



# City of Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission 2022-2023 Annual Report to City Council

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## Executive Summary

The Arts and Humanities Commission volunteers, City Council and staff liaisons have worked to compile the FY23 Annual Report to City Council covering the period of July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023. In the past fiscal year, the Arts and Humanities Commission met nine times.

The Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission is deeply appreciative of the Council’s ongoing commitment to the work of the Commission, so we can continue to provide support to the nonprofit arts organizations that not only enhance the quality of life for our citizens, but also showcase the vitality and spirit of our community to visitors who appreciate having myriad entertainment and enriching cultural options when they come to our city.

Through comprehensive year-end reports, the Commission knows that grantees returned roughly \$250,000 to the City, not including the countless dollars spent on dining out prior to performances or hotel revenues generated. More than half of the grantees provide significant programs for school-aged youth and children through school programs, after-school programs, field trips or performance opportunities. Two grantees provide experiences specifically for the elderly, isolated or those with hearing or vision loss who otherwise might be excluded from arts participation. Perhaps most importantly, last fiscal year, grantees provided more than 800 arts activities that were enjoyed by more than 875,000 people, including residents from every zip code in Virginia Beach.

## Mission Statement

To make Virginia Beach a great city, the Virginia Beach Arts and Humanities Commission is dedicated to integrating the arts and humanities, in their full ethnic and cultural diversity, into the fabric of everyday life. Toward this end, the Commission serves as an advisory and funding entity, stimulating and supporting excellence and accessibility in the arts and humanities for all citizens.

## Accomplishment of Goals and Objectives

Over the past fiscal year the agency, through its appointed volunteers and its Liaisons, worked on the following key matters in furtherance of its mission:

1. Awarded Project Grants
  - a. Number of grants awarded: 22
  - b. Designed to increase access to quality cultural programs for all Virginia Beach residents and support a wide variety of artistic and cultural activities
  - c. Requires a 50% revenue match and projects must take place in Virginia Beach

d. Deadline February each year

It is worthy of noting that the Arts and Humanities Commission engages in a rigorous grant process, by which we provide organizations with training and support to submit strong grant applications to the Commission. The skill sets obtained by this process help these nonprofits apply for other grants, so they are not reliant solely on the Arts and Humanities Commission or ticket revenue for their sustainability. (In fact, they must demonstrate this in their application.)

Each grantee makes a presentation to the Commission so they can be asked questions to gain broader understanding of the application. Each applicant also has a Commissioner assigned as their liaison, and that individual maintains contact throughout the year to assure the organization is fulfilling the terms of the grant, and helping them work through any issues that arise during the year. Cultural Affairs staff also assist in this ongoing support and guidance.

At the conclusion of the season, each grantee is required to provide a written report showing they have used the funds in the manner that was intended when the grant was issued. There is a thorough vetting for accountability of City funds, and this supportive processes helps organizations be more successful and financially solvent.

2. Awarded Community Cultural Arts Grants

- a. Number of grants awarded: 2
- b. Supports innovative, culturally rooted projects with the goal of bringing the community together to celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity
- c. Two deadlines per fiscal year

3. Awarded Leadership and Organizational Development Grants

- a. Number of grants awarded: 2
- b. Supports the leadership of arts and humanities organizations by funding professional development to acquire skills and practical tools that hone their ability to lead and sustain the overall health and vitality of arts and humanities organizations
- c. Awarded on rolling basis, based on funds available

4. Awarded 2022 Champion for the Arts to Marynell Gordan

- a. This annual award is presented to a person, or persons, who has made a significant impact in Virginia Beach's vibrant cultural and arts community through volunteer and/or financial contributions.
- b. Mrs. Gordon made significant contributions in and for the arts throughout her lifetime, long before joining the Arts & Humanities Commission. Her lifelong love of theater reached a high point in the late 1970s when she became a founding board member of the Virginia Stage Company and remained on the board for 20 years. Mrs. Gordon's devotion to the arts and humanities extended to the visual and fine arts realm, as well, as she served as a gallery teacher at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) for 16 years. In this volunteer role, she helped countless students and visitors articulate what they

noticed, felt and wondered about various artworks on display. Additionally, Mrs. Gordon was a longtime philanthropic supporter of MOCA, and loved volunteering to work at the Boardwalk Art Show.

