



Policy and Practice

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How arts and culture nonprofits take action on their diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility goals

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Executive Summary

The Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture's Organizational Grant Program (OGP) provides grants to LA County nonprofit arts organizations large and small that serve communities across the region in a wide array of disciplines. Both the application and subsequent reporting offer a unique opportunity to learn from grantees how they define diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in their own words, and the many ways it can be practiced in the arts. This report summarizes findings from an in-depth analysis of the applications and annual reports from OGP grantees with annual revenues above \$15 million. The goal of this study was to understand how the largest grantee organizations articulate and operationalize their DEI goals, particularly in relationship to the LA County's Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative (CEII).

This analysis revealed a deep and multifaceted commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. These organizations are actively adapting operations, programming, and engagement approaches to better serve and reflect LA County's diverse population.

Key Findings:

- OGP 4 grantees set ambitious goals for improving accessibility for clearly defined groups across all five CEII focus areas: boards of directors, staffing, audience/participants, programming, and artists/creators.
- OGP 4 grantees operationalize DEI in two primary ways:
 - ensuring their programs and organizational structures reflect LA County's diversity; and
 - prioritizing historically underserved communities.
- Accessibility was positioned as equal to diversity, equity, and inclusion, with barriers to participation addressed through physical, budgetary, psychological, and educational means.
- Program-related and advisory- and facilities-based partnerships emerged as key strategies across all CEII focus areas.
- Many grantees reviewed for this report cited the 2018 Statement Policy Plan (SPP) requirement, created from the CEII initiative and now a component of the OGP program, as a catalyst for formalizing their DEI efforts.
- K-12 educational programs, largely prioritizing Title 1 schools, are used by OGP 4 grantees as a community engagement strategy.
- The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted operations but also accelerated innovation in digital programming.

The following recommendations are made to the Department of Arts and Culture and to grantees, as the Department continues to strengthen the OGP program:

Recommendations to the Department of Arts and Culture:

1. Help grantees articulate whether and how program-level changes translate into change at the organizational level.
2. Use this analysis to simplify grantee reporting by replacing some narrative questions with multiple choice questions.
3. Give grantees an opportunity to reflect on recent crises and how they've impacted their organizations and DEI efforts.
4. Require OGP grantees to periodically update or reaffirm their statement, policy, or plan.

Recommendations to grantees:

1. Describe whether and how change at the program level translates into change at the organization level.
2. Explain how partnerships contribute to DEI efforts in more detail.
3. As the organization evolves, update your policy and plan to reflect it, and share in your reports.

Introduction

The Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture’s Organizational Grant Program (OGP) supports nonprofit arts organizations in addressing priority needs and ensuring cultural services for LA County.

The program provides grants to arts organizations working in a variety of artistic disciplines, geographies, and communities, with annual revenues ranging from \$17,000 to \$171,117,000. OGP grants are distributed over a two-year period, with half the full cohort receiving their award each year, helping their efforts to positively impact residents, neighborhoods, and communities through access to quality, often free or low cost, arts engagement opportunities. During the 2023-24 and 2024-25 two-year grant cycle, OGP funded 475 nonprofit arts organizations with awards of \$4,518,000 in 2023-24 and \$5,668,000 in 2024-25 for a total award allocation of \$10.2M (\$10,186,000). Awards ranged from \$700 to \$122,300.

In 2018, as part of LA County’s Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative (CEII)¹, the Department of Arts and Culture (Department) implemented a new eligibility requirement instructing all OGP applicants “to submit board-adopted statements, policies, or plans (SPP)² that outline their commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and access” as part of the application process³ (See Appendix C for a full timeline of the CEII). The SPP requirement⁴ is intended to support organizational efforts while strengthening equitable access to arts and culture for all residents. In 2018 and 2019, the Department offered more than 20 workshops and training opportunities to applicants to support them in meeting the new requirement. Since 2020 at least two workshops have been offered annually to support both new applicants as well as current grantees seeking to update their SPP’s.⁵ Grantees are asked to describe diversity, equity, inclusion, and access goals and outcomes in terms of five focus areas identified through the CEII process: boards of directors, staffing, audience/participants, programming, and artists/creators.⁶ In their reports at the end of the two-year grant cycle, grantees are asked to describe progress toward achieving the goals of their SPP, as well as how the process of creating an SPP impacted their organizations’ work.

Both the application and subsequent reporting offer a unique opportunity to learn from grantees how they define DEI in their own words, and the many ways it can be practiced in the arts. This report summarizes findings from an in-depth analysis of the applications and Year One and Year Two reports from the most recent full OGP budget category 4 (OGP 4) grantee cohort.⁷ The goal of this study, which was initiated from a conversation

between Department staff and the Arts Commission's ad hoc Grants Guidelines Committee, was to understand how the largest budget grantee organizations articulate and operationalize their DEI goals, particularly in relationship to the LA County's Cultural Equity Inclusion Initiative. It provided an opportunity to understand what organizations with the largest size and budgetary resources mean when they say "DEI." This exploration builds on the 2019 analysis of early implementation of the new OGP statement, policy, and plan requirement, *From Words to Action*⁸, which investigated how grantees described their goals and actions toward advancing DEI and access in the first year of SPP policy implementation.

