

June 13, 2017

To: Boulder County Commissioners

From: Boulder County Cultural Council

RE: 2017-18 SCFD Allocation Recommendations

Dear Commissioners,

Please see below background information and recommendations from the Boulder County Cultural Council regarding the allocation of 2017-18 SCFD funds, totaling \$ 718,136.94.

Background – This 2017 grant cycle is the continuation of a transition for the BCCC that started last year, reflecting a new application evaluation rubric the Council adopted after months of research and discussion following the grant cycle in 2016.

It is the understanding of the current council that the allocation of funds was previously based on historic funding levels and specific “asks,” which allowed grantee organizations to anticipate funding for their budget purposes. Unfortunately, this approach seemed to 1) penalize organizations that were unable to escape their historical allocation patterns and 2) exacerbate ongoing underfunding and overfunding dynamics. The intention of the new approach is to move away from the practice of allocating funds based on previous funding levels and move toward a more objective analysis of each organization’s current program content, capacity, financial status, and overall merit.

The Council communicated through SCFD and Boulder County websites, and at the Tier III grant workshop that 2017 scoring would be based on the new approach and not on funding history.

In order to mitigate possible dramatic changes that might occur in this transition year, the council agreed that it would average the two formulae – that is, average the results from the new rubric evaluation approach and the previous year’s historic funding model results – to arrive at a recommended allocation. This transition year “correction formula” does, of course, partially continue the effects of the historic funding approach. Using this hybrid or “correction formula” approach, 27 organizations will see improved outcomes over last year’s grants (ranging from \$6.00 to \$7,760) and 31 (excluding the Dairy) organizations will see lower outcomes (ranging from \$82 to \$7,000). GOS applications were funded, based on score, at between 15-86% of their eligible funds. The 28 organizations receiving above average scores were funded between 50-86% of their potential funding.

The council recommends full implementation of the new approach, without averaging or correction formulas, for the 2018 funding cycle.

Guiding Principles

As was anticipated, the distribution amount for Boulder County was less than last year (approximately one percent), due to election cost recovery, as well as the fact that Tier III distribution numbers are based on current year SCFD budget, which is always modest. With 1% less funding to allocate than in the prior grant year, and the return of The Dairy Arts Center for this grant cycle after being in Tier II in the last grant cycle, the Boulder County Cultural Council (BCCC) allocation decisions for 2017-18 were guided by the following intentions:

1. Fund all General Operating Support (GOS) – i.e., Boulder County based -- organizations to provide the broadest possible support absent a serious concern about organizational viability
2. Utilize the new evaluation rubric to bring some more objective rigor to the analysis of applications.
3. Support the prior communication to grantees and applicants that the approach would be moving away from funding at historical funding levels, in order to start to address past funding inequities and to reflect review of current organizational programming and outreach efforts.
4. Fund projects from organizations whose majority of programming is outside of Boulder County if the proposed projects are truly unique and additive to Boulder County offerings at 100% of ask level.

The BCCC reviewed 78 applications for total available 2017-18 funds of approximately \$718,000 – which is almost \$7,000 less than the \$725,000 funding available last year. Application requests included 59 GOS requests for general operating support (GOS) and 19 project requests totaling almost \$105,000 (compared to 28 projects in 2016, 21 requests in 2015 and 14 project requests in 2014).

The BCCC diligently reviewed all 78 applications and recommends funding of 70 organizations: all 59 GOS applications for \$674,817 and 11 of the 19 project applications at 100% of their requested amounts for \$43,319.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve and support the arts in Boulder County.

Respectfully,

Boulder Count Cultural Council