5. Marketing Support to Grantees

- a. The Arts & Humanities Commission is also a marketing resource for local arts groups.
- b. This year, the Commission provided advertising resources through quarterly printed VEER magazine advertisements, monthly email newsletters, paid online and social media advertising, and free, organic social media posting, all of which drives traffic to the “Upcoming Events” tab on the new Cultural Affairs City website, virginiaibeach.gov/culture.
- c. In FY23, the Commission expanded promotions into more diverse communities through Spanish language print and radio advertisements, as well as advertisements in smaller, targeted community publications.
- d. The Commission also created a “Celebrate the Arts in Virginia Beach” campaign, creating rack cards for distribution throughout the City, celebrating AHC grantees from the last five years and promoting their websites.
- e. The Commission has more than 9,200 Facebook followers, 4,900 Instagram followers and 2,090 X (formerly known as Twitter) followers.

## Membership and Attendance

- a. See Attendance Attachments (3):  
 FY23 AHC Meeting Attendance-Fiscal Year  
 2022 AHC Attendance Record-Calendar Year  
 2023 AHC Attendance Record-Calendar Year

## Budget Report

Organizations awarded grants in FY 2022-23:

### Leadership & Organizational Development Grants:

Organization	Amount
Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA)	\$750
Virginia Symphony	\$750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1500</b>

### Community Cultural Arts Grants: *Received two grant applications and awarded two grants*

Organization	Amount
International Association for Human Values (IAHV)	\$5,000
The Art of Living Foundation (AOLF)	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>

**Organizations awarded Project Grants in FY 2022-23:**

*Received 25 grant applications and awarded 22 grants*

Organization	Amount	Organization	Amount
Access Virginia	\$2,500	Virginia African American Cultural Center	\$10,000
Ballet Virginia	\$35,000	Virginia Arts Festival	\$13,437
Governor's School for the Arts Foundation	\$2,500	Virginia Beach Art Center	\$19,000
Hurrah Players	\$35,937	Virginia Beach Chorale	\$4,000
Little Theatre of Virginia Beach	\$25,000	Virginia Musical Theatre	\$93,437
Military Aviation Museum	\$5,000	Virginia Stage Company	\$5,000
Symphonicity	\$83,437	Virginia Symphony	\$53,437
Teens With a Purpose - The Youth Movement	\$9,200	WHRO: Curate	\$5,000
Tidewater African Cultural Alliance	\$7,025	Young Audiences of Virginia (dba Arts 4 Learning)	\$7,570
Tidewater Arts Outreach	\$13,437	Zeiders American Dream Theater	\$48,437
Tidewater Winds	\$5,437	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$547,228</b>
ViBe Creative District	\$63,437		

Total funds requested for project grants in FY 2022-23: \$979,295.00

**Goals and Objectives for the Coming Year**

1. Three grant opportunities will continue for arts and humanities non-profit organizations
2. Award a 2023 Champion of the Arts
3. Continue marketing support to grantees and promote awareness of grant programs
4. Continue work of committees: Advocacy, Public Art, Cultural Equity, Marketing, and Champion for the Arts

**Recommendations to City Council**

Each year, the amount of funds requested to the Commission are more than the Commission’s annual City budget allocation. This gap in funding often means that educational or free and accessible programming must be sacrificed by the organizations. Scaled back productions mean less employment and fewer local artisans contracted. An increase in support from the Commission can be leveraged many times over by the arts organizations.

In light of this situation, on behalf of the Commission, I respectfully request that City Council consider increasing the Arts and Humanities Commission budget. Amounts that would be inconsequential in many City budget line items would create enormous value to Virginia Beach citizens and visitors. Arts and culture are integral in providing economic development, health, healing, education and inspiration. On behalf of the cultural organizations in Virginia Beach, we greatly appreciate your continued support.

Should you have any questions or require a formal City Council briefing on the work of this team, please feel free to reach out to Susan C. Grube ([grube@cox.net](mailto:grube@cox.net)) or Emily Labows ([elabows@ybgov.com](mailto:elabows@ybgov.com)).