Field Studies by Arts Service Organizations Rooted in Communities of Color

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

LETTERS OF INTENT DUE: June 9, 2022
PROPOSALS DUE: August 19, 2022
ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Across the nation there are thousands of arts organizations that were founded by, for, and with communities of color. These organizations span the visual, performing, media, and literary arts and include arts education organizations, community-based organizations, and numerous supporting organizations. Although there is more variation than likeness across these organizations—involving a range of factors including artistic focus, community served, location, purpose, organizational culture, and mission— research suggests that many have, in their founding missions and continuing practices, and at the core of their organizational strategy, a deep and intertwined commitment to excellence in artistic practice and production along with a strong community orientation (Hally & Valdez, 2000; Voss & Voss, 2021). "Community orientation" has been described, across the literature, as preserving or presenting the artforms of a particular racial, ethnic, or tribal group, supporting artists from the focus community/ies, developing the cultural workforce of that community, and advocating for the community within broader socio-political contexts, among other activities.

Arts service organizations rooted in communities of color play essential roles in the arts ecosystem as they connect, resource, advocate on behalf of, strategize with, and otherwise support arts organizations of color.[1] They represent and advocate for their communities' cultural workers, organizations, artistic disciplines, and practices in broader national arts and culture conversations and the critical contributions of arts organizations of color to the field. These organizations also play central roles in documenting the scope, scale, focus, and contributions of their member or affiliated organizations (Bowles, 1993; Matlon et al., 2014; cf Driver, 2020).

As a part of The Wallace Foundation's five-year initiative intended to support arts organizations rooted in communities of color as they explore strategies for achieving organizational resilience (ability to adapt and thrive) while retaining their relevance (mattering to their communities), The Wallace Foundation invites arts service organizations serving and prioritizing such arts organizations to propose research projects that answer important questions related to the arts communities they serve. As used here, we define arts service organizations serving these communities *as organizations, networks, collectives or associations that were founded by and for arts and culture communities of color, and which play a role in advancing the interests and practices of those constituencies.*

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[1] For the purposes of this open call, the term 'arts organizations of color' describes organizations that were founded by and for communities of color. The Wallace Foundation recognizes that no one umbrella term can accurately represent the plurality and diversity of arts organizations that serve communities of color, including Black, Indigenous, Middle Eastern and Arab American, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

Proposed studies should address key issues of importance to the work of the arts service organization while also providing important learnings about the field of arts organizations founded by, with, and for communities of color. The Foundation invites arts service organizations to submit a proposal for one of two types of studies:

1. A research planning and implementation grant, which includes a planning period to work with a research partner followed by the subsequent execution of a research project (up to $250,000).
2. A research expansion grant, which proposes to scale up or refine an existing robust research design and implement an expanded research project (up to $500,000).

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 without a focus on any one community or region.

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 help institutions, beyond those we fund directly, enrich and enhance their work.

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.

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. 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 relevance and resilience.

Indeed, a study commissioned by Wallace last year 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 initiative focusing on arts organizations and arts service organizations of color is intended to build on prior work, delving deeper into the particular contexts in which arts organizations and their service organizations operate and serve their communities.

4.0 FIELD STUDIES BY ART SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS ROOTED IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

In this request for proposals, Wallace expects to fund up to nine 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. We anticipate funding up to two expansion grants and seven planning/implementation grants.

Arts service organizations serving and prioritizing arts organizations of color (ASO) are asked to partner with a researcher selected for their expertise in subject matter and methods relevant to the questions the ASOs seek to answer (see 6.1 Research Team Eligibility and Qualifications below for criteria Wallace will use in reviewing research partners). Proposals must be submitted by the arts service organization with the research partner listed as a subaward or consultant. Submitted proposals should reflect a highly collaborative relationship between the ASO 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.

In Winter 2023, 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 who are meant to serve as a resource to each team, and who will provide a technical review of, and methods advice for, each research design. 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. The methods advisors will be selected by Wallace, as advised by a panel of arts service organizations collaborating with Wallace on other aspects of the initiative.

4.1 Study Purpose

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

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 communities of color
- Histories and strategies of arts service organizations rooted in communities of color, and their role in the arts ecosystem
- 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 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 education, community development, and public health

The study's purpose should include the kinds of data collection that are important to the arts service organization and why, and how the resulting research evidence will inform their own 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. Proposals should be explicit about how the planned research will inform each of these intended purposes.

4.2 Proposal Types
Proposals should, <u>in the first sentence of the narrative</u>, describe whether they are for research planning and implementation or research expansion grants.

4.2.1 Research planning and implementation grants
The Foundation will award research planning and implementation grants of up to $250,000 to arts service organizations rooted in communities of color to work with a research partner to develop a research plan and conduct a research project involving data collection, analysis, and reporting. These proposals should include a description of the issues and related research questions the service organization would like to study, a plan for working with the research partner to develop a detailed research plan, and key activities that are expected to be undertaken as part of implementation of study research. Proposed projects may employ qualitative and/or quantitative research methods, with a wide variety of study types acceptable based on the study context, identified organizational and field knowledge gap and need, and questions posed. Section 6.2 below lists all required elements for this type of research grant.

