



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

**Participatory Action Research Study:
Evaluating the Impact of Creatives Rebuild New York's
Artist Employment Program
on Artists and Organizations**

**PROPOSALS DUE:
May 19, 2023 at 5:00 PM Eastern**

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1 | Overview

Summary of opportunity

Through this open-call solicitation, Creatives Rebuild New York (CRNY) seeks to identify a research partner to lead a participatory action research study evaluating the impact of the Artist Employment Program (AEP) on participating artists and organizations. Research institutions or teams that are led by BIPOC individuals and/or based in New York State will be prioritized in the review process.

Please note that this is one of two solicitations for research related to CRNY's Artist Employment Program. View the other opportunity [here](#).

Budget

The maximum budget available for this research study is \$700,000, including research fees, subcontractors and partners, IRB approvals, data collection, travel, compensation for participating artists and organizations, production of deliverables, and all other costs associated with carrying out the participatory action research study.

Timeline at a glance

Interested firms or consultants must apply by 5:00 PM Eastern on Friday, May 19, 2023. Finalists selected for interviews will be notified by Wednesday, June 7, 2023 and expected to attend an interview on Monday, June 12 or Tuesday, June 13 between 1:00-4:00 PM Eastern. CRNY will notify all respondents of our selection no later than 5:00 PM Eastern on Friday, June 16, 2023.

2 | About Creatives Rebuild New York

Introduction

CRNY is a three-year, \$125 million investment in the financial stability of New York State artists and the organizations that employ them. Through our Guaranteed Income for Artists and Artist Employment Programs, CRNY supports 2,700 artists whose primary residence is in New York State.

CRNY was officially announced in Spring 2021 amidst a national movement of broad-based employment programs that put artists back to work following the global COVID19 pandemic. Our two funding programs were designed to alleviate unemployment of artists, continue the creative work of artists in partnership with organizations and their communities, and enable artists to continue working and living in New York State under less financial strain.

Looking beyond the context of emergency relief, CRNY believes that artists are workers who deserve equitable, sustainable support structures, and that improving the lives of artists is paramount to the vitality of New York State's collective social and economic wellbeing. As a time-

bound initiative, CRNY is conducting a range of research, advocacy, and narrative change efforts designed with an eye towards replicability and integration of learnings into policy and practice at the local, state, and national levels. **Understanding the impacts of the Artist Employment Program on participating artists and organizations is central to supporting the lives and livelihoods of individual artists long after CRNY's programs have ended.**

Fiscally sponsored by Tides Center, CRNY's funding is anchored by \$115M from the Mellon Foundation and \$5M each from the Ford Foundation and Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF). Learn more at creativesrebuildny.org.

About the Artist Employment Program

CRNY's Artist Employment Program (AEP) is a 2-year program that funds employment for 300 artists working in collaboration with 115 community-based organizations, municipalities, and tribal governments across New York State. Participating artists receive a salary of \$65,000 per year (commensurate with median household income in New York State) plus benefits and dedicated time to focus on their artistic practice. Community-based organizations receive \$25,000-\$100,000 per year to support their collaborations with these artists.

Learn more about the artists and organizations selected to participate in AEP by visiting creativesrebuildny.org/participants/artist-employment-program/.

Review the archived AEP program guidelines—including context and vision, eligibility, selection criteria, and application questions—at creativesrebuildny.org/apply/artist-employment/ or in [Appendix A](#).

Of the 300 artists selected for the program, 163 sought to work in collaboration with grassroots organizations that did not have the capacity to hire the artists through their existing Human Resources infrastructure. To meet this need, CRNY partnered with Tribeworks—a cooperative, worker-owned payments and employment platform built to support creatives and the organizations who rely on them. Learn more about CRNY's partnership with Tribeworks at <https://www.creativesrebuildny.org/2023/03/29/collective-care/>.

CRNY's Values and Commitment to Equitable Evaluation

CRNY is committed to confronting racial and wealth inequities and to developing effective strategies that move the New York State arts and culture ecosystem toward an equitable future. Both the Guaranteed Income for Artists and Artist Employment programs were designed to reach artists deeply rooted in and reflective of populations that face structural barriers to financial security, with specific attention to addressing the pandemic's startling and disparate impact on artists who come from, and serve, communities of color.

CRNY's ethical framework prioritizes:

- transformative, caring support for artists;
- trust in and respect for program participants;
- worker solidarity and labor acknowledgement;
- reparative, equitable access to funds and opportunities; and

- an invitation to challenge and reimagine existing systems and institutions.

Applying this framework to our impact and narrative change work, CRNY believes in advancing equitable evaluation practices and artist-centered storytelling. We are committed to research that centers equity in its processes and methods—prioritizing the perspectives and knowledge of program participants and ensuring that they are the ones best positioned to use or benefit from the findings. As articulated by the [Equitable Evaluation Initiative](#), we “embrace new concepts of objectivity, rigor, validity, and complexity” and commit not only to compensation of research participants but also care, trust, and respect for the beliefs, ideas, and expertise they bring to our learning processes.

