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*Cathy A. Greer
Administration Coordinator*

**Post Office Box 11867
Columbia, South Carolina 29211
Telephone: (803) 212-6810 • Fax: (803) 212-6811
Room 228 Blatt Building**

*Charles L. Appleby, IV
Legal Counsel*

*Lewis Carter
Research Analyst/Auditor*

*Riley E. McCullough
Research Analyst*

June 17, 2021

David Platts
1026 Sumter St, Ste 200
Columbia, SC 29201

Via Email

RE: Follow-up from the Subcommittee meetings with the agency

Dear Director Platts:

The Education and Cultural Subcommittee appreciates the South Carolina Arts Commission's continued partnership in the oversight process.

As a follow up to the meetings on April 15, May 18, and June 15 the Subcommittee requests the agency provide written responses to questions. Please provide this information by Tuesday, July 13, 2021.

Please note the Subcommittee cannot accept any confidential information that cannot be placed online and that all correspondence received from agencies who have been or are currently under study is sworn testimony.

Arts Directory

1. Has the agency considered modifying, or adding a field to its directory, so it can collect information about who is using the service?
2. Has the agency ever surveyed directory participants to determine if they have seen positive results from their participation?

Poetry Out Loud Competition

3. According to agency testimony, 36 counties did not have any representation in the poetry competition in FY2019.
 - a. Does the agency have a plan to address this issue?
4. Do Poetry Out Loud state champions receive a prize? If so, what is the prize?

Cultural Districts

5. Some communities that may potentially qualify for cultural district status may not be aware of this process.
 - a. How has the agency promoted cultural district status or designation to local communities across the state?
 - b. Has the agency considered conducting a survey of the state to identify potential cultural district locations?
6. Does the agency require applicants for cultural district status to commission an economic impact study to verify or validate the impact of cultural district designation?
 - a. If no, has the agency conducted a study to determine the economic impact of each cultural district?

Agency Resources

7. The agency has multiple programs and grants which require considerable resources to effectively perform research and evaluate the efficacy of programs and grants.
 - a. Does the agency have adequate resources to perform research and effectively evaluate programming?

ABC Project

8. According to the ABC Project website, ABC currently serves 43,994 students at 74 schools in South Carolina. The agency identified 170,730 students served in FY2019 and 84 school or districts participants.
 - a. Please explain why the data are different.

9. Has the agency ever completed a study to determine if there are deficits in the number, type, and location of certain types of teaching artists?

State Art Collection

10. What is the cumulative value of the State Art Collection?

11. The agency testified that the State Art Collection is insured.

- a. How much does it cost to insure the State Art Collection?
- b. What factors impact the cost of insurance?
- c. If a piece of the collection is out on short or long-term loan, does the agency's insurance cover the art or does the entity receiving the art have to insure the piece?

12. The agency provided demographic information for artists with works included in the State Art Collection.

- a. Does the State Art Collection Acquisitions Committee consider demographics when evaluating pieces for possible inclusion in the State Art Collection?

13. Please provide the number of art pieces, by year, added to the State Art Collection since FY2000.

14. Is the agency confident that the procurement requirements regarding art purchases have been adhered to by state agencies?

- a. Please provide a five year list of art purchases by state agencies.

15. The agency testified that it is currently working on its first virtual exhibition.

- a. When will this virtual exhibition be available? How does the agency plan to promote it?
- b. What was the initial investment in the Kunstmatrix virtual exhibition platform and what will be the ongoing cost to support the exhibition?
- c. How many pieces of the State Art Collection will be included in the virtual exhibition?

16. Data for some of the artists in the collection, per agency testimony, has been entered inconsistently or in error.

- a. Has the agency made an effort to correct these errors?

17. How often does the agency perform a physical inventory of the State Art Collection?

18. When does the agency expect to have the State Art Collection fully archived and integrated into the new Artwork Archive cloud-based system?

Artist as Entrepreneurs Lab

19. What is the goal of Artist as Entrepreneurs Lab? How will the agency assess its effectiveness?

20. Does the agency, post on its website, a list of arts competitions (e.g., local, national, and international) available for artist to view on its website?

21. Does the agency know or inquire as to how participating artists became aware of Artist U? If so, what does the data show and has the agency utilized this information to improve its marketing of the program?

Canvass of the People

22. Did the agency have a participation goal for the survey? If so, how many participants did the agency seek have participate in the survey?

23. Of the approximately 1,500 individuals participating in the survey, what percentage would fall into the “underserved” population?

24. Did the agency perform a formal evaluation of the survey to inform leadership of actions needed for the next 10 year survey?

25. Please explain the agency’s decision to conduct this survey every 10 years. Has the agency considered a three or five year survey?

