



# **Arts Organizations Founded By/With/For Communities of Color: Research-Practice Partnerships**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**LETTERS OF INTENT DUE: February 13, 2023**

**PROPOSALS DUE: May 15, 2023**

ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

As a part of The Wallace Foundation’s five-year initiative intended to support arts organizations rooted in communities of color explore strategies to advance their well-being, the foundation invites researchers and/or arts organizations founded by, with, and for communities of color to propose research-practice partnerships designed to address important questions relevant to the work/research agenda of both partners. Research questions should shed light on issues related to the well-being of arts organizations of color in the socio-political context and/or arts ecosystem to which they contribute and in which they reside.

The Wallace Foundation is inviting two kinds of proposals:

1. Full RPP studies—Up to 3 years, up to \$500,000
2. RPP Planning Grants—6 months-1 year in duration, up to \$50,000

The primary purpose of this RFP is to support research studies that can address important unanswered questions related to the organizational well-being of arts organizations of color. The secondary purpose is to support early career scholars of color through the inclusion of postdoctoral appointments within disciplinary departments at partner universities or research agencies. This requirement and opportunity reflects the Wallace arts initiative’s intent to contribute to community-engaged scholarship in the arts, which has also included the support of a number of [research fellows](#) through an award to the Social Science Research Council. Full RPP proposals must include a support plan for the post-doctoral researcher. A third purpose of the RFP is, through supporting research-practice partnerships, to build the capacity of partnering organizations to develop relationships that have the potential to become long-term collaborations.

Research-practice partnerships (RPPs) are a form of collaborative research (such as participatory design research, social design research, and action research) that represents an approach to knowledge building rooted in questions that are meaningful to both practitioners and researchers. There is a growing literature documenting their particular attributes, strengths, and limitations (Bevan & Penuel, 2018; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Farrell et al, 2021; Ishimaru et al., 2022). RPPs are meant to be grounded in problems of practice that are of mutual interest and importance to all partners, involve original data analysis, and supported by intentional structures and routines that build trust and collaboration (Coburn,

Penuel & Geil, 2013). Equity-centered RPPs make intentional efforts to shift traditional power dynamics between researchers and practitioners, and are explicit about issues of race, power, and positionality within and across the different partnering organizations (Diamond, 2021; Farrell et al., 2022; Tanksley & Estrada, 2022). We encourage proposers to familiarize themselves with the literature on RPPs.

This RFP is designed to support equity-centered research-practice partnerships that

- Are designed to produce insights that can be of value and use to the sector of the arts that has been founded by, with, and for communities of color
- Can advance the knowledge base about that part of the arts ecosystem
- Include and support a postdoctoral researcher, working in partnership with a more senior scholar in a relevant disciplinary field.

Full RPP proposals can range in scope from one to three years and in size up to \$500,000, with the budget aligned to the scope of activity and potential broader impact of the study. Full RPP proposals are expected to include a scholarly discussion of the gap in the knowledge base; details on how the partnership will be structured, highlighting how equity will be defined, enacted, and supported; a postdoctoral researcher mentoring plan; a discussion of how the results of the research will serve the purposes of all partners, and the field writ large; and a budget that reflects a true partnership. While any organization can submit the Full RPP proposal, we strongly encourage the research partner to take a lead role in addressing the gap in the literature as well as the research design. The overall plan and proposal should reflect active engagement of all partners in conceptualization, implementation, and ultimate use of research results.

RPP Planning grants should describe the question the RPP is being formed to address, the need for addressing it (gap in knowledge base and gap in practice), the qualifications of the proposed partners, and a plan for developing a full RPP proposal to be submitted to Wallace within one year of receiving the RPP Planning grant.

## **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. We are a national foundation, supporting work across the United States without a focus on any one community or region.

The mission of The Wallace Foundation is to foster equity and improvements in learning and enrichment for young people, and in the arts for everyone. We recognize the historical and structural inequities that philanthropy both represents and can, if care is not taken, perpetuate. We have, as a foundation, embarked on a process of deeply examining our internal and external practices, and underlying systems of beliefs, as a part of our developmental journey to more deeply center equity in all of the work that we do.

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 designing initiatives that address important unanswered policy and practice questions, commissioning researchers to document and analyze what is learned by Wallace grantees as they participate in the initiative, 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 enrich and enhance institutions beyond those we fund directly.

Our three focus areas are the arts, K-12 education leadership, and child and youth development. We conceptualize our initiatives as learning collaborations among the grantee organizations, researchers,

technical assistance providers, and Wallace staff who together explore questions with implications for practice, policy, and research. Wallace staff, with experience and expertise in program, communications, and research, work collaboratively on all aspects of the initiative. In this sense Wallace is an “engaged foundation” who seeks to learn alongside its grantees, about the issues that matter in the fields it funds, so that it can make impactful investments in the future.

