



## **Field Studies by Arts Service Organizations Founded By, For, and With Communities of Color**

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**LETTERS OF INTENT DUE: February 23, 2024**

**PROPOSALS DUE: May 20, 2024**

ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Wallace Foundation invites arts service organizations founded by, for, and with communities of color to propose research projects that answer important questions related to the arts communities they serve. The Foundation is inviting two kinds of proposals:

1. Research implementation grants, for the execution of a research project with an already fully developed research design (up to \$250,000).
2. Research expansion grants, which proposes to scale up or refine an existing robust research design and implement an expanded research project (up to \$400,000).

Eligible organizations will be arts organizations that are:

- Founded by, for, and with communities of color.
- Grounded in one or more artistic discipline.
- Operating as or exercising the functions of an arts service organization by, for example:
  - Providing professional development, resources, and networking opportunities for other arts organizations of color or for networks of artists of color.
  - Providing field research and information services.
  - Serving as a field advocate for artists or arts organizations of color.
- Leading or participating in networks or structures that provide the context for you to share and disseminate the results of your study with arts organizations or networks of color that face similar issues your study will address.

This understanding of arts service organization is meant to recognize the multiple roles and purposes many arts organizations of color play – for their artistic discipline, for their community, and for their peer organizations. We invite you to reach out to us if you have questions regarding your eligibility for this funding opportunity, and to review the types of organizations that have been funded under the [previous two rounds of Field Studies grants](#).

As you consider whether the Field Studies program is a match with your organization's work,

please note that this RFP is not designed for entities that are primarily youth arts or arts education organizations, but rather for community-serving organizations, which may include youth. A separate youth arts program at Wallace will have research calls in the future.

## **2.0 ABOUT THE WALLACE FOUNDATION**

Based in New York City, The Wallace Foundation is the philanthropic legacy of DeWitt and Lila Wallace, founders of the Reader's Digest. Wallace is one of the nation's 60 largest independent, charitable foundations. Our mission is to foster equity and improvements in learning and enrichment for young people, and in the arts for everyone. We are a national foundation, supporting work across the United States.

The Wallace Foundation takes an unusual approach for a private foundation. Most of our work is carried out through large-scale, multi-year initiatives designed to accomplish dual goals. The first is to support our grantees (such as arts organizations) to create value for those they serve by developing and strengthening their work at the local level. Our second goal is to add value to the field as a whole by investing in organizations to address important unanswered policy and practice questions, commissioning researchers to document and analyze what is learned by grantees as they explore these questions through practice, and then sharing these findings with practitioners, policymakers and influencers in order to catalyze improvements more broadly. In this way, we aim to use the development of research-based insights and evidence as a lever to help institutions—beyond those we fund directly—to enrich and enhance their work.

Our three focus areas are the arts, K-12 education leadership, and youth development. Our current five-year, \$100+ million arts initiative seeks to better understand how arts organizations founded by, for, and with communities of color can advance their own well-being and that of their communities. The initiative has three different components: (1) support and studies of 18 large arts organizations; (2) a regranting program focused on smaller arts organizations and executed in partnership with regional arts organizations and arts service organizations; and (3) open calls for research proposals from the field. You can read about the initiative and the relevant research studies we have commissioned [here](#).

### **2.1 Research and Equity**

Wallace views equity as embedding fairness in the formal and informal systems, structures, and practices of our society, giving all people the opportunities and supports necessary to reach their full potential as human beings. The principles that guide us in our equity journey include:

- Our work foregrounds racial equity but is not limited to it. We are concerned with the marginalization of people based on any element of their identity or circumstance.
- We believe achieving equity requires constructively addressing historical, structural, and systemic causes of racial and other forms of inequity and why they exist.
- Specific definitions of equity will vary from one context to another. As a funder, we are careful to avoid imposing a single definition on grantees.

Wallace is also committed to supporting research that is designed and conducted with and for equity. To inform strategies for change, research proposals should use strength-based approaches and be designed to shed light on structures, systems, processes, or practices that produce or reproduce inequities or overcome them. Research itself should be equity-centered—including partnerships, processes, and methods that center the voices and perspectives of communities that would stand to use or benefit from the research. Research teams should

include principal investigators and other senior intellectual contributors with relevant lived experiences. Theoretical frameworks should be informed by a recognition of systemic forms of exclusion or marginalization. Research methods, from data collection to analysis, should clearly articulate how the use of such frameworks will lead to new insights and understanding at both a practical and conceptual level, what the limitations of the methods are, and how they can support the development of strength-based change strategies. Incentives and recognition should be provided for all research participants.

