



COUNCIL ON CULTURE & ARTS | TALLAHASSEE/LEON COUNTY

## Staff Reports

### *Summer Callahan, Grants Manager*

The FY23 grants, with a few exceptions for people who requested extensions (people who received city funds), closed on September 30. Final reports were due at the end of October and FY24 contracts cannot be executed for grantees with outstanding/unapproved final reports. That's ongoing.

A survey of the Tallahassee arts and cultural community went out earlier this month on social media, in the newsletter and to the FY24 applicants directly. Summer will present this feedback to the Grants subcommittee in December.

In February, Jan Rodusky will be giving a one-day workshop on professional development for nonprofits, including: strategies beyond grants, sustainability, creating community partnerships and soliciting donors.

Summer would like to hold a "grants 101" workshop series, which would involve meeting applicants one-on-one between February and May of 2024, walking them through how to apply for a grant (including programming, determining your organization budget and crafting a programming budget). This would be in addition to courtesy reviews of application drafts.

### *Sam Joslin, Public Arts Manager*

Sam led an online artist talk for Elvi Nichols to coincide with her exhibition in the Airport "Visions of Gratitude". Several were able to attend and many asked for a recording which has been uploaded to the COCA website and forwarded to those interested. Sam also managed the call for and programmed the 2023 Photofest exhibition. 52 artists applied with 147 total entries (comparatively, 35 artists applied last year). Of these, 42 pieces were accepted, featuring 35 artists. The exhibition was installed on November 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Airport, with guest juror Jesse Romimora selecting awards winners. The reception and awards ceremony is November 9<sup>th</sup> and over 70 people are expected to attend. Sam has also been working with the CRA (Community Redevelopment Agency) to start a new program that will be called "Mural Matchmaking – Makeover Edition", it will give some of Tallahassee's small businesses a makeover by covering up and preventing graffiti tagging by way of custom murals on the exterior walls of local businesses. This will be funded by the CRA and administrated by COCA. Sam has also been working with Kim at Independence Landing to help their facilities and residents engage more in arts programming as well as public art at the facilities. They wanted assistance finding a muralist as well as setting up a rotating gallery area for resident art as well as visiting artists. Will Mueller will install a walker system for them and Sam will help with artwork programming for their gallery. Cycle of the Arts is also making a comeback with a mobile app which generates various biking trails that bring participants to public art in the Tallahassee area, Sam will let you know once the Apalachee Regional Planning Council has finalized the app!

### *Sahara Lyon, Arts Education Manager*

Sahara hosted a Bicentennial education resource webinar on Monday, October 16th in collaboration with the Bicentennial Education Task Force, TSO, FSU's Art Education Department, and Southern Shakespeare Company. We had 10 teachers attend and we sent out the recording and resources to all of our teacher contacts. Sahara has also been working with teachers to collect work for Winter Fest. We have 38 currently signed up and their

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artwork is being delivered to the COCA office until November 22nd. The Winter Fest opening reception will take place on December 1st, with performances from Buck Lake Elementary, Griffin Middle, and a local high school (still pending). Sahara gave class tours to Sarah Black's and Carey Fee's career preparedness classes and spoke to a number of students about volunteering, interning, and shadowing with COCA. She is speaking with Carey Fee's museum class later this month. The arts education grant review panel will be hosted on November 13th, funding results to follow. After the panel, Sahara will draft up teacher contracts, create check requests, and work with Nick to ensure each teacher gets their grant in a timely manner. Finally, COCA will be donating our used pedestals and donated easels to arts teachers in town, and will continue to partner with artists and organizations to facilitate donations.

***Nick Pavlovik, Business Manager***

At October's Executive Committee meeting, Nick reviewed initial financial results from FY23. COCA paid out \$1.2 million in various grants and \$300,000 in City funds; applied to more grants than average; increased memberships by 22% and license plates increased by 23%. Advertising revenue was reduced due loss of a major client and lack of spending on marketing. COCA spent 91% of what was budgeted and that no line items went over budget. In addition, Tourism Development Tax (TDT) collection increased and current collected the funds will be paid out as grant funds. In addition, COCA has over \$2.6 million in liquid funds, and will be collecting two major receivables: the DAC grant and ARPA funds. In other news, COCA's FY23 EOY report was sent to the City of Tallahassee and County, triggering general operating payments for FY24. The voluntary audit process, engaged in annually by COCA, will start the week of November 13.

***Samantha Sumler, Marketing & Communication Manager***

Samantha stated that email newsletters' open rate is 42% (7% higher than the industry average) and a 3% click rate (1% increase; 2% higher than the industry average). Samantha updated the COCA Bicentennial monthly newsletter – *Artistic Ambition* – which will launch in January 2024. Newsletter subscribers can now add their email to its subscription list, and further calls to subscribers will be made over the next two months. Samantha stated that COCA received more t-shirts, new bucket hats, coasters, pins, and keychains. They are looking into adding license plate frames next year in anticipation of COCA's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025. Social media content continues to increase brand engagement. The last 90 days have shown the following: Facebook Reach – 61.2% increase; Instagram Reach – 9.9% increase; Paid Reach 47.1% increase. Facebook likes have increased 19.2% and followers by 47.3%, while Instagram followers have increased 37.5%. The Hispanic Heritage Month featured 11 artists, with most submitting their own features without any requests from staff. COCA is currently seeking Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and affiliated Island artists to submit for November.

Latest website updates include a [dedicated AEP6 webpage](#) with materials and recordings from the Oct 12 and 25 events. There is also a sign-up form for "Chain of Parks 2024," updated on the Board documents page. COCA's FY24 End of Year Report is also on the website. Samantha stated that her intern – Gabrielle Dietrich – created an updated "How-to" PDF for users to create anything on the website. The PDF includes events, classifieds, artist profiles, organizations, venues, public art, education resources, and more. Samantha is working with Sam to hold a "how-to" workshop for artists to post their profiles and other things on the website. Samantha stated the video workshop with BlindCAN and Ben Fox went well, with ten consistent attendees who expressed that the workshop was "life-changing." The workshop series was recorded and will be available later this month.