Methods

Applications and subsequent Year One and Year Two reports⁹ from the two most recent OGP 4 grantee two-year cohorts were analyzed (see Appendix A for a list of the questions reviewed). OGP 4 grantees are those with annual revenues above \$15 million.¹⁰ These cohorts' budgets ranged from \$16.4 million to \$101.6 million. Materials were examined from the eleven organizations listed in Table 1 below and further detailed in Appendix B. These materials were reviewed to identify programmatic and organizational goals and practices related to DEI.

TABLE 1: OGP 4 GRANTEES

2021-22 Cohort	2022-23 Cohort
The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures	KCRW
Center Theatre Group	Skirball Cultural Center
LA Opera	The Hammer Museum
The Music Center	Los Angeles Philharmonic
Public Media Group of Southern California	Autry Museum of the American West
	Museum of Contemporary Art

OGP 4 grantees are required to apply under the “Accessibility” project category, so this analysis included accessibility alongside diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Department defines accessibility for the OGP 4 grant application project category as, “...new or existing projects that provide public access to arts activities and programs.” Accessible projects offer activities that are easily available to the public and often focused on a specific segment of the population. Accessible projects frequently involve cultural equity and inclusion or educational activities.¹¹

This study benefitted from utilizing administrative data that was readily available, and did not require grantees to submit additional information. As the text analyzed here was submitted by grantees to a funder, it should be expected that grantees likely presented themselves in the best light possible. Moreover, this is a small subset of grantees (11 of 458) and does not represent the full universe of OGP grantees. There is some expectation of these organizations that they have greater capacity to address DEI, though it is equally possible that large organizations such as these may not be as effective when addressing DEI as smaller organizations that are more rooted in the communities they serve.

Findings

Between the years 2021 and 2023, OGP 4 grantees set ambitious goals for improving diversity, equity, inclusion, and access for very clearly defined groups. Though full achievement of these goals would require more funding than is provided by the Department of Arts and Culture, grantees documented progress achieved toward their intended outcomes. While some OGP 4 grantees reported on outcomes, others reported on process improvements. OGP 4 grantees addressed all five CEII focus areas in their DEI work while adding new areas not covered in the original CEII report.

In many cases, grantee approaches and activities straddled more than one CEII focus area. OGP 4 grantees often described DEI at the organizational level in a way that encompassed all five CEII focus areas.

The next section summarizes the **outcomes** grantees set out to achieve and how they were articulated in relation to the five CEII focus areas. The second section describes the **strategies** they deployed to achieve those outcomes.

Outcomes

In their reports, OGP 4 organizations defined DEI in two significant ways. First, they sought to ensure that their programs, services, and organizational structures reflect the diversity of LA County. Second, they elevated and prioritized communities that have been historically underserved or underrepresented. While specific areas of focus differed by organization, this was visible across all five CEII categories.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Aiming for organization-wide cultural equity, many OGP 4 grantees sought to engage DEI-trained and -educated leadership reflective of the diversity of LA County, focusing on organizational and programmatic access. OGP 4 grantees also sought to ensure greater gender, racial, and ethnic diversity at the board leadership level. From board composition to committees, OGP 4 organizations described curating their boards to reflect and remain relevant to the diverse communities in which they serve. For example, one grantee created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to guide their organization in this important work. They also relied on their boards to promote organization-wide alignment around DEI policies and practices.

STAFF

Organizations sought to build a diverse staff that would reflect the diversity of LA County while also building an inclusive and responsive staff culture. A diverse staff, they argued,

can better drive the organization toward lasting social impact through quality, culturally authentic, and relevant offerings. One grantee, for example, formalized a DEI staff council to support ongoing staff-led DEI initiatives. They also deployed an organization-wide task force inclusive of staff, board, and artists to advance broader DEI efforts. Another grantee convened a new committee comprised of mid- and senior-level staff, charged with revising their CEII policy and plan.

Diversity was most commonly referenced in terms of gender, and racial or ethnic representation. Disability was only mentioned within staffing when referencing the hiring of more BIPOC and female American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters.

ARTISTS/CREATORS

Grantees prioritized high-quality artistic expression that would reflect the diversity of LA County. They further sought to increase a wider awareness of the breadth of LA County's cultural landscape. For example, one grantee reported that they draw artists "from defined cultural traditions, reinforcing their mission to honor and celebrate the diverse identities and experiences that inform society." Another grantee described its education department's roster of teaching artists as representing "wide-ranging cultural and ethnic traditions of the residents of Los Angeles."

OGP 4 grantees often described LA County as having a unique creative ethos and cultural landscape which they see as foundational to the work they do and the content they create or offer. They valued diversity *of* art forms and diversity *within* art forms. They sought to elevate the voices of historically excluded artists and many set specific goals to support emerging and underrepresented artists and arts professionals. For example, an exhibition was designed to provide a platform for rising and underrecognized visual artists. At the organizational level, one grantee's commitment to "fostering the work of the most significant artists of our time," was reinforced by its support of "pioneering artists" engaged artistically and administratively at every level of the institution.

PROGRAMMING

Many grantees focused their programming on increasing awareness, preserving, and celebrating the cultural landscape of LA County, including artforms and innovative work. For some performance-based grantees, this meant advancing diversity onstage, backstage, and in the audience, to reflect LA County neighborhoods. For other grantees this meant expanding people's knowledge of art and creative thinking through engaging and inspiring programming.