## **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.
- 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 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 should be provided for all research participants.

## **3.0 THE ARTS AT WALLACE**

The Wallace Foundation has a long history of supporting arts organizations. Over the past 25 years, the Foundation has made grants totaling approximately \$335 million to more than 700 programs in the arts with an emphasis on building audiences, increasing accessibility, and strengthening community partnerships. In the 1990s and 2000s several initiatives supported arts organizations, community organizations, and artists to form partnerships and design new ways for arts organizations to engage with their communities and for communities to interface with the arts.

Over time, this work evolved to focus on strategies for audience engagement. Most recently, the 2015-2019 *Building Audiences for Sustainability* initiative focused on exploring approaches to reaching new audiences in ways that contributed to financial health. For many, this included expanding their programming and associated marketing to reach demographics (age, race, ethnicity) underrepresented in their current audiences. While summative research on this important work is not yet complete, practical lessons learned include the need to develop more nuanced understandings of target audiences and to more deeply understand the relationship between mattering and well-being.

Indeed, a study commissioned by Wallace found that financially high-performing organizations in the SMU DataArts database called out high quality programming standards, effective management practices, and a community orientation as the cornerstones of their success (Voss & Voss, 2020). In a follow-up study, interviews with organizational leaders of the highest performing arts organizations of color in the database found that these leaders emphasized the importance of a community orientation even more strongly, describing how community was built into their founding missions and was inseparable from their artistic programming standards of excellence (Voss & Voss, 2021). The Wallace Foundation’s

current \$100 million, five-year arts initiative focusing on the arts ecosystem of color (including arts organizations of color, arts service organizations and networks of color, researchers, and other community organizations invested in the arts as a mechanism for community well-being and artistic excellence) is intended to build on prior work, delving deeper into the particular contexts in which arts organizations of color and their service organizations operate and serve their communities. You can read about the initiative and the relevant research studies we have commissioned [here](#).

#### **4.0 RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIPS**

Wallace expects to fund five or more Full RPP and RPP Planning proposals. RPP planning grants will support the development of full RPP proposals, which will be eligible for funding if submitted within a year of receiving the planning grant.

Proposals may be submitted by either the research or practice partner. Submitted proposals, and accompanying budgets, should reflect a highly collaborative relationship throughout the research process, from the development of the research questions to the dissemination of findings. Proposals should describe how and why the partnership was formed and how you envision working together.

The study's rationale should include why the particular research question(s) you propose is/are important to each of the RPP partners, and to the community served by the arts organization. It should describe how the resulting research evidence will inform the partner organizations' work, benefit their members or communities, and build out the knowledge base about the wider field of arts organizations and service organizations founded by, for, and with communities of color.

The importance of answering the research question(s) for the arts partners as well as the field is the most important criteria for both Planning and Full RPP grants. The strength and detail of the research design will be an equally important proposal review criteria for the Full RPP proposals. We strongly recommend that the research partner plays a central role in developing and describing the proposal's research elements, even if the arts organization is the lead submitting organization.

Full proposals can range from one to three years in duration. Maximum budget request is \$500,000, aligned with the scope of activity and intended broader impacts. Planning proposals should be for one year or less, with budgets up to \$50,000 to cover staff time, travel, and other necessary planning costs.

#### **4.1 Deliverables**

*Planning grants* should produce, as a final deliverable, a Full RPP proposal, with a detailed research design, as described below. Planning grant teams can submit their full RPP proposal at any time within one year of receiving the planning grant.

*Full RPP Proposals* should describe the deliverables the research project will produce, the intended users of the deliverables, and how they anticipate results being used. We encourage you to include research briefs or tools or other products that are designed for non-technical users. We also require the inclusion of at least one academic publication, as a part of our overall intent to expand the literature and academic and policy discussions about the arts.

Full RPP Proposals deliverables should include, at a minimum:

- Deliverables your research will produce for the partnering arts organization and/or community
- A public facing research brief and/or report that describes results for the broader field, which Wallace will plan to post on its website and work with you to disseminate it widely. (This could be different or the same as the first deliverable for your local organization and community.)
- A paper submitted to a peer-reviewed journal

## 4.2 Research Team Eligibility and Qualifications

RPPs should at a minimum be composed of a researcher and an arts organization of color, but we welcome the involvement of multiple researchers and multiple arts organizations or networks if it enhances the study design and potential impact. Non-arts organizations can also be included as additional partners, with appropriate justification. We recognize, though, that RPPs are complex social structures and a larger number of partners can add to that complexity.

