped for. With apologies for saying it, but despite all your good efforts to simplify the process, the application feels more difficult to understand, more time consuming to fill out, and uses way too much paper. It also, sadly, feels far more discriminatory against small grassroots organizations, which is the exact opposite of the City Council's request not long ago .
48. Even though there have been many improvements - this process is extremely time-consuming. I would like to see a short form introduced back in to the process.
49. The application could continue to be condensed. It is still extremely time-intensive and the questions often ask for similar information from the applicant.
50. We appreciate the ability to apply for the OSP and report online. Thank you. We were very ambitious in goal setting last year. With the character limits in the report, it was somewhat difficult to accurately record all of the Center's accomplishments. Hopefully, the information recorded in the California Data Arts Report will fill in any gaps.
51. The OSP application is very onerous and the questions are often repetitive for smaller organizations. For groups with budgets less than \$500k, financial operations are pretty simple, yet the application asks several questions about policies and processes. A simpler, risk-tailored application for grants likely to be \$10-20,000 would be a definite improvement.
52. The process is clear and the materials provided by the Commission are very helpful. It would be great if some of the meetings could be held as webinars to save us the transportation time, but they are very succinct and informative. Thanks for all your support this year in helping to restore the funding to the arts.
53. Everything is much improved, just in my short experience with the City grant process. Thank you!
54. The in-person technical assistance workshops are helpful and well-run, covering updates and changes. Recommendation: record workshop and include links with the slides, so contractors can refer back and listen to specifics (especially Q&As). Advance notice, rather than last-minute changes, of updates within the application are much appreciated. A single source for instructions would also be helpful so confusion does not arise between application questions, guidelines, scoring instructions, etc.
55. The City's contract process is designed for vendors that are used to dealing with government contracts, and preparing RFQs and RFPs, which most arts organizations are not. The Commission's contract workshops are excellent and very helpful in understanding the

process. If these workshops were recorded and offered online as Webinars, as well, the information could be revisited at any time.

56. WE are appreciative of the thorough process that the Commission used to streamline these processes. We feels that reinstating the short application would be hugely beneficial to help contractors with a successful history of completing contracts. In addition, it would be beneficial to find ways to expedite the process of executing the contract and issuing a purchase order so that contractors do not have to wait until six months into providing services to submit a request for payment.
57. Return to short form application. We have been awarded and managed grants from the City of San Diego, County of SD, State of CA (CAC grant) and NEA. The most time consuming grant to manage is by far the City of SD because: Requires a city vendor contract, even for organizations that have a renewal each year. State/Fed Requirements and having a SAM registration should suffice. Why does OSP require a city-based contract for service?
58. The Commission has made many changes to its funding processes. Some have helped streamline, but continued concerns include:1. Time: Revive a short form option! The FY17 application took 50% longer than FY16; FY18 was better, but the new RFQ and its timing created other challenges. 2. Scoring - Ignore outliers panel scores and allow appeals.3. Flexibility vs fluidity We appreciate your flexibility, yet the fluidity of changing/adding deadlines and requirements can be stressful.
59. The application process has gradually moved to later in the year (in FY18 the RFQ was due shortly after the December holidays which is not ideal for applicants or for the City of San Diego. We recommend moving it back to the Fall. The contract and payment process could be automated (i.e. instituting electronic signatures), which could speed up the process of contract initiation and the release of a purchase order number (many non-profits rely on City payments and delays can be challenging).
60. This year, the Commission helped the arts retain funding levels higher than we anticipated, so major mission accomplished. Perhaps the Commission could help to address #3 above.
61. The staff at SDCAC are communicative and supportive! Thank you for your support!
62. Overall we are very happy with the application, contract and payment process as is. We are very grateful for all your staff's hard work and the support of our arts programs/services each year.
63. There needs to be a solid evaluation method, but the current application is rigorous. By adopting a two-year funding process would save time for applicants and staff. If a two-year process is not acceptable, change the application process so prior funded organizations complete short applications and then every three years complete a long form. Some questions require more space than the number of characters available to answer. It takes more time to try to fit answers in the space allowed.