The Foundation understands that planned activities related to implementation of the research project may change during the planning period. Built into the grant timeline is a six-month period for awarded research teams to refine research questions and to develop the research plan. Organizations that are awarded these grants will also receive advice from research methods advisors and ASO mentors on research design.

4.2.2 Research expansion grants
The Foundation will award research expansion grants of up to $500,000 to arts service organizations and their research partner to expand existing research projects that they have conducted to include new or more participants, to delve deeper into a topic, and/or to involve new components. These proposals should include a detailed research plan, along with the rationale for the study and its expansion in terms of scale, depth or additional components, how results will be used, and how they will be disseminated. Section 6.2 below lists all required elements for this type of research grant.

4.3 Deliverables
Grant proposals should describe the deliverables their research projects are intended to produce for the ASO and for the field. Research expansion grants should further indicate the anticipated timeline for these deliverables 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.

4.4 Research and Equity
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 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.

5.0 COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION, DISSEMINATION

All Wallace Foundation-funded initiatives have extensive collaboration, communication, and dissemination activities. **Please review 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.**

5.1 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 knowledge on 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 and mentors. While the content and frequency of learning opportunities will be refined with feedback from funded teams, we anticipate at minimum the following:

- An initial kick-off meeting of funded teams to share project hopes, goals, and plans, and to support community-building within the cohort
- At least two meetings per year between cohort members to exchange organizational and research updates
- At least one virtual meeting per year with research methods advisors, ASO mentors, and/or other individuals identified by cohort members to provide grantees with research guidance and support
- A final closing meeting for teams to present findings and reflect on project and grantee experiences
- Additional annual opportunities for cohort learning and research dissemination, in-person or virtually, in conjunction with convenings and other field building opportunities organized by arts service organizations of color partnering with The Wallace Foundation.

5.2 Meetings, Travel, and Research Updates

Proposers should budget time and effort for the following activities:

- **Virtual Meetings**. For your budgeting purposes we anticipate that meetings could include as many as the following:
  - A quarterly 90-minute learning community meeting with other initiative grantees
  - A quarterly 60-minute meeting with the Wallace team of program, communications, and research staff
  - An annual 90-minute meeting with research methods advisors, ASO mentors, and/or other individuals identified by cohort members to provide grantees with research guidance and support
  - 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, initiative-wide learning communities, researcher specific learning community meetings, and all data collection activities. Please assume in your budget that travel to meetings and convenings, as well as to study sites, as necessary, will resume in spring 2023. This assumption is subject to change following federal and state public health guidelines.
  - Budget travel costs to send a team of one to three individuals to attend up to two initiative-wide learning communities each year
  - Budget travel costs to send a team of one to three individuals to attend one ASO Field Study-specific learning community meeting each year
  - Budget travel costs for site visits/data collection as relevant to your plan
- **Written Project Updates.** Proposers should budget time each year for developing and submitting the following updates for Wallace Foundation internal purposes:

- o 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
- o Following initial research planning periods (as applicable), semi-annual analytic memos describing emerging findings or questions (no more than two pages)

5.3 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. In 2020, research reports on arts organizations were downloaded nearly 46,000 times from the Foundation's website.

<u>Public-Facing Dissemination Materials</u>. Public-facing dissemination materials (e.g. reports, research briefs, infographics, toolkits, videos, podcasts, etc.) commissioned as part of the projects described in the RFP will serve as the core of the Foundation's communications about this aspect of the initiative. Generating and disseminating knowledge that can benefit the field more broadly is a crucial aspect of the Foundation's philanthropic strategy. Wallace therefore expects that the publication contents will not only be rigorously researched but also written or presented in an accessible tone and manner appropriate to our target audience of practitioners, policymakers, funders, and other non-academics interested in the arts.

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 practitioner (organizational leaders) audiences. 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.

<u>Academic Papers</u>. *If relevant,* Wallace asks that proposals include related budgeted time for teams to develop academic papers resulting from research efforts. The Foundation does not expect to have any involvement in that part of the research team's work, though it requires that the team maintain the same confidentiality and privacy of individuals and organizations involved in the initiative as that required for the public-facing reports, as described above. Further, Wallace expects researchers will share drafts with their partner arts organizations and others, as appropriate. Please include, as a budget item, costs for making publications open access.

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO SUBMIT AND SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

If you intend to submit a proposal, **we ask that you email us a statement of intent on or before June 9, 2022.** 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 (no attachments) to ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org declaring your intention to submit. Your email should further 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 (planning and implementation or expansion) you intend to apply for; and (iii) any questions you have about the RFP or initiative. You are welcome to share ideas about what you plan to propose if you would like preliminary feedback from Wallace.

Please note that submitting such a statement 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 June 9, 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.