OGP 4 grantees sought to uplift underrepresented voices when generating content, specifically naming Indigenous, BIPOC, women, and LGBTQ+ artists. For example, one grantee nurtured new works for the stage that tell the stories and amplify the voices of Native peoples. Another grantee's exhibitions were curated with "an eye toward equity and inclusion," choosing to present artists that represent "the racially and socio-economically diverse community of artists in Los Angeles."

Grantees also sought programming that would include diverse cultural traditions. Many prioritized content that fostered cultural exchange, creative thinking, and experimentation, especially programming that could bring about positive community impact. Across many genres, grantees underscored the importance of sharing broad-reaching, high caliber art through multiple and varied engagement opportunities.

AUDIENCES AND PARTICIPANTS

Not only did OGP 4 grantees aim to reflect LA County's diversity internally and artistically, but they sought to see the same diversity reflected in their audiences. One grantee's eclectic programming line-up across multiple platforms, for example, was designed to maximize participation and appeal to varied audiences across LA County. Another grantee provides "opportunities for [their] audience to interact and find personal intersections with unfamiliar cultures."

Grantees prioritized removing participation barriers to ensure diverse communities can engage in high-quality artistic experiences. They paid particular attention to serving traditionally underrepresented groups, including young people, BIPOC communities, and people with disabilities. The organizations valued both preserving cultural traditions and fostering innovation, while building lasting partnerships that strengthened community connections.

One specific audience or participant group that grantees explicitly prioritized was school-aged participants, especially from Title 1 schools and those that have large percentages of free or reduced meal recipients. Educational opportunities were commonly used to reach this group.

Strategies

OGP 4 grantees implemented varied strategies in support of their intended DEI outcomes, often straddling several CEII focus areas at the project and/or organizational level.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OGP 4 grantees engaged in strategic board recruitment efforts, often led by a special committee and sometimes through the hiring of outside consultants. Many OGP 4 grantees set goals to diversify the racial or gender composition of board membership or improve diversity within recent recruiting efforts. Board membership accountability was often imposed through internal or consultant-led trainings or through DEI policy and strategic planning processes.

Four organizations specifically referenced the formation of DEI-related board committees, prioritizing BIPOC recruitment, gender balance, and diversity in leadership roles. Board committees facilitated outreach and guided culturally significant community partnerships. In some cases, administrative and artistic staff joined board members on

these committees. For example, one grantee's DEI committee membership includes not only board, but also staff and musicians.

STAFF

Planning, recruitment, hiring, and training practices were the most commonly cited strategies for improving DEI in the workplace. Some grantees prioritized changing the demographic makeup of staff while others focused on improving working conditions through training, planning, and policy-setting. Many described actively recruiting women and BIPOC staff and artists for leadership and administrative positions. Staff working groups and accountability teams were often referenced and called upon to steward institutional DEI and anti-racism efforts. Seven grantees formed staff working groups specifically focused on improving DEI in the workplace and throughout the organization.

Another key strategy was to make DEI a focus of recruitment strategies to embed DEI values in organizational structure, duties, and leadership. Six out of the 11 organizations had hired or were actively recruiting DEI-focused management positions during the grant period. Sample titles include:

- Chief of Human Resources, Equity & Engagement
- Director of AREDI (anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion)
- Manager of Representation, Inclusion and Equity
- Senior Vice President of People and Culture
- Chief Talent and Equity Officer
- Chief People and Culture Officer
- Chief of Public Engagement, Learning and Impact

Paid career development programs and fellowships were also cited as key strategies in recruiting emerging and underrepresented workers.

Nine grantees cited specific staff and board training and planning, five of those taking place with assistance from outside consultants. Several organizations also engaged consultants to help structure and facilitate equitable practices and long-term change. Key consultant tasks included, but were not limited to:

- Working with staff and board to deepen race equity understanding and implement DEI principles across the organization
- Leading quarterly workshops for staff focused on fostering inclusion and accountability
- Leading focus groups designed to offer a safe space for staff of color to connect and share experiences
- Conducting an organizational DEI evaluation and facilitating staff meetings to share findings and suggested next steps

- Assisting in the development of a DEI program and finalizing metrics for program review
- Co-designing DEI training curriculum for staff

ARTISTS AND CREATORS

OGP 4 grantees often wrote about artists and programming synonymously making it difficult to separate these efforts. For purposes of this study, an artist/creator focus is recognized when grantees described direct services to and engagement with artists, whether connected to public programming or not.

OGP 4 grantees supported both artistic excellence and diversity at the same time through a variety of vehicles. Some offer internship or fellowship programs to support a more inclusive artistic pipeline. Others use commissions or professional and career development to support emerging, BIPOC, and underrepresented artists. One grantee formed an artist committee intended to inform programmatic decisions through a DEI lens. Many grantee programs were deployed for young and emerging artists offering broader access to high quality arts instruction within and outside of school.

Eight grantee organizations described projects or initiatives specifically to support new, emerging, or underrepresented artists and their professional evolution. For example, one commissioned their first Spanish-language production, by the company's first female composer. Another focused on creating a welcoming environment for gender-expansive artists. Their program engaged all women (and majority BIPOC) playwrights in their mainstage productions. Still another offered a suite of programs to diversify the talent pipeline. Their career and professional development initiatives offered inroads at a range of career levels.

