**Possible FAQs for Neighborhood Voices**

**What is the purpose of the *Neighborhood Voices* (*VOICES*) program?**

*VOICES* seeks to **highlight and support community-based cultural expressions, stories, histories, and heritage of the many communities in Oakland. The Cultural Affairs Division recognizes that cultural resources are not distributed equitable throughout Oakland’s neighborhoods and seeks to address inequities through this program. The people of Oakland have found diverse ways and places in which to express their creativity, traditions, and sense of community. *VOICES* seeks to support cultural activities where they happen—whether or not in spaces that are typically thought of as cultural centers.**

**Who can apply to *VOICES*?**

An organization must have non-profit status **(that is, be a federal tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code) to be eligible to apply to *VOICES*. The organization can be** **an arts or non-arts organization. If an organization wishes to apply to be a lead partner in a *VOICES* project but doesn’t have a non-profit status, it must use a fiscal sponsor that has non-profit status and has a mission that is aligned with the purpose of the project. An organization acting as a fiscal sponsor need not be located in Oakland, however the main partners in the project must be Oakland-based.**

**What kinds of projects will be funded by *VOICES?***

Many different kinds of projects may be funded by *VOICES*. Here are a few examples:

* + - * + **Activities that lift up the cultural identity of a people or the historical significance of a place such as a street festival, a walking or virtual tour, a folk life activity, or a civic art project;**
				+ **Community-centered participatory research into the history of a neighborhood, ethnic-specific enclave, or particular cultural tradition (including oral histories, audio/video/photo documentation and production, story cloths, etc.);**
				+ **Traditional and cross-cultural community-building activities that foster empathy and connection; or**
				+ **Educational programs in culturally-specific practices related to stewardship of natural world, food ways, and health and well-being.**

However, all *VOICES* projects must be centered on cultural activities and must be done in partnership between **community builders and cultural practitioners.**

**What is a “community builder”?**

**Community builders can be social service organizations, civic/neighborhood/family associations, community development agencies, youth groups, senior centers, PTAs, faith-based organizations, after-school program providers, or other kinds of community groups that are stakeholders in the neighborhood in which the project will take place or with a particular community (or communities) that reside there.**

**What is a “cultural practitioner”?**

**Cultural practitioners can be artists, arts activists (“artivists”), storytellers, traditional culture bearers, community historians, cultural centers, visual and performing arts spaces, or others who are knowledgeable of culturally-specific practices/history/heritage of the people who will be involved in the project.**

**Why do *VOICES* projects have to be partnerships?**

**The partnership requirement is meant to ensure that the community that is to benefit from the cultural activities supported by *VOICES* is involved in the creation and implementation of the project—whether through a neighborhood association, faith-based organization, parent or youth group, etc. Funded partnerships between cultural practitioners and community-based groups are meant to result in projects that lift up people of different neighborhoods and recognize the value of Oakland’s many community voices.**

**How many partners can be involved in a *VOICES* project?**

**There is no limit to the number of partners that can be involved in planning and implementing a *VOICES* project. However, please keep in mind that the grants will not exceed $10,000. Lead organizations must partner with at least one other entity.**

**Can *VOICES* partners serve as volunteers to the project?**

**Yes. Projects may include volunteers or in-kind exchanges. However, there is a general expectation that the work of core partners will be compensated and Cultural Affairs values projects that pay for cultural expertise.**

**Will having more partners make my application more competitive?**

**Not necessarily. Competitive partnership projects will include ones that are authentic, mutually-beneficial and respectful, and rooted in the community where they take place.**

**Can my organization apply for more than one VOICES project?**

**Organizations are only allowed to apply as a Lead Organization for one project. An organization may be involved in a partnership for another *VOICES* project, but may not apply as the Lead. Cultural Affairs wishes to allow for as many different organizations and neighborhoods to be supported as possible.**

**If my organization has a current grant through the Cultural Funding Program, can we apply for a *VOICES* grant?**

**Organizations currently receiving two Cultural Funding awards at the time of application to *VOICES* are not eligible to apply as a Lead Organizations.**

**How many grants will be made through this program?**

**Seven grants will be awarded through this inaugural round of *VOICES*. If the program is successful, the Cultural Affairs Division will explore ways to grow the program.**