



Interoffice Memorandum

February 27, 2020

TO: Mayor Jerry L. Demings
-AND-
Board of County Commissioners

THRU: Randy Singh, Deputy County Administrator *RS*

CONTACT: Terry Olson, Administrator
Arts and Cultural Affairs Office *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: March 10, 2020 – Consent Agenda Item
Approval of \$800,000 Blockbuster Funding to Creative City Project
for IMMERSE 2020.

This year's recommendation of funding for IMMERSE 2020 is the third of three phases. In 2018 and 2019, the Blockbuster fund recommended and the Board approved funding for those year's IMMERSE events. This three-year strategic plan was designed to develop IMMERSE 2020 as a destination, signature event for Central Florida.

In keeping with the Blockbuster Fund's guidelines for investment, IMMERSE 2020 plans to host 100,000 guests in October 2020. The event will platform more than 1,000 artists from 200 collaborating organizations across 10 city blocks in Downtown Orlando. More than \$300,000 will be paid out to artists and arts organizations, contributing to our community's long-term cultural development.

The event hosted 50,000 guests in 2018 and 75,000 guests in 2019. IMMERSE is becoming nationally and internationally recognized — with feature coverage in The Daily Telegraph (The UK's national newspaper), the Sydney Morning Ledger, and others. The historical increase in attendance, combined with increased attention from around the world is evidence that the Blockbuster Fund's model for investment is effective. Large-scale, destination events like IMMERSE result in elevating our community as a hub for creativity and innovation, having a significant long-term impact on economic and cultural development.

Board approval of the recommendation from the Arts and Cultural Affairs Advisory Council will result in the continued growth of IMMERSE 2020. It will also strengthen the event's organizational infrastructure, ensuring long-term sustainability beyond the direct funding support of the Blockbuster Fund.



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As Orange County continues to grow, the Blockbuster Committee and Arts and Cultural Affairs Advisory Council members and staff believe that IMMERSE is poised to be a significant part of that growth. Through innovative arts programming, IMMERSE has continued to gain national and international attention, and it is quickly becoming a destination arts and culture experience.

**ACTION REQUESTED: Approval of the Arts and Cultural Affairs
 Advisory Council's funding recommendation of
 \$800,000 from the Blockbuster Funding for the
 Creative City Project for IMMERSE 2020.**

TO/ls

c. Byron W. Brooks, AICP, County Administrator