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From: Peggy Mainor, Executive Director, The MICA Group
Date: October 15, 2015

Cultural Resource Fund Report July – September 2015

Background

In May 2014, the Federal Communications Commission and seven Class I freight railroads signed memoranda of understanding to create a \$10 million Cultural Resource Fund (CRF) to address issues relating to Positive Train Control construction. The CRF allows for grants to be made to eligible Tribal Nations and State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs).

The MICA Group applied and was selected to serve as Administrator for the CRF, and signed a contract with the railroads in February 2015. MICA's application included a proposed Advisory Board, consisting of national leaders in Indian Country and a State Historic Preservation expert, to guide the initiative.

In March 2015, the FCC issued its "List of Tribal Nations and State Historic Preservation Officers Eligible for Grants from Positive Train Control Cultural Resource Fund."

Summary

MICA's second quarter, July 1-September 30, 2015, was primarily devoted to facilitating, processing, and awarding Phase 1 grants totaling \$2.9 million to 237 eligible grantees (196 Tribes and 41 SHPOs). MICA staff conducted outreach to all 277 eligible Tribes and SHPOs to encourage and support their Phase 1 grant applications. Each of the 237 Tribes and SHPOs was awarded a Phase 1 grant of either \$10,000 or \$15,000 (depending on the number of PTC poles in their state). Checks for each grant were processed and mailed to all recipients from the Tides Foundation. CRF Liaisons have begun follow-up communications and initial preparation of information for Phase 2 grant applications.



65% of Phase 1 grant applications requested funding for Language and Traditional Culture Revitalization, including improvements to cultural centers, preserving cultural artifacts, cultural education for youth, and revitalizing language, traditional crafts, and ceremonies.

35% of Phase 1 grant applications were site-related. Included in this group were improvements to THPO offices (including furniture, equipment, and software), site surveys, purchases of GIS, training monitors to protect sensitive cultural land areas, restoring historic buildings and graveyards, and contracting for strategic plans involving sites.

As part of the Phase 1 application, applicants were asked to list their Tribe's or SHPO's Top Five Cultural Priorities. Polling results were compiled. Tribal priorities are ranked below, indicating the number of Tribes reporting each priority as their top (or number one) priority:

1. Language revitalization (68 Tribes)
2. Creating or improving Tribal cultural centers, archives, libraries and data storage (40 Tribes)
3. Cultural and Sacred sites preservation (39 Tribes)
4. Cultural education for youth (21 Tribes)

29 Tribes listed various other cultural priorities as their number one priority.

Polling results for SHPO priorities were as follows:

1. Raise public awareness about the need for historic preservation (20 SHPOs)
2. Provide GIS database and online tools for the public (7 SHPOs)
3. Streamline environmental reviews (3 SHPOs)

11 SHPOs listed various other individual priorities as their number one priority.



Significant Milestones

- July CRF website, www.culturalresourcefund.org developed.
- Aug. NATHPO Annual Meeting - CRF Advisory Board members presented.
Deadline for submitting Phase 1 Grants.
CRF website finalized and launched.
- Sep. First CRF "Update" email blast sent out.
W.K Kellogg Foundation Application submitted.
Annie E. Casey Foundation Grant Application submitted.

Tribal Nations Update

CRF Phase 1 grant applications were due on August 31, 2015. MICA received applications from 198 Tribes (84% of those eligible) for Phase 1 funding. Ten additional Tribes expressed interest, but either inquired after the deadline had passed, or were unable to submit final applications for various reasons. 197 applications were approved. Projects were very diverse. There was a lot of excitement about the projects at all levels: Tribal, SHPO, CRF Staff, and CRF Advisory Board. Funded projects will be listed on the CRF website at www.culturalresourcefund.org. Several Tribes have already sent in reports and photos of completed projects that will be featured in a "Projects Section" of the CRF website.

State Historic Preservation Officer Update

MICA received applications from 41 SHPOs (100%) for Phase 1 funding. All 41 were approved. SHPOs were enthusiastic about their projects, and several have already begun planning for their Phase 2 applications.



Phase 2 Grant Applications

Phase 2 Grant Applications will be emailed to our Tribal and SHPO mailing lists in October 2015. Phase 2 grants will be competitive. A minimum of 50 grants with a maximum award of \$50,000 each will be awarded. Similar to Phase 1, Phase 2 grants can be used for a broad range of cultural projects. Tribes and SHPOs will have separate tracks and will not be in competition with each other. SHPOs are strongly encouraged to have Tribal partners. Phase 2 grant applications will be due on February 1, 2016. Grant awards are expected to be made in May 2016.

Phase 3 Grant Applications: Leveraging the CRF and Matching Grants

Phase 3 grants will be divided into interest “tracks” based on the cultural priority survey results conducted in Phase 1. As language revitalization was identified as the top Tribal Priority in the Phase 1 survey, MICA submitted a \$391,000 language planning grant application to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in September. If funded, the grant will provide for a facilitated language “gathering” of interested Tribes to be held in February 2016. Stakeholders, including government agencies and private foundations, will be invited to join CRF-eligible Tribes that ranked language as their top cultural priority at presentations of highly successful model language programs that have achieved language fluency. The focus on the gathering will be to educate Tribes and funders about these successful programs, and to facilitate partnerships and matching funds for a CRF Phase 3 language project funding track.

A second Phase 3 track involving funding of protection of sacred sites is currently being planned.

CRF Outreach

CRF staff, fund applicants and public audiences were informed of the launch of the CRF website on August 21. The site provides introductory fund information, process support, Advisory Board and administrative profiles, funding structure and timelines, and FAQs. It also provides direct contact access to MICA staff. The Phase 2 application will be posted on the CRF website.



Three CRF Advisory Board members attended the NATHPO Annual Meeting on August 19 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. A CRF Advisory Board member, W. Richard West, Jr., CEO of the Autry National Center, was the featured luncheon speaker. Advisory Board members reported that their presentation was attended by approximately 150 THPOs and Tribal cultural representatives, FCC staff, and ACHP staff, and that their presentation was well received. Several Tribes requested information on how they could be added to the Tribal Eligibility List. These inquiries were referred to the FCC.

MICA began electronic CRF "Updates" in mid-September. An email blast was circulated announcing the launch of the website in September, and a second blast was sent out in late September/early October that provided an update on Phase 1 Grant reporting requirements. The second blast also provided information about anticipated Phase 2 grant application release and due dates.

We plan to continue outreach efforts to allow all Tribes and SHPOs to have access to current information and stay up to date on the latest CRF developments.

Conclusion

The MICA Group is pleased to present this report on the progress of the second quarter of the administration of the Cultural Resource Fund. MICA is honored to serve as Administrator for the CRF and is endeavoring to distribute the CRF's assets in a fair, prompt, and meaningful way.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Mainor
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The MICA Group