6.1 Research Team Eligibility and Qualifications

Arts service organizations responding to this request for proposals should demonstrate in their proposal, through mission, organizational leadership, and communities served, an organizational commitment to arts communities of color.

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 with diverse stakeholders on issues of equity and culture
- Experience working with arts organization directors and leaders
- Excellent project management, writing, publication, and communication skills

6.2 Proposal Requirements, Selection Criteria, and Review Timeline

Research Planning and Implementation Grants ($250,000 for up to 2 years)
In no more than 7 pages, single spaced, 11 pt font, please provide:

1. An introduction to your organization, its mission, purpose, and stakeholders.
2. A description of the issue(s) and related question(s) you would like to study. Why is this question important to your organization? How will it be used to advance the needs of the communities you serve? How might addressing this question advance the larger arts and culture field? What is already known about this topic, and how will what you would be learning through your proposed project build on this existing knowledge?
3. How you plan to work with your research partner to refine your question(s) and develop a detailed research plan. In this section, please describe key activities that you expect to undertake as part of your research planning process, which may include conducting background research or piloting data collection to inform the design and approach of a detailed research plan.
4. The general research approach you are interested in pursuing in the research study. In this section, please describe key activities that you expect to undertake as part of implementation of the study, including anticipated or potential forms of data collection (for example, survey, focus groups, interviews), and any initial hopes and plans for data analysis, data use, and dissemination along with pandemic-related contingency plans, if relevant.
5. Qualifications of key members of the project team. What experiences and qualifications prepare your team and the organizations leading the project to engage in this project? Describe who will lead or participate in the proposed activities and their roles in the project. Use this section to describe your research partner's qualifications for undertaking the proposed research.

6. To the extent not answered above, your organization's prior experience, if any, in conducting or commissioning research. How have you used prior research, and what lessons have you learned that you would now hope to leverage or avoid?

Research Expansion Grants ($500,000 for up to 2 years)
In no more than 10 pages, single spaced, 11 pt font, please provide:

1. An introduction to your organization, its mission, purpose, and stakeholders. How do you typically use data or research-based evidence in your work?
2. A description of your existing study, what has been learned from it, and how you would propose to expand it. How have you used the study to date, and what do you propose to do to expand it, and why? Why is it important to your organization? How will it be used to advance the needs of the communities you serve? How might expanding the study advance the larger arts and culture field?
3. How the proposed study will complement, supplement, or deepen existing information or data, besides your own existing study that you propose to expand, that is available to the field in prior reports or studies.
4. How you plan to work with your research partner to expand and implement your proposed study.
5. A detailed research plan including:
    ● Data sources
    ● Data collection methods
    ● Data analysis plans
    ● Pandemic-related contingency plans, for data collection or any other element of the research, if relevant
5. Project deliverables and timeline.
6. Qualifications of key members of the project team. What experiences and qualifications prepare your team and the organizations leading the project to engage in this project? Describe who will lead or participate in the proposed activities and their roles in the project.

For both grants, please attach reference citations, as applicable, to your narrative. References do not count towards the page limit.

Proposal Attachments*
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. Proposed budgets should demonstrate the use of funds for the research activities, including the time needed to develop, implement, analyze, and disseminate findings. Wallace allows a 15% indirect rate on all direct costs.
2. A Word document budget justification briefly explaining each budget line in the Excel document. Please be sure to attend to rationale for honoraria or consulting fees in ways that address equity concerns.
3. A list of deliverables, including intended audience, when it will be completed, and purpose.
4. A table listing all senior staff, across all organizations represented in your team, with FTE and, if relevant, their role or part in the project. Please note that it is important to the Foundation that the proposed principal investigator(s) has/have sufficient time dedicated to the project.
5. CVs of senior staff or consultants named in your budget.
6. A project timeline.

With the exception of the Excel budget, all of the items can 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 August 19, 2022. Please send to ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org.

*For Research Planning and Implementation Grants, please budget up to the maximum award amount of $250,000. We recognize that budgets and timelines for these grants may need to be adjusted following development of a detailed research plan.

6.3 Proposal Selection Criteria
Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:
- The study's ability to advance understandings on arts organizations of color, arts service organizations of color, the contexts in which they operate, and how these learnings will enrich the evidence base and provide actionable guidance to you and/or the field
- Quality of the research design in its ability to answer the research questions. For proposals where the research design has not yet been developed, the quality of the process that will be used to develop the design, and the proposed methods and methodological experience of the research partner.
- Qualifications of the project team, including both the arts service organization and research partner(s)
- Quality of the 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

6.4 Review Timeline
We anticipate funding a first round of field studies by fall of 2022. The 2022 RFP timeline is as follows:
- May 12: Request for Proposals opens
- May 25: Informational webinar at 2pm ET / 11am PT ***Zoom dial-in information coming shortly***
- June 9: Letters of Intent due
- June 15: Office Hours with Wallace Research team
- August 19: Proposals due
- August-November: Proposals reviewed
- Mid-November: Grantee notification of awards

Please note that this timeline is subject to change.

Questions about this RFP can be sent to ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org