



Arts & Culture Research Network

Call for Proposals

Letter of Intent: June 24, 2016

Award Notifications: July 22, 2016

Letters of Intent and Proposals must be sent to Amber Caulkins, Program Director of The Collaborative, at amber@collaborativeri.org

Background: In November 2014, Rhode Island voters approved a Creative & Cultural Economy Initiative. The Initiative involved FY2015-FY2018 investment and distribution of \$35M in funding awards to improve cultural infrastructure throughout the state. To track the return on this investment, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA), in partnership with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission and in collaboration with The Collaborative, will commission RI college- and university-based researchers to explore the impact of this initiative.

It is commonly understood that the creative and cultural sector is a vital contributor to the RI economy. Researchers throughout the nation have gathered data from a variety of sources to support that understanding, by quantifying the impact of the arts in the economy through information gathered by the National Endowment of the Arts on its own and in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, Americans for the Arts, and the Pew Charitable Trusts, to name a few. RI hopes to inform statewide policymakers on the arts' impact on the economy and other sectors (healthcare, community development, education) by establishing an Arts & Culture Research Network. This network of researchers will use state and national resources to document return on the state's Creative and Cultural investments.

The initial research project funded as part of The Arts & Culture Research Network is part of a long-term vision for creating research partnerships that will explore future opportunities for leveraging research within this sector.

Research Project Description: The selected researchers will work collaboratively with an identified research team to creatively explore the impact of the Creative & Cultural Economy Initiative. The research team will work with an identified subset (7-10) of arts, cultural, and preservation grantees. The research team will then produce a final report that includes 1) Identified metrics for evaluation and data collection, 2) Guidelines for data collection for grantees, and 3) Analysis of the pilot data collected from the subset of grantees. The research



project will address the following three priorities:

1. **Economic Return:** *Impact on the creation of jobs in Rhode Island*
 - Short term – How many people are/were employed in these capital improvement projects?
 - Long term – What has happened programmatically with each funded organization that increases employment due to increased capacity?
2. **Programmatic Return:** *Impact on the growth and expansion of programs*
 - What has this cultural investment meant to the expansion of programming?
 - What has the expansion of programming meant to the service provided by the grant recipient, and what economic impact has that had in the communities they serve?
3. **Quality of Life Return:** *Impact on the vitality of the communities served by each of these grant recipients*
 - Does the facility/program engage and enhance the community, its culture, and identity? Provide a sense of belonging or connectedness?
 - Does the facility/program provide access to its community, inviting participation, partnership, and opportunities?

Collaborative Research Team: Researchers are asked to submit their letter of intent individually and will be selected based on their ability to contribute to a research team by addressing one of the three priorities outlined above.

Eligibility: This research project is intended to encourage bold, competitive proposals. We seek individual faculty members from across disciplines that may include the fields of social sciences, design, information technology, arts, and humanities to be a part of an interdisciplinary team that will devise and implement this research project.

Submission and Review Process: Submissions will be reviewed by a Review Committee, comprised of RISCA, Historic Preservation, The Collaborative, state government, local foundations, community organizations, and nationally recognized funders/scholars. The committee will select three to four individuals.

Once selected, these individuals will participate in three workshops that are facilitated by



national data experts who are involved in advanced evaluation programs. The workshops will be an opportunity to explore and discuss new techniques, approaches and tools that are currently being used in national studies. After the workshops, the team will prepare a collaborative proposal for final review and approval.

Interested individuals are encouraged to submit a letter of intent that outlines the following:

1. How does your past work and future plans address the aims of the project?
2. Describe your previous experience working on this type of project, as well as collaborative projects, and/or your interest in working on this type of project.
3. What question inspires you and what is your approach, idea or model of how to approach questions?

With the letter of intent, all submissions must include:

1. Updated CV or Resume
2. Short bio
3. Bulleted list of relevant collaborative work/project/work samples.

Award: Individual researchers will receive grants of up to \$7,500. There is no overhead charged for these grants. Researchers will also work with graphic designers and editors at The Collaborative to create a research brief accompanied by data visualizations that highlight the key findings of their research.

Letters of Intent are due no later than June 24, 2016. Researchers will be notified of their selection by July 22, 2016.