PROGRAMMING

Strategies included highlighting the work of up-and-coming contemporary artists, commissioning new works in non-English languages, and improving casting policies and procedures to be more inclusive. For example, all of one grantee's annual productions emphasize "gender and color conscious casting."

Grantees challenged traditional narratives in their offerings and engaged in DEI-focused programmatic practices to bring visibility to important issues and people. Some grantee practices involved creating and scaling up content to be presented regionally or nationally. Others developed culturally-relevant education programs that ensure young voices have space and a place to grow.

Additional strategies involved expanding programs across multiple platforms, including digital media (e.g. webcasts, exhibitions, and performances), social media, free events, programs provided at offsite locations throughout the county, and adding accessibility supports such as ASL and BASL tours and productions created for deaf and hearing audiences. OGP 4 grantees also leveraged partnerships with other organizations or affiliate groups to facilitate program creation and delivery.

AUDIENCES AND PARTICIPANTS

OGP 4 grantees implemented a comprehensive range of actions toward their audience engagement goals, focusing on meeting communities where they are, both physically and culturally. One grantee invited local participants to perform in a professionally led ensemble, community chorus, or student orchestra onstage at a local cathedral. Grantees also deployed traditional audience development methods like discounted admissions and offerings in multiple locations while also employing newer digital platforms and technologies. For example, one grantee offered its content through multiple mediums and supplemented its programming with free live events which included art, music, and food from local businesses.

Further, six grantees described embracing digital access and virtual programming as solutions for engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most intended to continue exploring how virtual platforms could increase access to programming in a way that would advance DEI goals. For example, one grantee shifted to virtual programming during the pandemic closures and continued to provide opportunities to participate across multiple platforms after reopening. This included a new virtual series offering free online family artmaking activities and exhibition tours. Another grantee reported that the “virtual world allowed [their organization] to reach wider audiences in and out of our Los Angeles home.” At the time of reporting, they intended to continue to use virtual, widespread access to significant stories.

Finally, some grantees engaged community by creating advisory boards and committees to ensure their programming truly responds to community needs and interests. Examples included a program where community members can join culturally-specific affinity, advisory, and volunteer groups.

Analysis

Seven themes emerged from OGP 4 applications and reports.

SPP requirement as a catalyst for change

While most OGP 4 grantees shared that they had already adopted some form of a DEI plan prior to the SPP requirement, six organizations specifically cited the 2018 mandate as a catalyst for their DEI efforts. Among the actions these six organizations took:

- Instituted a requirement that the CEII Policy and Plan be reviewed and updated every three years.
- Allocated resources toward “ensuring a more equitable, inclusive and diverse institution.”
- More formally invested in the diversity of Los Angeles County (“the place [they] call home”) since adopting their CEII statement/policy and plan.
- Implemented annual updates to their supporters to share their efforts.
- Described CEII documents as a springboard for their current efforts.
- Stated that the “Cultural Equity and Inclusion Policy and Plan laid the groundwork for our ongoing commitment to integrate [DEI] into all aspects of our organization.”

Access on an equal footing with diversity, equity and inclusion

Grantees place accessibility, a long-time required component of the OGP grant program for OGP 4 grantees, on equal footing with diversity, equity, and inclusion. To that end, grantees defined “access” in multiple ways, generally describing it as the removal of participation barriers. Grantees positioned access within a set of cultural engagement rights:

- **Physical** (ability and location). For example, one grantee offered programming across multiple media and in-person platforms in order to connect with as broad of an audience as possible.
- **Budgetary**. For example, one grantee’s virtual platform, which was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, offered free on-demand content, from studio visits with artists and film screenings to panel discussions and family activities.
- **Psychological** (relevance and reception). For example, one grantee focused on finding new ways to weave “cultural traditions, along with social justice themes.”

- **Educational.** For example, one grantee’s education program sought to “increase student accessibility to performing arts” by offering quality and culturally relevant performances at the school site and in other educational settings.

How grantees define communities and participation

Grantee organizations define DEI in many different ways. In addition to race and ethnicity, grantees referenced gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, geographic location, justice, underserved/underrepresented, or low-income populations when mentioning action toward diversity, equity, and inclusion.

OGP 4 grantees also defined DEI and access by geography, not just by demographic characteristics. In addition to offering programs in their neighboring communities, the majority of organizations focused specific attention on offering opportunities in locations other than their main sites. Geography was sometimes further defined as a specific neighborhood or specific schools.

OGP 4 grantees defined “participation” in multiple ways, framing it in some cases as bringing attendees and participants from underrepresented communities to performances or exhibitions at the grantee location, while others defined it as providing workshops and educational opportunities in underrepresented communities or online. Others created opportunities for community members to serve on advisory committees, while still others created opportunities for involvement through internships and programs for emerging artists and arts leaders.

“Partnership” as a strategy

Nine of the 11 organizations referenced specific partnerships they were involved with. Overall, partnerships were described as sector and cross-sector relationships designed to advance DEI. Partnerships were described not only as being between organizations and artists, but also between organizations and community members. The term itself was often used in a way that was interchangeable with collaboration, connection, and engagement, and was reported as existing both within and outside of the organization.

