

The ever-changing face of WSAC Grants, or.....

"Why was our grant (not funded, \$\$ cut, etc.)?"

(excerpt from a letter by Mary Frye, with quotations from WSAC Chairman, Lonny Kaneko)

"Grant review has always been, and still is, a competition; one that is getting extremely wicked. Four consecutive years of state budget cuts have reduced the grant funds to approximately the same cash that was available in 1987 [and further cuts are expected]. The Arts Commission is no longer providing grants to many organizations that used to get funding (and realistically still should) and severely cutting grants to others.

"As our Chairman, Lonny Kaneko noted: '[WSAC] money continues to be an important part of the budgets of many of the state's outstanding arts organizations.

When it instituted the peer panel system three years ago, the Commission recognized that the way of doing business, as well as funding patterns, would change.

"There are several reasons for the change. First, the grants would be based on qualitative evidence rather than historical funding models. The Commission recognized that peer panels could make better professional judgements on grants, given work samples and a basic amount of information. ... Second, peer panels enable previously unfunded arts organizations to apply on an equal basis with older, more familiar organizations, thus

opening the door which had been closed to those who came to the table when funding sources were shutting down. Third, the panel system provided incentives for organizations to improve their financial, programmatic, and access capabilities.

".... the result has been that some organizations have had to deal with a serious reduction or loss of finances from the state, while others have gained state dollars. Anticipating such losses, the Commission has provided dollars in the Project Support Program for those strong institutions with worthy projects."

*Governor
Mike Lowry*

*Chairman
Lonny Kaneko*

*Executive Director
Karen Kamara
Gose*

*Washington
State Arts
Commission*

*P.O. Box 42675
Olympia, WA
98504-2675
(206) 753-3860*

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