

Quality and Productivity Commission
30th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Heritage of Excellence"

2016 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT:

PUBLIC SERVICE THROUGH IMPROVED CAPACITY BUILDING

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION:

JANUARY 2014

(Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before July 1, 2015)

PROJECT STATUS:

XX Ongoing _____ One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT?

_____ Yes XX No



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 Like many County departments, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission serves
 2 County residents largely through intermediaries. In our case, we do this through grants
 3 and contracts with nonprofit arts organizations, artists and arts educators. To ensure
 4 their work is of the highest quality, the Arts Commission offers technical assistance and
 5 capacity building (TA/CB) services to our grantees and contractors through workshops,
 6 classes, scholarships and internships. These are cost effective tools that allow us to
 7 broaden our reach across LA County beyond our staff capacity. In 2014 we launched a
 8 project to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our TA/CB services. This began
 9 with a comprehensive study that quantified the full breadth and scope of our TA/CB
 10 services across the entire Arts Commission, calculating complete costs (including staff
 11 time) while also measuring the benefits to people and organizations that have received
 12 those services. We have used the results of this study to improve our services so that
 13 we can be more responsive to County residents. We also created an interactive online
 14 toolkit (<http://www.lacocbat.org>) that other County departments can use in their effort to
 15 improve their services to intermediaries as well.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

| (1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE | (2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS | (3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE | (1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT | SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

| | |
|---|--|
| SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Los Angeles County Arts Commission 1055 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 800 Los Angeles, CA 90017 | TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-202-5858 |
| PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Bronwyn Mauldin Director of Research and Evaluation | TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-273-8318 EMAIL bmauldin@arts.lacounty.gov |
| PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Barbara Nack  | DATE 6/2/16 TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-974-4111 EMAIL bnack@lacbos.org |
| DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Laura Zucker  | DATE 6/1/16 TELEPHONE NUMBER 213-202-5858 |

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made. Use Arial 12 point font

THE CHALLENGE

Like many County departments, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission serves County residents largely through intermediaries. In our case, we do this through grants and contracts with nonprofit arts organizations, artists and arts educators. To ensure that the services our intermediaries provide directly to County residents are of the highest quality, the Arts Commission offers technical assistance and capacity building (TA/CB) services to our grantees and contractors that are designed to strengthen participating individuals and organizations. Our challenge was that each of our four divisions serves a different constituency and provides TA/CB services in a different way. For example, staff at the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre provide training in media outreach and ticket sales to arts organizations that present shows at the Ford. In another example, our Organizational Grants Program provides TA/CB support to our grantees – approximately 380 nonprofit arts organizations throughout LA County – in program evaluation, human resources management, finance and other topics. Through these services we improve the cultural landscape of LA County for all residents. In 2014 we launched a project to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and coordination of our TA/CB services across the Arts Commission. The outcomes and benefits of this project have been greater than we expected.

SOLUTION

Project vision and objectives: For more than fifteen years the Arts Commission has provided TA/CB services to arts nonprofits, artists and arts educators through workshops, classes, scholarships and internships. These are cost effective tools that allow us to broaden our reach across LA County. We also provide TA/CB one-on-one to many of our intermediaries via phone, email and in person. Through these services we give these individuals and organizations the skills they need to manage their organizations more effectively. As a result, they provide better quality and higher quantity art and arts education to LA County residents. In 2014 we launched a project to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our TA/CB services. This began with a study that quantified the full breadth and scope of our TA/CB services across the Arts Commission, calculating complete costs (including staff time) while also measuring the benefits to people and organizations that have received those services.

With a \$70,000 Productivity Investment Fund (PIF) grant from the LA County Quality and Productivity Commission, the Arts Commission hired an outside consultant, Harder+Company, to conduct data collection and analysis. The project took eighteen months to complete from the contract start date to submission of the final report. As a

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result of this study the Arts Commission is making major improvements to our TA/CB services that still continue today. We also created an interactive online toolkit (<http://www.lacocbat.org>) that other County departments can use to replicate this study and improve their own TA/CB services.