These partnerships can be broken into three primary categories:

1. Project- or program-related partnerships
2. Advisory or thought partnerships
3. Place- and facilities-based partnerships

Project- or program-related partnerships were those where coordination of resources and initiatives could lead to broader and deeper impact for all parties involved. The breadth and depth of these relationships varied. For example, through its artistic partnerships with regional and national theatre companies, one grantee’s productions

were developed to drive authenticity, expand opportunities for artists of a specific culture, and increase recognition and performance of culturally specific plays across the country. They further engaged an advisory council to ensure program effectiveness and support. Another grantee described several programmatic partnerships, including convening community and professional artists for an annual program and serving as an artistic partner with another organization in co-creation and presentation.

Advisory or thought partnerships leveraged diverse perspectives to advance sector change. These types of partnerships tended to occur at the organizational level rather than the programmatic level. For example, one grantee was part of the national *OF/BY/ FOR ALL Change Network*, a cohort of cultural and civic organizations committed to equity, inclusion, and relevance. On a local level, another grantee's effort to advance DEI in the LA County theatre community was achieved through communication with local theatre groups and their signing of the LA Anti-Racist Theatre Standards. Examples of a more traditional advisory partnership included a leadership cohort group which provided a sounding board to address equity in the arts and foster collaboration and an advisory board which is woven into a grantee's outreach efforts and facilitates culturally significant community partnerships.

Place- and facilities-based partnerships maximized the geographic diversity of a facility's neighborhood. For example, one grantee engaged with six libraries in the delivery of their infants program, meeting parents where they naturally convene. Some organizations simply held events at venues countywide to broaden their geographic or demographic reach, like one grantee who presented at civic and cultural organizations such as Descanso Gardens, Grand Performances, and Smorgasburg at Row DTLA to produce and present live events countywide.

K-12 Education as a key community engagement strategy

OGP 4 grantees utilized arts education as a strategy to improve DEI and access, primarily focusing on Title 1 schools and under-resourced populations. While none of the OGP 4 grantees identified themselves as arts education organizations in their grant applications, three of the OGP 4 grantees used OGP funds directly for arts education initiatives and eight served youth annually through their main programs and/or education programs.

For example, one grantee's school-based program was designed to bring arts education to students and support for teachers, especially those with barriers to arts education. The majority of schools they worked with are Title 1 and part of LAUSD. Additionally, they leveraged technology to provide a virtual program track to schools that could not participate at their downtown facility.

Of the OGP 4 organizations not explicitly seeking funds for an education program or project, many included related activity in their reporting. For example, one organization utilized funds to support their exhibit which explored Black participation in American

filmmaking. However, this project also served to create a formal school tour program and standards-based curriculum. This grantee was also building relationships with Latinx or Hispanic identifying LA County Title I school students and their families and have made progress toward their CEII Plan goals through college internship and mentorship programs. Another grantee focused their school programs on public schools identified as Title 1.

Many of the OGP 4 grantees also described arts learning via community engagement and supplemental programming. For example, one grantee's exhibitions were accompanied by artist conversations, special tours, and lunchtime talks. Among their short-term goals, another grantee sought to integrate digital programming as a means to create a place of gathering, cultural exchange, and collective healing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Still another grantee's in-person community engagement events and screenings were a critical element of their program's multi-platform strategy and provided opportunities to deepen partnerships with other cultural organizations in the region.

Reporting change on multiple levels

Likely due to the nature of the questions asked in the application and reports, DEI efforts were sometimes framed in terms of project or programmatic goals and objectives, but sometimes as overall organizational practices. For example, one grantee used OGP 4 funds to support the creation of new works by culturally-specific playwrights. While they reported on outcomes for this project, which included creating seven new plays and robust attendance, they also reported on organization-level efforts such as a diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) task force and its work in advancing the organization's DEAI Workplan.

This highlights how organizational aspirations and their individual programs and projects are inextricably linked. Programs and services may have their own outcomes, but they can also be seen as strategies to achieve the organization's mission, vision, and goals.

Outcomes were also dependent upon the CEII category(s) grantees emphasized¹². For example, those that described DEI efforts related to Board of Directors and Staffing leaned toward organizational outcomes, whereas those that described actions toward engaging Audiences and Participants, Programming, and Artists or Creators more often articulated outcomes at the program or project level.

Continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

At the time that the applications and reports analyzed here were submitted, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was still being felt. Many OGP 4 grantees were still stabilizing and building back to pre-pandemic activity levels. Across the board, complying with obligatory safety protocols, responding to intermittent closures, postponing programmatic offerings, recalibrating budgets, and re-opening to limited capacity were at the forefront of day-

to-day operations. The majority of organizations impacted by the pandemic described programmatic shifts, decline in attendance and budget constraints, especially among the 2021-22 cohort. Some reported in June of 2023 that they were still recovering.

