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an agency of state government

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Montana Arts Council

House Bill 946 Study Response

February 26, 2024

Overview

The Montana Arts Council (MAC) is the agency of state government established to develop the creative potential of all Montanans, advance education, spur economic vibrancy and revitalize communities through involvement in the arts.

The agency has 7 FTE and is governed by a 15-member Governor-appointed council.

Human Resource Services

MAC transitioned from private-contractor-provided HR to State HR in September 2022. State HR provides the services listed in the study except Bi-weekly Timesheet/Payroll Verification, which is completed by MAC staff.

- State HR does not charge MAC for these services. Transitioning will increase annual fixed costs by \$8,855 (\$1,265 x 7 FTE).
- Transitioning in FY25 would create an agency budget deficit of \$8,855.
- Transitioning in FY26-27 would be budgeted as a fixed cost.

Budget/Accounting Services

MAC employs a full-time CFO whose duties include most of the services listed here, in addition to other roles and responsibilities that are integral to the daily operations of the agency. The potential loss of that position in-house would hamper efficient operations and reduce services to our constituents.

The service MAC would be interested in from DOA is the Internal Audit Services. MAC currently hires a private accountant (who was State Accountant at DOA years ago) to test our internal services. We have been informed that he plans to retire in 2-3 years.

Legal Services

MAC currently has an MOU with the Dept of Justice – Agency Legal Services Division. They charge \$121/hour on an as-needed basis. We may see some efficiencies in our contracting process by switching to DOA legal services.

IT Services

MAC has been using DOA SITSD for all IT services including LAN Admin since 2016. The agency budget includes \$72,301 for these services in FY24.

Potential Approaches for Consideration

MAC is a very small agency, with only seven FTE's, each of which is integral to the agency's operations. Removing any one of them from being present in the office in an effort to achieve efficiency would likely have the opposite effect than intended. For example, the CFO does more than accounting. MAC is too small to have any of our existing staff transfer to DOA, or to transition services with staff turnover.