

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
OFFICE OF CABLE TELEVISION, FILM, MUSIC, AND
ENTERTAINMENT



**Fiscal Year 2021
Performance Oversight Hearing**

Testimony of
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Director

Before the
Committee on Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs
Council of the District of Columbia
The Honorable Trayon White, Sr. Chairperson

Virtual Hearing
February 23, 2022
Time: 12-3pm

Good afternoon Chairperson White, Members, and staff of the Committee on Recreation, Libraries and Youth Affairs. I am Angie Gates, Director of the Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, and Entertainment (OCTFME). On behalf of Mayor Muriel Bowser and the agency, I am pleased to provide testimony about the activities and accomplishments of OCTFME in Fiscal Year 2021 and Fiscal Year 2022, to date.

The mission of the Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, and Entertainment is to:

- Regulate cable television service providers;
- Provide high-quality, responsive customer service for District cable subscribers;
- Produce and broadcast 24-hour public, educational, and government (PEG) programming and content highlighting the District's culture;
- Grow and support a sustainable creative economy and entertainment media industry by managing programs and initiatives, such as the Film Rebate Fund, 202Creates, and through activities of the Creative Affairs Office.

Mayor Bowser's Fiscal Year 2021 budget made investments that supported our efforts to deliver on the promise of shared DC values. These efforts include creating economic opportunity, making our neighborhoods safer, and providing more effective and efficient government services. While the coronavirus health pandemic has plagued the world and has crippled our economy, we continue to work each day to fulfill our commitment to provide District residents with opportunities and a pathway to the middle class.

OCTFME's Legal and Regulatory team continued to work closely with the District's three cable and internet service providers during the pandemic to ensure prompt resolution of cable-related issues, and monitor compliance against service disconnections. The team also continued to facilitate the providers' efforts to upgrade technology and expand services throughout the District.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, OCTFME has continued to provide transparency and valuable information to District residents through its three PEG channels, DCN, DCC and DKN. In FY21, our production crew covered 200 live Mayoral press conferences and media events presented by the Executive Office of the Mayor. Additionally, our programming team showcased 322 virtual hearings on DCC with the support of the DC Council.

OCTFME remains on the front line, as a vital broadcast feed source for television markets reaching millions globally. Clips of our footage continue to air on news media outlets such as CNN, MSNBC, FOX, the 'Today Show,' and 'Good Morning America,' to name a few.

In a historic move, OCTFME launched the city's first and only streaming network, DCE (the District of Columbia Entertainment network) in September 2021. DCE delivers award-winning lifestyle and entertainment programming produced in Washington DC for a global audience. DCE provides an international viewing opportunity that supports OCTFME's mission to elevate and amplify the creative community.

During FY21 OCTFME collaborated with the newly created Office of Racial Equity to produce the *Voice of the People* series, and partnered with DC Public Schools and the *Washington Informer* to produce an award-winning virtual Spelling Bee.

Our multi-Emmy award-winning team worked with a local producer to acquire original Go-Go music to enhance our video music library.

OCTFME continued its collaboration with the Metropolitan Police Department, producing over twenty-five (25) public service announcements to solicit the public's support in solving unresolved homicides in the District.

In total, OCTFME aired over thirteen hundred (1,300) hours of diverse programming, earning an Emmy nomination for Best Directing, eight (8) NATOA (National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors) Awards, nine (9) Telly Awards and a Hometown Video Award.

In FY21, OCTFME engaged a Certified Business Enterprise vendor to make technical upgrades to the agency's Emergency Infrastructure Systems. The Uninterrupted Power Supply and HVAC Chiller systems were replaced to address proper electrical functions and support press communication for national and international media outlets.

Throughout the pandemic, DC Radio continued to produce high-quality content. Our programming included audio and video podcasts, PSAs and promotions which aired across our digital and social media platforms.

OCTFME's Film Division is a "One-Stop Shop" that issues film permits, provides production location assistance, and manages the Film Rebate Fund. The Film Rebate Fund promotes economic impact by creating jobs and providing media training opportunities for District residents.

In FY21, film production in DC started to return to pre-COVID levels. The Film Rebate Fund supported six (6) qualifying awardees, including two (2) local production companies. The overall economic impact for the Rebate Fund projects was \$6.7-million dollars and the projects provided 175 District resident job hires and \$796,000-thousand dollars in wages to District residents.

OCTFME's Creative Economy Career Access Program ("CECAP") is an innovative workforce development program that connects District residents from underrepresented communities with local creative economy training. In FY21, CECAP provided paid, on-the-job training for five (5) District residents.

During FY21, 35 individuals graduated from the 202Creates Residency Program. 202Creates also conducted twelve (12) virtual masterclass conversations with District creatives which promoted entrepreneurship, social awareness, culture and entertainment. Industry leaders also shared valuable advice on best business practices.

As a division of OCTFME, the Creative Affairs Office (CAO) showcases and preserves the District's rich creative communities throughout all 8 Wards. CAO builds sustainability in the creative community through policy and programming which further expands the pathway to the middle class for the creative workforce.

In accordance with the *Go-Go People's Plan*, CAO distributed financial support to artists, initiatives and programs designed to preserve and promote the District's Go-Go music, history, and culture. The Go-Go financial allocations promote the mission of the Go-Go Plan through various partnerships with entities and curated programming within the District.

CAO also advanced the Performing Arts Promotion Amendment Act of 2021 (PAPA). This legislation establishes real property tax rebates for eligible live performing arts venues affected by public health emergencies.

In partnership with The George Washington University, CAO continued its *Care for Creatives* initiative which provides confidential pay-what-you-can mental health counseling to creatives, entrepreneurs, and small business owners.

Through this partnership, CAO launched *Care for Creatives Community Conversations*. This virtual series included fourteen (14) conversations that focused on supporting creatives' mental health.

CAO held the second installment of the *Business Over Brand* program which improves access to resources for District creatives to build their businesses and grow their brands. The virtual Program provided dynamic content featuring seventeen (17) speakers from local and national organizations.

To close out FY21 and a successful 2021 Creates month, the District's rich arts community shined bright on September 28th at The 36th Annual Mayor's Arts Awards at the historic Howard Theatre. The Awards Show was back in-person, hosted by comedian Joe Clair. The Show aired on DCN and YouTube, and honored 14 award categories, including two (2) new categories for excellence in youth creativity and excellence in fashion and beauty industries.

OCTFME demonstrates its dedication to District residents, businesses, and the creative community by providing open and transparent communication. We will continue to utilize our various media platforms to promote DC talent and showcase the District as a premiere location for media production.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank Mayor Muriel Bowser, and you, Chairperson White, for your leadership and support. We appreciate the opportunity to share our accomplishments and future plans and look forward to working with the Committee. This concludes my testimony. My staff and I are happy to address any questions you may have.