



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 18, 2015

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

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, ACTING CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Fiscal Year 2016 Grant Application to the Virginia Commission for the Arts for a Local Government Challenge Grant for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities.

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**ISSUE:** Consideration of a Fiscal Year 2016 grant application to the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) for funding, in the amount of \$5,000, for the Local Government Challenge Grant Program. The grant application deadline is April 1, 2015.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council authorizes the City Manager to:

- (1) Submit a grant application, in the amount of \$5,000, to the Virginia Commission for the Arts' Local Government Challenge Grant Program; and
- (2) Execute all necessary documents that may be required.

The Alexandria Commission for the Arts (ACA) fully endorses the application submission.

**BACKGROUND:** The City has received the maximum amount of funds awarded through the Virginia Commission for the Arts' Local Government Challenge Grant Program for 35 out of the past 36 years that this program has been in operation. Through the Local Government Challenge Grant Program, the VCA will match funds, up to \$5,000. Independent town, city, and county governments are eligible to apply for funding in this category.

For Fiscal Year 2016, the City is seeking \$5,000, the current maximum permitted in the VCA's Local Government Challenge Grant category. The grant application is due April 1, 2015. These funds, if awarded to the City, are to be allocated to the arts organizations who have submitted requests for funding to the Office of the Arts for Fiscal Year 2016. Included in the application is a description of each artist and organization

proposed to receive VCA funding.

The Alexandria Commission for the Arts (ACA) advises the Office of the Arts staff on funding appropriations to grant applicants. The Office of the Arts' grant program is modeled after the Virginia Commission for the Arts grant program.

**DISCUSSION:** The Office of the Arts made some adjustments to the Fiscal Year 2016 grant program. The adjustments made were to provide grantees easier access to the online program, to outreach to individual artists and organizations by offering in-person workshops and webinars, and to condense the grant program's cycle for grantees, Grant Task Force and Arts Commission members, and staff. On January 7, the Office of the Arts' provided online written guidelines to all potential applicants. Grant workshops and webinars were held in January and February. Online submissions are due the last Friday in February.

In February, the Office of the Arts staff provides an orientation to the Grants Task Force members. The members are instructed how to use the scoring rubrics for the evaluation. The rubrics tool was designed to reduce subjectivity in the review process for each assessment item.

In April, the Grants Task Force meets to evaluate each grant application. The Task Force also develops a recommendation for funding. This recommendation is forward to the Alexandria Commission for the Arts. The Commissioners review all applications and develop their conditional funding levels at their April meeting. After the adoption of the City budget, confirmation letters with funding levels are sent to successful applicants.

All applicants receiving funding from the Office of the Arts are required to submit a Final Report within thirty days after the project is completed. The Arts Commission's Conflict of Interest Policy is enforced to ensure the highest standards of personal integrity and honesty and to uphold the principles of fairness in the decision-making process regarding potential allocation of public funds.

Funding distribution of the VCA grant award will be to any Alexandria-based nonprofit arts organizations who receive a City of Alexandria Arts Grant. If the full VCA award of \$5,000 is granted to the City, the appropriation to the organizations will be determined by the history of funding and the size of the operating budget. During Fiscal Year 2015, the following organizations received a portion of the VCA Local Government Challenge Grant:

Alexandria Choral Society		\$200	
Alexandria Film Festival		\$200	
Alexandria Harmonizers		\$200	
Alexandria Singers			\$200
Alexandria Symphony Orchestra	\$200		
Art League			\$200
Arts on the Horizon			\$200
Arts Resource Foundation/Del Ray Artisans	\$200		
Choreographers Collaboration Project	\$200		
Eclipse Chamber Orchestra		\$200	
First Night Alexandria		\$200	
Jane Franklin Dance Company	\$200		
Karen Reedy Dance Company	\$200		
Living Legends of Alexandria	\$200		
MetroStage			\$200
National Rehabilitation and Rediscovery	\$200		

Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association	\$200		
Port City Playhouse		\$200	
Quintango			\$200
Torpedo Factory Art Center		\$200	
Upcycle Recycle Reuse Center	\$200		
Virginia Bronze Handbells		\$200	
Virginia Opera		\$200	
Washington Balalaika Society	\$200		
Washington Philharmonic Orchestra	<u>\$200</u>		
		Total	\$5,000

Although the distribution results in small awards to the arts groups, the impact can be much greater. With these awards, arts groups can promote the fact that they are a recipient of funds from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and its funder, the National Endowment for the Arts.

This “seal of approval” can often help arts groups leverage additional dollars.

The grant award is provided in two payments. The first payment is 85% of the award and includes a partial amount from the City appropriation and all of the Virginia Commission for the Arts funds. The final payment of 15% of the grant award is released after the Office of the Arts receives a successful Final Report.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The Virginia Commission for the Arts provides up to \$5,000. The City has identified 100% matching funds as the cash match in the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Fiscal Year 2016 proposed operating budget.

In addition, the City is also responsible for normal administrative costs associated with this grant. These costs 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. It should be noted that no monies are available in the City’s Budget to continue these activities once the grant funds are expended.

**ATTACHMENTS:** None.

**STAFF:** James Spengler, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities (RPCA)  
Diane Ruggiero, Deputy Director, RPCA/Office of the Arts  
Cheryl Anne Colton, Regional Program Director, RPCA/Office of the Arts