Organizational goals often centered on bringing audiences back to pre-pandemic levels. However, many grantees were able to create opportunity amidst these challenges. Of OGP 4 grantees that had shifted to digital programmatic delivery methods to maintain a connection to audiences during the pandemic, many articulated interest in maintaining them in a post-pandemic era. For example, one grantee integrated digital programming to help deliver on their mission and create new ways of gathering and healing collectively through the arts during a time of isolation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis of OGP 4 grantee organizations' applications and reports reveal a deep and multifaceted commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. It is evident that these organizations are actively adapting operations, programming, and engagement approaches to better serve and reflect LA County's diverse population. Some have put a particular focus on historically underrepresented or underserved communities. Of particular note are the organizations' strategic approaches to implementing DEI initiatives through multiple channels simultaneously. Rather than focusing on singular initiatives, OGP 4 grantees describe representation and access at all levels and across all five CEII focus areas. The mandatory CEII Statement, Policy, and Plan requirement appears to have served as a catalyst for many organizations to build longer-term structure around these efforts, providing a framework for setting concrete goals and measuring progress.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a significant contextual factor, having both challenged and altered the way organizations approach accessibility and community engagement. While the pandemic created substantial hurdles, it also spurred innovation in digital programming and virtual engagement strategies. This suggests that the crisis, while disruptive, may have accelerated the development of new modalities for reaching diverse audiences.

Looking ahead, a set of recommendations each to the Department of Arts and Culture and grantees are offered for further examination as the Department continues to support and evaluate the Organizational Grant Program.

Recommendations to the Department of Arts and Culture

1. Help grantees articulate whether and how program-level changes translate into change at the organizational level.

The SPP requirement is intended to advance change at the organizational level. However, questions on the grant application and reporting requirements focus on activities at the program level. This implies that the Department of Arts and Culture assumes that activities funded at the program level will translate into change at the organization level. The Department could benefit from reviewing application requirements and reporting forms to ensure that they better reflect this assumption. Grantees could benefit from additional guidance from the Department in completing those requirements, specifically on how to better articulate whether and how DEI efforts at the program level serve to advance organizational goals.

2. Use this analysis to simplify grantee reporting requirements by replacing some narrative questions with multiple choice questions.

To better understand how grantees connect with audiences and participants, or how they collaborate with one another, it may be useful to create typologies of access, participation, and partnership that could be incorporated into application and reporting structures as multiple choice or rank order questions. Classification tools like these can help aid in the understanding of grantee prioritization trends.

3. Give grantees an opportunity to reflect on recent crises and how they've impacted their organizations and DEI efforts.

Recent events including the COVID-19 pandemic, wildfires, racial reckoning, and changes in federal policies and funding, challenged the status quo and have direct impacts on grantee programming and operations. To best serve the sector, it is important to understand just how these organizations have changed. Grantees, and the Department, could benefit from the opportunity to reflect on how recent crises affected their DEI efforts both positively and negatively. The addition of a question or two exploring impacts on grantees would help the Department be more relevant and responsive in times of crisis.

4. Require OGP grantees to periodically update or reaffirm their statement, policy or plan.

As organizations evolve and respond to a changing environment, so must DEI policies and practices. It is therefore recommended that the Department consider an adjustment to grant guidelines requiring OGP 4 applicants to update or reaffirm their SPP on a regular basis. This might include asking applicants to indicate if they have updated their policy and plan and to include the intended term, offering space to describe the changes made and what led to those changes.

Recommendations to Grantees

1. Describe whether and how change at the program level translates into change at the organization level.

As described above, the SPP requirement is intended to lead to change at the organizational level, while application and reporting requirements focus on the programmatic level. To better understand the impact of OGP-required SPP, it is important to be clear on where the work takes place – at the level of the organization, through specific programs, or both – and the level of information necessary to assess these efforts. Though inextricably linked, programmatic endeavors and overall organizational outcomes warrant individual attention. Further, it appears that OGP 4 grantees are probably tracking more data than they are sharing out in reports. Some grantees reference specific data collection efforts and report only some of the related outcomes. Others simply rely on narrative to convey

impact. With additional guidance from the Department of Arts and Culture, grantees can be more explicit in determining whether activities at the programmatic level leads to change at the organizational level, and if so, how that happens.

2. Explain how partnerships contribute to DEI efforts in more detail.

Understanding how different organizations in the arts and culture sector collaborate to achieve DEI goals can help find ways to improve. In grant reporting, more detailed descriptions of the nature and depth of partnerships can help. Application and reporting considerations might include providing specific opportunity to include partnership detail. As seen with education and community engagement, this analysis reveals that partnership plays a role across all five CEII categories and therefore could be elevated as a critical component in how grantees explain their implementation of statements, policies, and plans.

3. As the organization evolves, update your policy and plan to reflect it, and share in your reports.

In their reports, many grantees describe very clear and specific changes to their organizations resulting from implementation of their policies and plans related to DEI and access. They do not always describe how those documents have been updated to reflect organizational changes. Deeper reporting on how the SPP requirement has impacted grantee organizations could help influence the Department's Cultural Policy and frame its future direction. Areas of reporting could include if the requirement helps grantees better articulate, monitor, and revisit their DEI goals, how organizations adopt and advance their statements, policies, and plans, and the elements that are most important.