### **3.0 FIELD STUDIES BY ART SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS FOUNDED BY, FOR, AND WITH COMMUNITIES OF COLOR**

Wallace expects to fund up to field studies for 6-8 arts service organizations, whose studies collectively will bring definition, depth, breadth, and perspective about the nature of the ecosystem of arts organizations founded by, with, and for communities of color.

Arts service organizations (ASO) meeting the eligibility criteria set forth in this RFP are asked to partner with a researcher selected for their expertise in subject matter and methods relevant to the questions the art service organization seeks to answer (see section 5.1 for criteria Wallace will use in its proposal review). Proposals must be submitted by the ASO with the research partner listed as a subaward or consultant. Submitted proposals should reflect a highly collaborative relationship between the arts service organization and research partner throughout the research process, from development of the research questions and design to dissemination of findings. Each proposed study should describe how the ASO envisions the partnership work taking place.

Shortly after awards are made, we hope to bring together, virtually, each funded research partnership as a cohort for teams to learn from one another in the first of a series of year-round learning community opportunities. At this first meeting, the cohort will be joined by a small team of external research methods advisors and ASO mentors selected by Wallace based on grantees research designs. These program advisors will serve as a resource to each team, and will provide a technical review of, and methods advice for, each research design. Prior cohorts of Field Studies grant recipients will also participate in one or more of these learning community opportunities. The purpose of this collaborative work is to maximize efforts to achieve meaningful data and documentation relevant to ongoing field-wide efforts to realize a more sustainable, equitable arts ecosystem.

#### **3.1 Study Purpose**

We invite arts service organizations and their research partners to identify and describe the issue(s) they want to address and questions they want to answer through their research project.

Proposed projects should be research studies and not evaluation studies. By “research studies” we mean studies that can advance both theory and practice, and whose results can be informative in other settings and organizations. They should shed light on questions that matter to, and also beyond, the immediate submitting organization or community involved in the proposed study.

Topics of research projects could include, but are in no way limited to:

- Structural and contextual features that impact organizations, associations, networks, and collectives founded by and for artists and arts organizations of color
- Indigenous organizational models and arts ecologies

- Cooperative fundraising, organizing, and economic models used by arts organizations of color
- Forms of and approaches to assessment of organizational health and impact by arts organizations of color
- Cross-sectoral work being conducted by arts organizations of color, such as organizational strategies and collaborations intersecting with the fields of community development and public health

Proposals should clearly describe how the research results will (a) inform the work of the arts service organization, (b) benefit their members or communities, and (c) enhance the knowledge base about the wider field of arts organizations and service organizations founded by, for, and with communities of color.

### **3.2 Proposal Types**

Proposals should, in the first sentence of the narrative, describe whether they are for research implementation or expansion grants.

#### **3.2.1 Research Implementation Grants**

The Foundation will award research implementation grants of up to \$250,000 to arts service organizations and their research partner to conduct a study involving data collection, analysis, and reporting. These proposals should include a review of the existing research literature that makes the case for the need for the study, detailed research questions, and a detailed research design and plan. Study methods should align with the research questions. Section 5.2 lists all required elements for this type of research grant.

#### **3.2.2 Research Expansion Grants**

The Foundation will award research expansion grants of up to \$400,000 to arts service organizations and their research partner to build on prior research projects; for example by including new or more participants, delving deeper into a topic, and/or to involving new research components. These proposals should include results of the prior study, including how they were used in the field, the need for expansion, a detailed research plan, how new results will be used, and a dissemination plan. Section 5.2 lists all required elements for this type of research grant.

### **3.3 Deliverables**

Grant proposals should describe the deliverables their research projects are intended to produce for the arts service organization and for the field, intended audiences, an anticipated timeline, and how the research team anticipates the deliverables being used. Deliverables might include reports, infographics, toolkits, videos, podcasts, research briefs, scholarly publications, and other forms of communication.

## **4.0 COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION**

All Wallace Foundation-funded efforts have extensive collaboration, communication, and dissemination activities. Please review this section carefully so that your proposal can appropriately budget for activities and requirements described in this section, and that, if awarded a research grant, you are aware of program expectations.