Eligible arts organization partners:

- Have been founded by, with, and for communities of color
- Have the arts as a core part of their mission, practice, and community
- Can be organizations, networks, and other types of structures meeting the goals of this RFP

Research team partners should, collectively, demonstrate the following qualifications:

- Experience working with the cultural community served by the partner arts organization
- Experience studying the arts, artists, or arts organizations relevant to the proposed study design
- 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
- History of supervising postdoctoral researchers who have gone on into academic careers
- Demonstrated experience working with diverse stakeholders on issues of equity and culture
- Excellent project management, writing, publication, and communication skills

## 5.0 COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION

All Wallace Foundation-funded initiatives have extensive collaboration, communication, and dissemination activities. Please review this section carefully so that you are aware of award expectations and can appropriately budget for these requirements.

### 5.1 Meetings, Travel, and Research Updates

Proposers should budget time and effort for the following activities:

- **Meetings**
  - A monthly one-hour virtual meeting with your Wallace Research Officer.
  - Annual cohort meeting, meant for funded research teams to share and exchange emerging insights, challenges, and ideas in the research. We will work with teams to determine timing, location, and content/design of the meeting. Please include funds to fly at least two of your research team to NYC to attend this meeting, although we will conduct it virtually if needed.
  - For Full RPP proposals, for each public research deliverable you propose, two 60-minute virtual meetings, one with Wallace staff to preview findings and one with relevant professional audiences to discuss results.
- **Travel.** You are responsible for budgeting all travel costs for your team—including meetings at Wallace, annual cohort meeting, and all data collection activities.
- **Project Updates.** Full RPP proposers should budget time for developing and submitting the following updates to Wallace:
  - A short monthly email update listing (in bullet form) research activities of the prior month, plans for the following month, and any challenges or changes that have arisen.
  - Semi-annual < 4-page analytic memos describing emerging findings.

## 5.2 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. In 2021, research reports on arts organizations were downloaded nearly 37,000 times from the Foundation's website.

In Section 4.1 above we describe a minimum of three deliverables for Full RPP proposals. This section specifically addresses the second deliverable we describe—your public-facing report.

Public-Facing Dissemination Materials. Generating and disseminating knowledge that can benefit the field more broadly is a crucial aspect of the Foundation's philanthropic strategy. Public-facing dissemination materials (e.g. reports, research briefs, infographics, toolkits, videos, podcasts, etc.) commissioned as part of the project described in this RFP will serve as the core of the Foundation's communications about this aspect of the arts initiative. Wallace expects that your publication's contents will not only be rigorously researched but also written or presented in an accessible tone and manner appropriate to a target audience of practitioners, policymakers, funders, and other non-academics interested in the arts. We also request that you maintain the confidentiality and privacy of individuals and organizations participating in the research, as agreed upon between you and the research participants.

Wallace anticipates that grantees may produce multiple types of dissemination materials, certain of which may be more appropriate for specific audiences, and does not expect or commit to posting all of these materials on its website. However, we ask that each study produces one public-facing report that details questions, methods, and findings for the relevant arts practitioner community. To ensure that reports reach the widest possible audience, we ask you to build in budget and time to submit the report to Wallace's established editorial review process. Wallace editorial review criteria relate to clarity, claims being supported by evidence, organization of argument, and non-partisanship. This approximately twelve-week editorial review process will produce, for your consideration, comments and suggestions aligned to the four criteria. We also request that you include time and budget for working with a Wallace writer to produce a two-page derivative research brief for the report.

Our editorial review seeks to support rather than replace authors' own editorial review and quality control. As a result, we assume that drafts of publications will be fact-checked, copy-edited, and proofread prior to submission to Wallace. Crucially, we ask that teams budget editorial and graphics time to prepare drafts for non-academic audiences. We expect authors to factor in the related costs when they make their publication plans. We invite any questions from applicants about our editorial review.

Academic Papers. While not subject to Wallace review, Wallace asks that the research team maintain the same confidentiality and privacy of individuals and organizations as that required for the public-facing reports, as described above. Further, Wallace requests that researchers share drafts with their partner arts organizations and others, as appropriate. We also ask that you allow Wallace to conduct a courtesy review, checking only for any misstatements about the Wallace initiative and strategy. Please include, as a budget item, (a) costs for making publications open access and (b) time to review and approve a two-page brief that Wallace will develop summarizing your academic paper.

## 6.0 LETTERS OF INTENT AND SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

You are strongly encouraged, but not required, to submit a letter of intent to submit a proposal to the foundation.