Consumers: The Arts Commission ensures that County residents have access to high quality, relevant, arts and cultural services by strengthening the people and organizations that provide those services. By improving our own TA/CB services to those organizations, we improve the quality of arts and culture for all County residents. County residents ultimately benefit from our TA/CB work in that it builds skills and creates stronger organizations that provide art and arts education to them.

How project is innovative, resourceful or unique: Many County departments serve the public at least in part through grants and contracts with intermediaries: nonprofits, businesses, other government agencies and individuals. The public sees and benefits from the work of those intermediaries but may never see County government and their own tax dollars at work behind the scenes. This project was designed to help one arm of County government – the Arts Commission – ensure that our intermediaries meet the highest quality standards when they serve the public by improving our services to those intermediaries. When we launched this project we recognized that the way in which we work is not unique, so we planned from the beginning to also create a toolkit that will help other County departments learn from our work. In this way we ensured the funds invested by the Quality and Productivity Commission would benefit not only the Arts Commission but any department in the County. This is an example of how one commission within the County can have an outsize impact both by strengthening the work of others – our grantees and contractors – and by sharing our work with colleagues across the County.

Describe all technology used in the solution: Nearly all technology required to complete this program was already in use by the Arts Commission and is publicly available. Data on staff time was collected using Excel spreadsheets. Dropbox was used to share files between staff and the contractor. An online survey administration tool – Survey Monkey – was used to collect participant data. All data was analyzed in Excel. The interim and final reports were submitted in Adobe PDF format. The toolkit was submitted in Adobe PDF format as well as Word, and has been made available in an easy-to-use interactive format using the point-and-click website creator Weebly. Sample forms are available on the toolkit website in Excel and fillable PDF forms.

BENEFITS

The greatest benefit of this project has been improvement in the administration of County services in a way that allows us to be more responsive to County residents.

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The toolkit we created has the potential to support other County departments in their effort to improve their services to intermediaries as well.

The Arts Commission has used the findings from this study to engage in a series of activities to improve our TA/CB services. While the PIF-funded study is complete, the work to improve our services continues. We combined this work under the broader category of Professional Development (PD) and established a PD Task Force made up of representatives from all divisions. This group is responsible for improving the quality of our PD activities and coordinating it across divisions. The task force established a common post-event feedback form that all divisions use. This feedback form provides us with customer satisfaction data as well as information about what *actions participants have taken* as a result of the training. With a shared set of common questions we can now determine which communities we are serving most effectively, by division and for the Arts Commission as a whole. This helps us to ensure our services are of high quality and responsive to needs among our grantees and contractors.

We have clarified and narrowed our capacity building focus through a process of articulating the intended impact of each TA/CB service more clearly. While some are light-touch trainings designed to provide basics, others are in-depth and our expectations of impact should be greater. This is helping us decide on which TA/CB services to continue and which to discontinue. This summer we plan to engage in a project to map out the range of TA/CB services available throughout LA County to ensure we are maximizing our referrals to other agencies and not replicating services available elsewhere. The PD task force is currently developing a Quality Assurance guide for PD across the entire Arts Commission. We are also working on a set of common grant reporting questions that will allow us to aggregate information about our grantmaking to the level of the entire Arts Commission while also comparing grantmaking programs to each other internally.

Our final product from this program was to create a toolkit that other County departments can use to conduct their own studies of similar services they provide to the public. This toolkit is available for free online in an interactive, easy-to-use website: <http://www.lacocbat.org>.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN

This project links to Goal 2, Strategic Initiative 1 of the County’s Strategic Plan, as it has helped us improve our services to the public, making our PD services more customer-centric as we provide more effective assistance to small nonprofit organizations and designing a website that improves customer engagement and transparency for the Arts Commission.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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