#### 4.1 Research Learning Community

Funded research teams will join a national community of arts service organizations and research partners seeking to advance their work and field understanding of arts organizations of color. Over the duration of the grant period, Field Study grantees will exchange learnings with other grantees in their cohort and on a cross-cohort basis, and obtain support from program advisors. While the content and frequency of learning opportunities will be refined with feedback from funded teams, we anticipate at minimum the following:

- At least two meetings per year between cohort members to exchange organizational and research updates, and to support community-building within the cohort
- At least one meeting per year with research methods advisors and ASO mentors, with additional meetings depending on project needs

#### 4.2 Meetings, Travel, and Research Updates

Proposers should budget time and effort for the following annual program activities:

- **Virtual Meetings.**
  - Two annual two-hour learning community meetings with other initiative grantees
  - Two 90-minute meetings with research methods advisors and ASO mentors to provide grantees with research guidance and support
  - Monthly 30-minute meetings with your Wallace research officer
- **Travel.** You are responsible for budgeting all travel costs for your team—including meetings at Wallace, initiative-wide learning communities, researcher specific learning community meetings, and all data collection activities.
  - Budget travel costs to send a team of one to three individuals to attend one ASO Field Study-specific learning community meeting in New York each year.
  - Budget travel costs for site visits/data collection and dissemination activities as relevant to your plan.
- **Written project updates.** Proposers should budget time for developing and submitting a brief monthly email to their Research Officer that research activities of the prior month, plans for the following month, and any challenges or changes that have arisen.

#### 4.3 Publications

Wallace undertakes extensive communications efforts to share lessons from its initiatives, both on its own and with the arts service associations and issue organizations with which it partners. Generating and disseminating knowledge that can benefit the field more broadly is a core aspect of the Foundation's philanthropic strategy.

We ask that you include in your plans the production of a final report that will serve as the source document for Wallace to generate a research brief which will be posted on the Wallace website. The report should detail your study purpose, questions, methods, and findings. The brief generated by a Wallace-funded writer will fully credit and link to your research deliverables, and will be subject to your review, edits, and approval. The purpose of this brief is to allow you to produce research results in your own voice, in your own preferred formats, for

your specific audience, while also generating, via the Wallace brief, a summary intended for the policy and practice audiences that Wallace additionally seeks to inform.

If relevant, Wallace asks that proposals include related budgeted time for teams to develop papers intended for peer review. The Foundation expects researchers will share drafts with their partner arts service organizations and others, as appropriate. Please include, as a budget item, costs for making publications open access.

## 5.0 NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO SUBMIT AND SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

If you intend to submit a proposal, **we ask that you email us a 1-page statement of intent on or before February 23, 2024.** We will share with those who notify us of their intent any subsequent relevant information, including clarifications that emerge through responding to questions from the field. Send emails to [ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org](mailto:ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org) declaring your intention to submit. Your email should include: (i) the names, organizations, and emails of any persons who you would like us to send future information to related to this RFP; (ii) the type of research grant (implementation or expansion) you intend to apply for; and (iii) any questions you have about the RFP. You are welcome to share ideas about what you plan to propose if you would like preliminary feedback from Wallace. We also encourage you—if you have any doubts—to describe to us why you believe you qualify as an arts service organization for purposes of this RFP so that we can share with you any questions we feel you should address in your proposal to clarify your status to reviewers.

Please note that submitting a statement of intent is not required in order to submit a subsequent proposal. However, we encourage you to submit these letters so that we can share additional information that may assist you in preparing a successful proposal. If you submit a statement of intent by February 23, 2024, you will also receive notification on how to sign up for office hours to discuss your proposed project with a member of the Wallace Research team.

### 5.1 Research Team Eligibility and Qualifications

Arts service organizations responding to this request for proposals should demonstrate the following qualifications:

- Through mission, organizational leadership, and communities served, evidence that they have been founded by, with, and for communities of color.
- A history of providing the function of an arts service organization, as defined at the beginning of this RFP.
- Evidence that they lead or are a part of existing structures or networks where what they learn through their proposed project will be disseminated to and shared with others who are grappling with similar issues that the study will address.

Research partners should demonstrate the following qualifications:

- Experience studying arts organizations focused on presenting or advancing art work and practices from communities or community-based organizations of color.
- Research and analytical skills appropriate to the project and proposed research designs
- History of producing publications and/or other dissemination material relevant to the research design and focus.

- Demonstrated experience working on issues of equity and culture.
- Experience working with arts organization directors and leaders.

## **5.2 Proposal Requirements, Selection Criteria, and Review Timeline**

### **Research Implementation Grants (up to \$250,000 for up to 2 years)**

In no more than 15 pages, single spaced, 11 pt font, please provide:

1. A brief introduction to your organization, its mission, purpose, and stakeholders. In this section, directly address your organization’s eligibility for this call and how it meets the criteria described above.
2. The need your study addresses, referencing the existing research literature as well as local and field needs expressed in practitioner communities. Use this section to also address why this study is important to your organization and how you intend to use study findings to advance your organization’s work and the communities you serve.
3. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks you will draw upon in the design, conduct, and analysis of your study.
4. A detailed research plan (this should be the bulk of your proposal) including:
  - Research questions
  - Research methodology
  - Data collection sources and methods
  - Data analysis plans

Please include a table making clear the links between your research questions, data sources, analytic plan, and deliverables.