### 6.1 Letter of Intent to Submit

Letters of intent are due to us on or before February 13, 2023. Your letter, which should be in the body of the email, and not as an attachment, should include:

- The names, organizations, and emails of any persons to whom you would like us to send future

information related to this RFP

- A one paragraph description of your proposed or existing partnership and why it was formed. Who is part of it? What is your shared area of interest? What is its history and, for existing RPPs or Full proposals, how is it structured? For either call (Planning or Full), we welcome applications from both existing and new RPPs.
- Any questions you have about the RFP that we can answer in writing
- Any aspects of your planned study on which you would like early feedback from Wallace

We will respond to your letters of intent within one month, sending you dates/times for optional office hours to discuss your study ideas, raising questions that we think might come up in proposal review, and sharing clarifications about the RFP that have arisen from questions submitted to us in the letters of intent. Letters of intent should be emailed to [artsresearch@wallacefoundation.org](mailto:artsresearch@wallacefoundation.org).

## **6.2 Proposals**

Proposals are due to us on or before May 15, 2023. In no more than 15 pages, single-spaced, 11 pt font, please describe:

### **RPP Planning Proposal**

1. The question you would like to address together. To the extent possible, please reference the existing research literature, demonstrating that the question is not already well addressed by research. How is this question important to each of the RPP partners? What are the implications of answering such a question for the larger field?
2. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks you currently work with in your research, and that you might expect to draw upon in the design, conduct, and analysis of your study.
3. Your partnership (whether new or existing): What led you to seek to work with one another? What structures have you created/will you create to intentionally develop relationships, center equity, and develop a full proposal?
4. Your planning process: What activities will you undertake to develop a full RPP proposal? What problems or questions will you address? Why, how, where, when will you address them?
5. Qualifications of key members of the project team. What experiences and qualifications prepare your team and organizations to consider co-designing this study? Describe who will lead or participate in the proposed activities and their roles in the project.
6. References—References do not count toward the page limit.

### **Full RPP Study Proposal**

1. The need your 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? How is this question important to each of the RPP partners? What are the implications for the larger field?
2. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks you will draw upon in the design, conduct, and analysis of your study.

3. The history and structure of your RPP. What led you to seek to work with one another? How will you structure the project to intentionally develop relationships, center equity, and create mechanisms for mutually engaging with data and meaning-making?
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
  - Pandemic-related contingency plans, for data collection or any other element of the research, if relevant

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

5. Research deliverables, including intended audience, intended use, and dissemination strategies.
6. Qualifications of key members of the project team. What experiences and qualifications prepare your team and organizations to lead this study? Describe who will lead or participate in the proposed activities and their roles in the project. We request that you form a technical working group (TWG) of three or more research methodologists who would serve as research advisors with whom you would meet at least once annually. Please describe the areas of expertise you would seek to have represented on such a TWG, which we will ask you to assemble if awarded.
7. References—References do not count toward the page limit.

### **Proposal Attachments (For Both Planning and Full Proposals)**

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

1. A detailed line-item budget in Excel format. Include full budgets for any subcontracts. Please budget for a technical working group (TWG) of 3 or more research methodologists. 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 include a rationale for honoraria or consulting fees in ways that address equity concerns.
3. A table listing all senior staff, across all organizations represented in your team, with FTE dedicated to the project and their role or part in the study.
4. Resumes of senior staff or consultants named in your budget.
5. Letters of support from any partners named in your proposal.
6. Two examples of prior publications produced by key members of your team that are relevant, in some way, to your proposed project.
7. A project timeline.
8. Full Proposals only: A <2-page postdoctoral researcher mentoring plan describing the position profile, your recruitment strategy, their role in the project, and professional development and support they will receive to advance their career.

With the exception of the Excel budget, all of the attachments can be submitted as PDF(s). In fairness to others, we will not review any materials not listed above. Proposals should be mailed to [artsresearch@wallacefoundation.org](mailto:artsresearch@wallacefoundation.org)

### 6.3 Proposal Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

#### RPP Planning Proposals

- The demonstrated need for the study, both to advance the work of the arts organization and to address important gaps in the knowledge base.
- The strength and detail of the proposed planning process and its ability to produce a strong RPP research proposal
- Qualifications of the RPP team to design and conduct the study.
- Depth of conceptualization and integration of equity into proposed planning period
- Budget, including the active involvement of the community development organization in all phases of the planning period.

#### Full RPP Study Proposals

- The demonstrated need for the study, both to advance the work of the arts organization and to address important gaps in the knowledge base.
- The strength and detail of the research design and its ability to answer the research questions.
- Qualifications of the RPP team to design and conduct the study.
- Quality of the partnership, including depth of engagement of the community development 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, including the active involvement of the community development organization in all phases of the study.

### 6.3 RFP Timeline

The expected timeline, which is subject to change, is as follows:

Letters of Intent Due	February 13, 2023
Optional Office Hours	February-March 2023
FAQ Sent	March 2023
Proposals Due	May 15, 2023
Proposal Decisions	September 2023
Project Start Date	September 2023-Jan 2024

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

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