Application and Report Questions Reviewed

Application

- Budget and Project: Brief Project Description
- Organizational Narrative: History/Programming
- Organizational Narrative: Planning & Leadership
- Organizational Narrative: Community/Core Audience
- Organizational Narrative: Artistic Engagement and Quality
- Project Narrative: Project/Funding Request Evaluation
- Project Narrative: Brief Project Description
- Project Narrative: Project/Funding Request Overview
- Project Narrative: Project/Funding Request Details
- Project Narrative: Project/Funding Request Leaders/Staff/Volunteers

Year One Report

- BRIEFLY describe your OGP funded project.
- What short term or long term goals are you working on with this project?
- What are the outcomes you are seeking to measure progress on your project goals?
- In your OGP application you were asked about internal and external steps taken toward integrating and reflecting the values of CEII. Briefly outline any achievements and/or challenges on these steps thus far.
- Optional - What was the greatest success during this project so far in impacting your organization and/or community?
- What challenges are you facing in implementing this project, if any?
- Do you need to modify your project and/or budget for Year 2?
- “Year One - Report - Narrative Questions” completion date/time
- Participation and Project Reach
- If you answered “No”, please explain.

Year Two Report

- Funding Request Overview
- What short term and/or long-term goals are you working on with this project?
- What progress did you make toward these goals?
- What was the greatest success during this project in impacting your organization and/or community?
- What challenges did you encounter in implementing this project, if any? What helped/would have helped you meet those challenges?
- How has the process of creating your organization's Cultural Equity Inclusion and Access Policy and Plan impacted your organization's work?
- Describe the progress you have made toward achieving the goals of your CEI Plan.


APPENDIX B

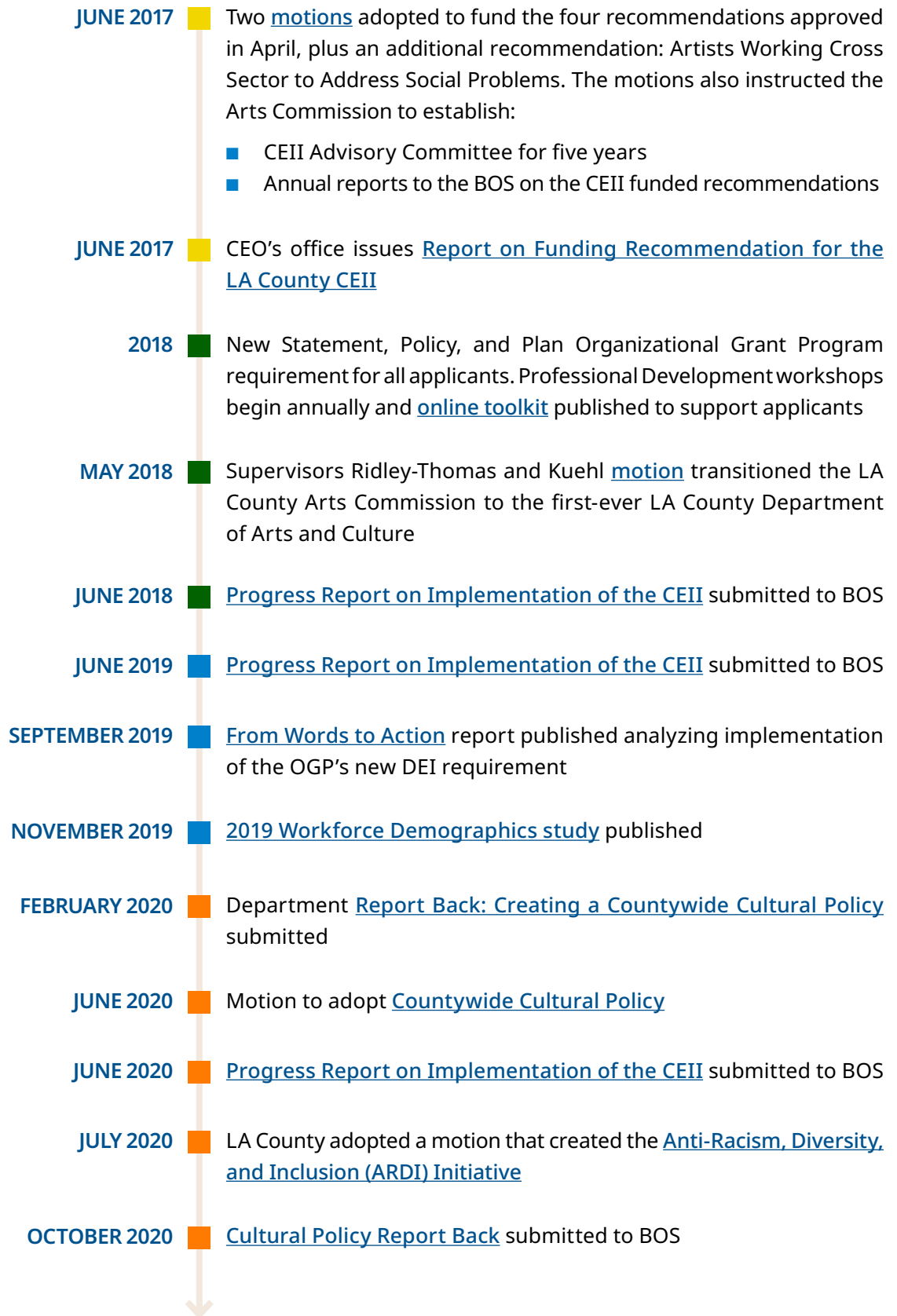
Organizational Grant Program Budget Category 4 Organizations

