



Legislation Text

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File #: 24-1933, Version: 1

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** MARCH 26, 2024

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**THROUGH:** JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

**FROM:** JAMES SPENGLER, DIRECTOR,  
RECREATION, PARKS, AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Grant Application to Race Forward and Americans for the Arts for the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities' Office of the Arts.

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a grant application to Race Forward and Americans for the Arts for the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities' Office of the Arts.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Retroactively approve the submission of an application in the amount of \$40,000 to the Race Forward and Americans for the Arts grant, which was due on March 29, 2024; and
- (2) Authorize the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required.

**BACKGROUND:** A funding opportunity is available through Race Forward and Americans for the Arts for the Cultural Week of Action on Race and Democracy initiative that will take place from September 27 to October 5, 2024, in communities across the country, which aims to bring people together through the arts, culture, and creativity to inspire action towards a just, multiracial democracy. Race Forward and Americans for the Arts are seeking proposals from local government institutions, local arts agencies, community-based arts organizations, and/or racial justice organizations.

Government Alliance on Race and Equity (G.A.R.E.) member jurisdictions are eligible to apply for up to \$40,000 in grant funding to work with community-based arts organizations to explore the shared history, present, and how everyday people are organizing to build an equitable and racially just future.

**DISCUSSION:** The City of Alexandria is a G.A.R.E. member. The focus of the grant project will intend to reach community members in the West End neighborhoods who reflect low income, underserved, and immigrant populations.

The Office of the Arts identified the Redella S. "Del" Pepper Community Resource Center, located on the West End of the City, at

4850 Mark Center Drive as the location for the Race Forward project to take place. The Center is named after the former councilwoman and brings together a range of health and human service programs and critical resources for the community. The new city building was opened in April 2023, and houses the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), Alexandria Health Department (AHD), Neighborhood Health Clinic, Permit Center, and Finance Department and Clerk of Court services.

The Del Pepper Community Resource Center is an important location for public art, given the public-facing nature of the services provided. A significant priority for the Department of Community and Human Services and the Office of the Arts is that the project includes community engagement, involving both users of the facility and the community in the area around Mark Center. It is anticipated that the art programs and events will represent and celebrate Alexandria's history and many different cultures. A series of community engagement activities for the design of the public art will occur, as the public art will embrace the neighborhoods' culture, and celebrate the city.

The Office of the Arts will apply for the maximum award of \$40,000 to support the public art program elements for the Del Pepper Community Resource Center.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There is not a cash match requirement for this grant. The Office of the Arts will be responsible for normal administrative costs associated with this grant which include financial and reporting oversight provided by the administering agency (the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities) as well as the Office of Management and Budget and the Finance Department.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None.

**STAFF:**

Emily A. Baker, Deputy City Manager  
Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, RPCA/Office of the Arts  
Meika Daus, Senior Public Art Manager, RPCA/Office of the Arts  
Cheryl Anne Colton, Regional Program Director, RPCA/Office of the Arts