



City Council

Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the Funding Recommendation of the Cultural Access Advisory Board for Inspire Olympia

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Title

Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the Funding Recommendation of the Cultural Access Advisory Board for Inspire Olympia

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Cultural Access Advisory Board recommends approving the Resolution authorizing expenditures from the Cultural Access Fund for Inspire Olympia contracts.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve a Resolution authorizing the funding recommendation of the Cultural Access Advisory Board for Inspire Olympia contracts.

Report Issue:

Whether to approve a Resolution authorizing the funding recommendation of the Cultural Access Advisory Board for Inspire Olympia contracts.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Marygrace Goddu, Inspire Olympia Program Manager
Cultural Access Advisory Board Member and Representative

Background and Analysis:

The Inspire Olympia Cultural Access Program is funded by one-tenth of one percent of Olympia's sales tax, effective January 2023 for a period of seven years. Revenues are deposited into the Cultural Access Fund and are to be used to support the work of local nonprofit organizations who are mission-focused on the arts, science, culture or heritage, and who offer public programming in Olympia.

The Cultural Access Advisory Board (CAAB) was established to advise City Council on

implementation of Inspire Olympia, to recommend funding guidelines for cultural access programming consistent with state law, and to review grant applications for programming that meets criteria for providing public benefit (RCW 36.160.110). The CAAB is to make recommendations regarding funding to City Council.

The funding guidelines and criteria for public benefit were developed by CAAB and presented to City Council in August 2023. At that time Council also approved a funding framework that includes two funding pathways, created to promote equitable distribution of funding among a population of organizations that vary greatly in size, capacity, and experience. A third funding reserve was identified to support Cultural Access in Olympia Public Schools (CAPS), including transportation.

A total of 61 cultural organizations submitted proposals for Inspire Olympia funding before the March 15 deadline this year. Twenty-one organizations applied in the Comprehensive Funding pathway, seeking two-year contracts with the city to provide year-round cultural activities and experiences for the public. Another 40 organizations submitted proposals in the Impact Funding pathway for one-year contracts.

Two Review Panels were formed to review and score the applications for Inspire Olympia's two funding pathways. Each panel included four CAAB members plus additional members of the public. The panels considered the public benefit of each proposal in light of the program funding goals, guidelines, and criteria (see detailed criteria attached), and engaged in individual review and in group discussion. They forwarded their combined scoring and their funding recommendations to the full CAAB.

Recommendation:

The CAAB's funding recommendation presented to the City Council is based on the work of the Review Panels; an understanding of the available funding in the Cultural Access Fund; and the commitments made to voters regarding use of the Fund. The recommendation includes individual award amounts for one-year and two-year contracts for services, and a recommended funding level for CAPS programs in 2024-25, detailed in the attachments. This recommendation meets our commitment to voters to reinvest a minimum of 80% of revenues in supporting cultural activities and experiences for Olympia residents, and up to 10% toward transportation for public school students to cultural activities.

The CAAB used the following formula to determine individual contract amounts, applied to both one- and two-year contracts:

- Proposals that scored 60 percent or higher receive 100% of their requested amount.
- Proposals scoring 40 to 59 percent receive 75% of their requested amount.
- Three proposed programs serving Avanti High School were considered together and funded each at 50% of their requested amount.
- Proposals scoring below 40 percent are not recommended for funding in this cycle.

In addition, the recommendation includes:

- Cultural Access in Olympia Public Schools should be funded at up to 14% of the available funding for 2024-25, to include reimbursement for transportation services to the Olympia School

District, reimbursement to support field trip activities to funded cultural organizations, and funding for a CAPS Intermediary, a position to coordinate all CAPS programs and services.

- The Board endorses setting aside \$50,000 for the Inspire program to use to contract for learning opportunities such as workshops in topics related to nonprofit business management, development, public access, equity and more, to support the growth of funded cultural organizations.

Climate Analysis:

This program is in its first year and the possible climate impacts of funded activities are yet to be fully understood. Integrating expectations for environmental sustainability into our contracts could be a future step. We plan to include a workshop on planning “green” gatherings and festivals, minimizing waste, and encouraging use of recycled and recyclable materials in programs offered for the public.

Equity Analysis:

This first funding cycle will provide benchmarks for setting goals and measuring progress in future funding cycles.

Achieving greater equity through enhanced access to the arts, science and culture is a fundamental goal of Inspire Olympia. As such, strategies to advance equity in our community and strategies to promote equitable funding outcomes were carefully considered in the development of funding goals, eligibility criteria, the funding framework that established two application pathways, and in the evaluation and scoring process underlying the CAAB funding recommendations.

These program elements represent a starting point, and call for calibration with each funding cycle to continually strive for equitable distribution of funding among a diverse population of organizations that differ in size, capacity, experience, and services. Olympia’s non-profit cultural community will grow in capacity and number and Inspire Olympia will work to actively support that growth.

Equity must also be examined in terms of who is served by Inspire Olympia’s funded organizations. The 2024-2026 applicant cohort includes some minority-led organizations and organizations who include a focus on serving or celebrating minorities, such as at-risk youth, our LGBTQ community, women of color, and senior citizens. As funded organizations report on their activities over the course of the contract period, data will be collected that can be used to assess community impact, identify gaps, and analyze how and where Inspire Olympia is delivering increased cultural access.

The CAPS funding recommendation includes resources to hire a coordinator, ensuring that programs for OSD students reach as broadly as possible into our schools, that information is shared, opportunities are recognized and can be seized, and that appropriate support and focus is given to Title One schools and grade levels with the least access to cultural experiences.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

As a voter approved program, Inspire Olympia’s development and program outcomes are of great public interest. Decision-making processes for program goals, direction, priorities, and funding recommendations have been deliberate, thorough, and representative. Care has also been taken to ensure that reporting and payment processes for funded organizations are linked, for accountability to public benefit outcomes.

Financial Impact:

Inspire Olympia is funded with a dedicated portion of City of Olympia sales tax, deposited into the Cultural Access Fund. The projected 2024 income to the Cultural Access Fund is \$3,100,000.00. Additional details may be found in the attached budget.

Options:

1. Move to approve the resolution.
2. Move to modify the resolution, which may delay contract start dates.
3. Do not approve the resolution, which will delay contract start dates.

A delay in contract start dates will impact the ability of cultural organizations to meet their stated commitments and could require revisions to contract deliverables, causing further administrative delay. The public is impacted by a loss of anticipated services under this scenario.

Attachments:

Resolution
Funding Recommendation
2024-25 Impact Funding Application Guidelines
2024-26 Comprehensive Funding Application Guidelines