64. I just learned (the hard way) that one cannot have this narrative page of the report open in two different tabs or work does not save--in fact it is completely deleted when the "Save Work" button is clicked. This kind of technological glitch is so disheartening to small organizations who do not have the bandwidth to simply start over again. I sincerely hope this is either fixed or applicants are properly warned before starting the massive RFQ/RFP process for this year's OSP application.
65. The Commission has considerably improved upon its leadership and generally in areas of expertise of its staff. Keep going! And thank you!
66. Nothing comes to mind. The processes are easy to understand and accomplish as long as 3rd party players like insurance companies provide timely documentation..
67. The online interface is a positive development that continues to improve. This helps us.
68. The application seems complicated to understand quickly how much funding will be allocated.
69. The addition of the online portal and information provided has made things much easier.THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK!
70. Over the last few years, the CCSD application process has become extremely complicated and overly burdensome. This limits the pool of applicants to an "in crowd" who have the resources to spend the considerable time on an application. Migrating the application process online was intended to streamline the process and while this might have occurred for those managing the program, from the point of view of the applicants, the opposite has occurred.
71. We value the extraordinary effort and generosity of the City of San Diego to fund cultural programs. To strengthen the review process, we request the Arts Commission to consider a review by the grant applicants as part of the application review process after the reviewing body has made its initial deliberations. This is to give the applicant an opportunity to respond appropriately if the reviewing body happens to make a wrong assumption / interpretation about requests made by the applicant.
72. Distribute Commission announcements & program information to contractors & general public with ample notice and in a timely manner, i.e. 30 to 90 days prior to deadlines using contractor input & guidance More transparency in the development of the funding application process Develop a process for contractor involvement and input in the development of OSP policy & application guidelines Keep the Commission website updated regarding meeting notices, agenda, & minutes
73. The constant changes to the application and contracting process without sufficient prior notice and lack of transparency is a critical concern especially in light that the Commission is a public, government agency.

74. We recently completed its 3rd application to the Commission and each time the application has been very different. It would be very helpful if the degree of changes each year could be smaller. Also, it would be helpful to have a workshop that was oriented specifically for smaller groups (funding less than \$10,000) since the matching and reporting requirements are different than for larger groups and because some questions in the application seem to contemplate larger organizations.
75. We found the 2018 application to be more streamlined than the 2017 application. If the newest application is used again next year, that would be helpful.
76. It would be helpful if the online application and reporting forms in gosmart could auto-save frequently, or at least auto-save when "next" is clicked, before going to the next page. The DataArts CDP online form does both of these and it is very helpful and time saving.
77. If the application could somehow put the goals and objectives to reference on the application, it may be easier for us to discuss and refer to for answering our achievements of those goals.
78. Streamlining the process with online access is so much better. Try to keep changes to a minimum. Not crazy about the RFQ! Seems redundant.
79. Live Webinar or Teleconference with Q&A Recorded Webinar or Teleconference
80. Interactions with staff are positive, however we suggest the application process be frozen for at least a year so applicants can experience the process without the frequent addition of new requirements. This lengthens the application process for everyone and may result in applicants rushing to meet deadlines. The revised panel process was informative, but we suggest that each panelist became familiar with the organizations to be reviewed, so as not to give the appearance of being unprepared.
81. The application for funding process should be briefer and less involved for smaller organizations than it is for large organizations. The time and expense of application preparation is proportionally more impactful on the small organizations and puts them at a disadvantage.
82. We were very disappointed to experience questions being added to the application a mere 3 days before its due date. The amount of time to prepare responses for these newly added questions was completely inadequate and inconvenient as the 3 days in question were travel days as our team was attending a professional conference in another city. Then we were penalized for not having those answers. We feel this is unfair and strongly object to this type of scenario in the application process.
83. Getting better! It would be helpful to receive the contract and purchase order together whenever possible.
84. I can't think of any. It seems easier each year as you try to streamline the process.

85. The 2017 grant application seemed geared more toward performing arts organizations and at times it was difficult to answer the questions in a meaningful way. However, the 2018 application was more inclusive of non-profit organizations such as ours who provide "culture events" to the community. We really appreciate it! It would be helpful if information entered during the application process could automatically populate the Final Performance Report. Thank you!
86. You are a government institution, so it is understandable that there is red tape involved. We're sorry we don't have the opportunity to contract with you in 2018.
87. Entering the full information into Data Arts for a year is a laborious process. Yet when the report for CCSD was generated, only part of the information was included. For those of us who expect to use Data Arts ONLY for CCSD contacts, please list in some detail which sections of the report should be completed and which may be omitted.
88. The application and reporting process works well for us.
89. We are extremely grateful to the changes the Commission for Arts and Culture made to its application form this year. It made it much simpler. Perhaps there are similar changes that could be made to the DataArts form? It would be helpful if the Program Activity section could be simplified to perhaps one section.
90. Most of the processes have become more streamlined and user friendly. The addition of the DataArts survey requirement was a bit tricky. The questions asked did not dovetail well with our organization and project. We are still interested in getting feedback from the commission review of our grant application.
91. Decrease the amount of detail needed for the application, especially for returning organizations. Include the request for payment form as an online fill-able form. Decrease turnaround in assigning purchase order numbers for organizations who complete their projects in Q1 of the fiscal year. Create downloadable word versions of online forms to make it easier to draft responses before filling in online forms. Increase amount of time between materials release and due dates.
92. Allowing more words/characters for answers would allow more complete answers and perhaps keep panelists from discounting scores for not having enough information, particularly in the section of the people playing key roles with Name/Title/Job Description and qualifications. Let CCSD applicants know in advance that they will need to fill out the Cultural Data Project in order to complete their final report.