

Government of the District of Columbia



Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dawn Dickerson, Program Manager
FR: Denise Wiktor, General Counsel
DT: August 24, 2023
RE: ANC 4B Art Contest

You requested an opinion on whether ANC 4B's monetary award as a prize for an art competition was an allowable expenditure for an ANC. It is not a permissible expenditure allowed for an ANC under the D.C. Code.

To answer your question, I went to the well-reasoned opinion of the Office of Attorney General on [Seasoned Settlers and Grants Generally](#). It outlines the D.C. Code requirements that all grants should meet. The prize would be treated the same as a grant in that it is an award of money that is not in exchange for goods or services. The OAG summarizes the grant provisions in the DC Code as requiring a grant to:

1. Have a Public Purpose that benefits the community as a whole; and
2. Have a local benefit in that it benefits those who reside or work in the ANC; and
3. Be a proposed project in that it is for a specific purpose; and
4. Be granted to an organization and not an individual; and
5. Not be duplicative of any services already performed by the District government.

While arguments can be made that this contest can meet most of the criteria, the most significant problem is that the award will go to an individual, namely the winner. The D.C. Code is clear that a "Commission may approve grants only to organizations..." D.C. Code Section 1-309.13(m)(1). The DC Auditor has also issued [Guidelines for Use of ANC Funds to Purchase School Supplies and Support School Activities \(dc.gov\)](#) which arrives at the same conclusion.

A better course for the ANC if they wish to have such a contest is to work with an organization in their ANC that they can give a grant to for such a contest and receive the right to publish the winning entry in their newsletter as part of the grant.

cc: Kent Boese, Executive Director