Cohort	Organization	Budget at the Time of Application	OGP Project Description
2021-22	Academy Foundation	\$101,545,300	To support an increase in inclusive arts access for audiences at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, including the exhibition “Regeneration: Black Cinema 1898-1971,” and program outreach for the following year.
2021-22	Center Theatre Group of Los Angeles	\$63,127,232	To support access programs providing theatre experiences to patrons with physical disabilities and limited access to the arts, and a full production by BIPOC artists at the Mark Taper Forum per year.
2021-22	Los Angeles Opera Company	\$48,530,718	To support LA Opera’s programs that provide all people across the County with an introduction to opera and the opportunity for deeper engagement with the art form.
2021-22	Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County	\$90,288,478	To support Music Center on Tour’s mission to increase cultural exchange and creative thinking by providing performances for under-served Los Angeles County students (K-12) in up to 40 schools.
2021-22	Public Media Group of Southern California	\$33,173,034	To support Artbound, PMGSC’s multi-platform arts and culture program, providing the public with free access to diverse coverage of artists and arts groups throughout LA County and surrounding areas.
2022-23	KCRW Foundation, Inc.	\$24,014,804	To support KCRW’s slate of arts & culture programming such as “Good Food,” “Bookworm,” “The Treatment,” “The Business,” “UnFictional,” music programming, and “Morning Becomes Eclectic.”

Cohort	Organization	Budget at the Time of Application	OGP Project Description
2022-23	Skirball Cultural Center	\$16,403,168	To support "Sunset Concerts" at the Skirball that have been offered since 1996 as an annual series of free world music concerts; this grant application is for the 2022 and 2023 "Sunset Concerts".
2022-23	Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, Inc.	\$26,945,313	To support Hammer Projects, the museum's longest running exhibition series, that provides seminal exposure for up-and-coming artists while introducing audiences to a broad range of artistic practices.
2022-23	Los Angeles Philharmonic Association	\$81,076,079	To support the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association's Learning initiatives, including YOLA (Youth Orchestra LA), which make symphonic music accessible to residents of LA County.
2022-23	Autry Museum of the American West	\$21,155,354	To support the creation of new works for the stage by Native American, First Nations, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native playwrights through Native Voices, the Autry's resident theatre company.
2022-23	Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA)	\$20,997,868	To support Contemporary Art Start, MOCA's arts education program providing professional development, classroom curriculum, museum visits & family involvement opportunities for students & teachers in grades 3-12.

Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative Timeline

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- NOVEMBER 2015** ■ Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (BOS) [motion](#) to conduct “a constructive Countywide conversation about ways to improve diversity in cultural organizations” for all Los Angeles County residents. The Board specifically directed the LA County Arts Commission to concentrate on five key focus areas:
1. Boards of Directors
 2. Staffing
 3. Audience/Participants
 4. Programming
 5. Artist/Creators (added by the Arts Commission)
- 2016-2017** ■ 18-month public process included town halls, focus groups, advisory committee, and research
- MARCH 2016** ■ [CEII Literature Review](#) published
- MARCH 2017** ■ LA County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis introduced a [motion](#) to implement a private developer requirement for civic art in the unincorporated areas of LA County
- APRIL 2017** ■ [CEII Report](#) released with 13 recommendations
- APRIL 2017** ■ [2016 Workforce Demographics study](#) published
- APRIL 2017** ■ Supervisors Solis and Sheila Kuehl [motion](#) calling for the implementation of 4 additional recommendations:
1. Develop a County Cultural Policy
 2. Require cultural organizations that contract with the County to include statements or plans for Cultural Equity
 3. Create access to work-based learning opportunities for teens
 4. Expand the Arts Internship Program for Community College students





Endnotes

1. “Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative Report,” LA County Arts Commission, April 2017, https://www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/lacac17_ceiireport_final.pdf.
2. Requirement varies based on budget size. OGP 4 grantees are required to submit a Board adopted cultural equity and inclusion policy and plan.
3. See <https://www.lacountyarts.org/funding/organizational-grant-program/ogp-grantseekers/ogp-grantseekers-apply>
4. Cultural Equity and inclusion (CEII) is an initiative of LA County government and is implemented by the Department of Arts and Culture. The statement, policy, and plan (SPP) requirement asks grantees to state their commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. “Diversity,” “equity” and “inclusion” (DEI) are defined in the [Building Your Plan](#) training document, but “access” is not. Therefore, we use “DEI” to refer to concepts defined in the training and treat access separately. “CEII” refers to the initiative, and “SPP” refers to the policy.
5. See <https://www.lacountyarts.org/building-your-plan-cultural-equity-inclusion-toolkit>
6. “Cultural Policy Strategic Plan,” LA County Department of Arts and Culture, February 2020, https://www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/lacac17_ceiireport_final.pdf
7. 2021-22 and 2022-23 OGP grant cycles
8. Robin Garcia, *From Words to Action: Implementation of the Organizational Grant Program’s new diversity, equity, and inclusion requirement* (Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, September 2019), https://www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/wordstoaction_final.pdf.
9. Final reports are due six months after each calendar year end (June 1).
10. See <https://www.lacountyarts.org/funding/organizational-grant-program> for full grant guidelines including eligibility requirements.
11. See https://lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/2526-OGP-Guidelines_20240826.pdf
12. In the Organizational Grant Program: Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative Frequently Asked Questions, which accompanies the application, it is highly recommended that the CEI plan includes actionable strategies and methods for measuring progress around all five key areas of the initiative including board, staff, programs/operations, artists and audiences.