Strategic Plan

26. Did the agency amend or add any new metrics to determine the efficacy of the new Strategic Plan? If so, please identify these metrics.

Data and Metrics

27. Has the agency considered or investigated adding an interactive dashboard to its website for artists, members of the General Assembly, and other stakeholders to view agency metrics and outcomes?

Records, Regulations, and Reports Compliance

28. Please identify the documents required to be submitted to the State Library and the Department of Archives and History?

Risk Mitigation

29. Please provide a process flow chart for the agency’s grant payment process.

Agencies and the Arts

30. Besides the Department of Education, which other state agencies are involved with arts services or arts education?
31. Please identify all of the state agencies that collaborate with the Arts Commission.
32. There are approximately 767,000 K-12 students in South Carolina schools. Approximately 20% of students were served through Arts in Education grants.
 - a. Does the agency have a goal regarding the percentage of South Carolina students it would like to reach through its grant programs?

Remote Work Outcomes

33. Did productivity suffer when the agency began working remotely during COVID-19 office closures?
34. Did the agency make any significant investments in hardware, or other technology (e.g., web-based subscriptions, licensing, etc.) to ensure staff were able to do their jobs remotely?
 - a. If so, please identify the investments and the associated costs.
35. Provide the percentage of agency staff who worked remotely during COVID-19 office closures.
 - a. Which agency operations were found to be efficient and manageable in a remote environment?
 - b. Did the agency survey staff to gauge their interest or support for a continuation of remote work options?
36. Has the agency investigated the efficacy of remote work options as a means to reduce the cost of leased office space?
 - b. How much does the agency spend on leased office space?
37. Has the agency considered permanently implementing remote work options as a way recruit and retain staff?

Communications

38. Does the agency have a formal social media strategy? If so, provide the goals, objectives, and metrics associated with the strategy.
39. Identify the forms of communication the agency utilizes to inform the public, artists, and stakeholders regarding arts activities and arts related programs/grants (e.g., mail, social media, radio, etc.).

Grant Evaluation

40. Does the agency have a formal documented process for evaluating the efficacy of grant programs? If so, please describe this process.
41. The agency approved 835 grants in FY20. That is an 83% increase from the previous year (FY19 – 456 grants).
 - a. What do you attribute to the growth in grant awards?
42. With limited funding, how does the agency ensure that each region of the state has an opportunity to receive grant dollars?
43. Has the agency considered a grant funding “ceiling and floor” for each region of the state to ensure a more equitable distribution of grant funds?
44. Please list each of the grants provided by the agency and identify the metrics used to measure the effectiveness of these grants.
45. What is the estimated dollar value of the intensive in-person and individual professional development consulting offered by the agency?
 - a. Identify the total number of intensive in-person and individual development consults provided by the agency (FY19-20).
 - b. Has the agency considered charging a fee for these services?

Arts Experiences by County

46. Is it possible for the agency to group arts experiences into categories (e.g., theatre, music, visual art, etc.)?
 - a. If so, please group the activities for each county (FY19-20).
47. There are several counties with total artists in the single digits. Is this a concern for the agency?
 - a. If so, what is the agency doing to bolster artist development in these counties?
48. Does the agency provide county legislative delegations with information regarding what is needed to improve arts infrastructure in their districts?

Fundraising

49. Agency testimony stated that the Arts Commission does not want to raise significant amounts of private funds as to avoid competing against other arts organizations for finite dollars.

- a. Has the agency investigated how much it can raise without encroaching on the fundraising efforts of other arts organizations?

50. The agency received approximately \$49,000 annually from the South Carolina Arts Commission FY16-19.

- a. How does the foundation determine the level of financial support it gives to the agency?

51. Has the South Carolina Arts Foundation considered applying for a specialty license plate, through the Department of Motor Vehicles, to generate funding for the agency?

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

52. The agency testified that it received diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

- a. Will the internal staff committee draft a report of its internal agency findings? If so, when will it be completed and will it be presented to the board?

53. Please submit the executive survey the agency used during testimony at the May 18, 2021 meeting.

Renaming of Elizabeth O’Neill Verner Award

54. Was there an initial complaint about Ms. Verner and if so, who or what entity made the complaint?

55. Who made the decision to revoke her name from the award – employees of the commission, the Board, their newly formed diversity committee?

56. What was the timeline of the decision?

57. What criteria directed the decision?

58. What other awards granted by the Arts Commission bear the name of an artist?

The Subcommittee looks forward to working collaboratively with the South Carolina Arts Commission. Thank you and your team for your service to the people of South Carolina.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey E. “Jeff” Johnson

cc: Education and Cultural Subcommittee