5. Research deliverables, including intended audience, use, and dissemination strategies.
6. Qualifications of key members of the project team. Briefly describe who will lead or participate in the proposed activities and their roles and qualifications in the project.
7. Research References—References do not count toward the page limit.

### **Research Expansion Grants (up to \$400,000 for up to 2 years)**

In no more than 15 pages, single spaced, 11 pt font, please provide:

1. A brief introduction to your organization, its mission, purpose, and stakeholders. In this section, directly address your organization’s eligibility for this call and how it meets the criteria described above.
2. A description of your earlier study, and what was learned from it. How have you used the study results, and what do you propose to do to expand it, and why? Describe the need your proposed expansion study addresses, referencing the existing research literature as well as local and field needs expressed in practitioner communities. How will your study address an important knowledge gap for practice and in the literature?

3. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks you will draw upon in the design, conduct, and analysis of your study.
4. A detailed research plan (this should be the bulk of your proposal) including:
  - Research questions
  - Research methodology
  - Data collection sources and methods
  - Data analysis plans

Please include a table making clear the links between your research questions, data sources, analytic plan, and deliverables.

5. Research deliverables, including intended audience, intended use, and dissemination strategies.
6. Qualifications of key members of the project team. Briefly describe who will lead or participate in the proposed activities and their roles and qualifications in the project.
7. Research References—References do not count toward the page limit.

### **Proposal Attachments (for all proposals)**

Please also attach, as separate documents not counted toward the page limit:

1. A detailed line-item budget in Excel format. Include the FTE or time allocation of personnel included in the budget. Include full budgets for any subcontracts. Wallace allows a 20% indirect rate on all direct costs.
2. A budget justification briefly explaining each budget line in the Excel document. Please be sure to attend to rationale for honoraria (which we encourage), incentives, or consulting fees. Please also provide your organizational tax ID, or the organizational name and the tax ID of your fiscal sponsor.
3. Resumes of senior staff or consultants named in your budget. Please limit resumes to 1-4 pages per person.
4. One or two examples (or links to examples) of prior research publications/dissemination products produced by your research partner that are relevant to your proposed project.
5. A project timeline.

With the exception of the Excel budget, all of the attachments should be submitted as a single PDF. In fairness to others, we will not review any materials not listed above. Complete proposals are due to Wallace by the end of your day on May 20, 2024. Please send to [ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org](mailto:ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org).

### **5.3 Proposal Selection Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- The study's grounding in the relevant research, identification of key issues in the field and gaps in the knowledge base that the proposed study will address.



- For expansion studies, a description of the previously completed study, how learnings from the previous study have been used to date, and a compelling explanation of the reasons for expanding the previous study.
- The study’s demonstration of how learnings from the research will inform and be utilized by the arts service organization and will advance the needs and interests of the arts communities it serves.
- Quality of the research design, including the strength of its conceptual framework, provision of a detailed research plan able to answer the research questions, and the feasibility of the proposed research design and timeline.
- Qualifications of the project team, including both the arts service organization and research partner(s).
- The collaborative nature of the research partnership, including depth of engagement of the arts service organization throughout the research process.
- Depth of conceptualization and integration of equity into proposed plans.
- Relevance, use, and timeliness of the proposed research deliverables for their intended audiences.
- Budget.

#### 5.4 Review timeline

The 2024 RFP timeline is as follows:

- November 2023: Request for Proposals opens
- January 22, 2024: Informational Webinar at 3pm ET / 12pm PT  
**\*Please see Zoom dial-in information below**
- February 23, 2024: Letters of Intent due
- March 2024: Office Hours with Wallace Research team
- May 20, 2024: Proposals due
- June-August 2024: Proposals sent out for external review
- September 2024: Grantee notification of awards

Please note that this timeline is subject to change.

**\*Link to join January 22 Informational Webinar:**

<https://wallacefoundation-org.zoom.us/j/84446114904>

Or join by telephone by dialing one of the phone numbers listed below and then providing the webinar ID: 844 4611 4904

US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 929 205 6099 or +1 253 215 8782  
or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 6833

**Questions about this RFP can be sent to [ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org](mailto:ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org)**