Key Findings of Assessment

May 2013
Methodology

• Background Research
• Benchmark Study
• Interviews (~80 total)
  – Commissioners, Staff, Board of Supervisors, City Dept Representatives, Peer Funders, Arts Organizations, Arts Education Partners
• Surveys of Staff and Commissioners
• Focus groups
  – Cultural Equity Grants recipients
  – Cultural Centers
Topics Discussed with Interviewees

• Strengths of SFAC
• Areas in need of improvement
• Critical issues facing the SFAC
• Future vision
• SFAC Leadership
• Community perceptions
Key Findings
SFAC Strengths

• Director’s leadership and communication skills
• Committed, knowledgeable staff
Overall Critical Issues Identified by Interviewees

- Lack of vision
- Adequate funding for breadth of programs
- Program relevancy and accountability
- Care for collections
- Visibility and awareness of SFAC
Critical Issues Identified by Commissioners

• Perceived as a “rubber stamp”; work done in committees
• Lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities
• Current focus on operational issues vs. policy, vision, and mission
Critical Issues Identified by Staff

- Lack of clarity about SFAC vision and mission
- Reactive vs. strategic decision-making
- Minimal data to drive decision-making
- Internal communications lacking across program areas
- Limited visibility to the public and City government
- Lack of SFAC champions
Critical Issues Identified by External Stakeholders

• Mission creep
• SFAC’s role as a producer vs. funder
• Program silos
• Changing demographics and ensuring program relevancy
• Civic Design Review process
Critical Issues Identified by CEG & Cultural Center Grantees

- Tension between SFAC’s conflicting roles as:
  - funder vs. landlord
  - funder vs. program provider
- Promotion of grant opportunities
- Overly complex reporting and application processes
- Lack of long-term leases for cultural centers
- Non-competitive grants for cultural centers
- Changing demographics and need to reach new constituencies
Interviewees’ Suggestions About Future of SFAC

• Make the arts more of a “player” in education, economy, and city government

• Focus on roles as grantmaker, capacity builder, convener, resource, and advocate

• Build relationships to leverage financial and political support
Interviewees’ Suggestions About Future of SFAC

• Be more efficient in carrying out what we currently do
• Bring a sense of focus to our work
• Build funding base
• Enhance branding and marketing
• Celebrate the work of grantees and local artists
Interviewees’ Opinions: Barriers to Achieving SFAC’s Future

• Bureaucracy
• Budget constraints
• Lack of cohesive vision/clear goals
• Political realities
• Need for stability/fear of risk
Next Steps

• Strategic Planning
• Community Engagement
• Draft Plan
• Ongoing Evaluation of Plan
SFAC Mission

• The San Francisco Arts Commission is the City agency that champions the arts in San Francisco. We believe that a creative cultural environment is essential to the City’s well-being. Our programs integrate the arts into all aspects of City life. The Commission was established by charter in 1932 (Charter sections 5.103 and 16.106).