



Legislation Text

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Report Prepared by: Jennifer Flachman, Senior Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Arts and Cultural Advisory Commission (ACAC) to Present Project Award Selections for Heartland Grant Project

REPORT IN BRIEF

ACAC to present artist and design recommendations to the City Council for seven projects funded by the Heartland Grant.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion approving the Arts and Culture Advisory Commission's recommendations of artists and their designs to be installed at City owned locations funded by the Heartland Grant.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve as recommended by staff; or,
2. Approve with modifications; or,
3. Refer to staff for reconsideration of specific items as requested by Council; or,
4. Continue to a future Council meeting; or,
5. Deny.

AUTHORITY

Charter of the City of Merced, Section 200.

CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

As provided for in the 2023/24 Council Goals and Priorities: Public Works & City Beautification

DISCUSSION

The California Creative Corps was developed by the California Council on the Arts in collaboration with the state legislature. California Creative Corps is a \$4.2 million economic and jobs recovery pilot program designed to support pandemic recovery and environmental, civic, and social engagement in California's hardest-hit communities. Using a variety of art forms, including visual, performing, and traditional arts, artists will promote positive community outcomes by creating locally focused, contextual, and culturally sensitive messages and public works.

Merced, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne counties have an abundance of talented individuals who tell the stories and express the culture of our communities through art. We want to support our artists to create projects that are locally focused and spread awareness related to public health messages, civic engagement, social justice & community engagement, and water & energy conservation, climate

mitigation, & emergency preparedness.

The Heartland Creative Corps awarded the City of Merced \$79,288.00. Funding will provide project opportunities for local artists to create public art installations to contribute to our City of Merced neighborhoods' rich and vibrant character and cultures. These projects will visually represent our community's cultural perspectives, priorities, and contributions that positively impact our environment that community members can embrace, appreciate, and respect.

All projects will support social justice and community engagement. The City of Merced is interested in engaging with people of multiple ethnicities to promote interest and involvement in these community-based projects. We aim to encourage people in neighborhoods where these murals and sculptures are located to have a vested interest and a sense of ownership and connection to these projects. Studies have shown that public art encourages residents to develop respect and responsibility for these areas. Community members take an interest in protecting and maintaining murals. We will promote each project through the City's social media platforms to encourage community involvement during production.

Building community is essential in supporting the health and wellness of residents within the City of Merced - an effort that the City Council is committed to across all service areas. In every way possible, the City of Merced strives to provide equal access to all its residents and supports services and programs that promote inclusivity.

Additionally, each artist's progress will be documented and shared on the City's social media platforms and a project page at engage.cityofmerced.org. All artists will be required to meet the June 2024 project completion date.

The project aims to benefit artists and engage communities in the bottom quartile of the California Healthy Place Index. The Healthy Place Index will support the City of Merced in addressing environmental equity. The selected projects will focus on areas within the City of Merced identified as the lowest quartile of the California Healthy Places Index.

At the ACAC meeting on November 16, 2023, a subcommittee was formed to review and score 30 submissions from 10 artists who responded to an RFP for the Heartland Grant. The subcommittee met on November 20, 2023, to review and select designs for seven projects. The subcommittee presented its selections at the November 30th ACAC special meeting. The commission is recommending these selections for review and approval at the City Council meeting on January 2, 2023.

Each artist will enter into a contract with the City of Merced. Each contract will not exceed the individual project dollar amount.

IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES

No appropriation of fund is needed. Funding is available in project GR240011-Heartland Creative which was approved and appropriated by Council on 9/18/23 Council meeting. No match is required.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Heartland Grant Artist Project Budget Worksheet

2. ACAC Recommendations