3 | Timeline

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Monday, April 24, 2023 | RFP released |
| Thursday, May 4, 2023 | Information Session with CRNY |
| Friday, May 19, 2023 | Deadline to submit proposals |
| Wednesday, June 7, 2023 | 2-3 finalists notified |
| June 12 and 13, 2023 | Finalist interviews |
| Friday, June 16, 2023 | Final selection/notification |
| June 19-June 30, 2023 | Finalize contract |
| Monday, July 3, 2023 | Work to begin |
| Wednesday, July 30, 2024 | CRNY initiative ends |

4 | Scope of Services

Research purpose and priorities

The purpose of this research is to advance insights and understanding of the impacts of the Artist Employment Program (AEP) on artists and on the community-based organizations that employ them. The impact of AEP collaborations on the communities they serve is of central importance to CRNY, but is *not* expected to be assessed within the scope of this research study.

CRNY is specifically seeking a mixed methods, [participatory action approach](#) to this evaluation so that the research questions are relevant to the community of artists, organizations, and other stakeholders across New York State invested in sustaining employment opportunities for artists in the future.

As a starting point, however, CRNY has formulated the following research questions in line with our overall mission and theory of change:

1. Impact on Artists
 - a. Did artists' creative practice change as a result of being employed through AEP? How?
 - b. How did artists' lives change as a result of being employed through AEP?
 - c. How has the artist's relationship to organizations evolved?
2. Impact on Organizations
 - a. How did the organization's relationship to its community change as a result of employing artist(s)?
 - b. How did the organization's operations, culture, and/or capacity to reach its mission change as a result of employing artist(s)?
 - c. How has the organization's relationship to artists evolved?

We seek a research design and plan that evolves these questions in deep collaboration with participating artists and organizations, and builds upon them with additional outcomes of interest to the arts and cultural field at large. CRNY aspires for this research to advance the knowledge base about the contexts and conditions that support or inhibit artist employment.

Baseline data

CRNY launched the *Portrait of New York State Artists* survey in March 2022 to build a portrait of the needs, circumstances, and experiences of artists across New York State. Upon submission of an application to the Artist Employment Program, artists were invited to answer additional questions, all optional, about their artistic practice, financial circumstances, well-being, pandemic experience, and attitudes about policy and advocacy matters.

46 of the 300 selected AEP artists completed the survey. These responses have the potential to serve as baseline data for those artists, as well as a framework for inquiry and discussion with the remaining artists in the program. See [Appendix D](#) for the full set of "Portrait of New York State Artists" survey questions.

Employment began in July 2022 and will end in June 2024. AEP co-directors have been conducting and documenting check-in calls with all collaborations every six months. CRNY and its program partners, including Tribeworks and other consultants brought on to support the collaborations, have also been tracking progress, changes, and challenges throughout the first year.

Deliverables

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 think creatively about research briefs, tools, or collective actions that are either public-facing and/or designed explicitly for use by participating artists, organization staff, or other advocates for artist employment. At minimum, CRNY will require a report that summarizes

the questions, methods, and findings for the purpose of documentation and distribution to our philanthropic and government partners.

Depending on the timeline and availability of public-facing deliverables prior to CRNY's close, CRNY will work with you to disseminate them widely through the CRNY website and/or through strategic partners.

Budget

The maximum budget available for this research grant is \$700,000, including research fees, subcontractors and partners, IRB approvals, data collection, travel, compensation for participating artists and organizations, production of deliverables, and all other costs associated with carrying out the participatory action research study.

CRNY allows a 12% indirect cost rate on all direct costs.

As you prepare your budget, please allocate time for the following:

1. Onboarding and ongoing coordination meetings with the Director of Strategic Impact and Narrative Change and with the Artist Employment Program Co-Directors;
2. At least one 90-minute meeting with other CRNY funded research teams to coordinate data collection plans and compensation to participating artists and organizations; and
3. Monthly email updates listing (in bullet form) research activities of the prior month, plans for the following month, any challenges or changes that have arisen, and any emerging findings or analysis.

5 | Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Strength and detail of the research design
2. Quality, depth, and creativity of plan to engage participating artists and organizations throughout the research process (including appropriate compensation)
3. Degree to which equitable evaluation practices are integrated into proposed research design and activities
4. Relevance, use, and creativity of the proposed research deliverables for their intended audiences
5. Qualifications of the project team:
 - a. Experience collaborating with artists, arts organizations, or community based organizations relevant to the Artist Employment Program
 - b. Research, analytical, and facilitation skills appropriate to the project and proposed research designs
 - c. Demonstrated experience working with diverse stakeholders on issues of equity and culture

- d. History of producing deliverables and/or other dissemination material relevant to the research design and focus
- e. Excellent project management, writing, publication, and communication skills

Additional preference will be given to:

4. Project teams or institutions led by BIPOC individuals
5. Project teams or institutions based in New York State

6 | Submission Requirements

Format and Delivery

All proposals must be submitted electronically. Proposals should be no longer than 12 pages total, and no larger than 10 MB in size.

The proposal must be received by 5:00 PM Eastern on Friday, May 19, 2023, and addressed to Jamie Hand, Director of Strategic Impact and Narrative Change, Creatives Rebuild New York, at jamie@creativesrebuildny.org.

Please include the Subject Line: “Response to AEP Participatory Action Research RFP”

Content

Please submit a narrative proposal, no longer than 12 pages in length, that includes the following:

1. **Contact Information:** Clearly note the submitting individual’s or organization’s name, address, primary contact person, phone number.
2. **Experience:** Provide a summary of the research team’s experience with participatory action research or other methods relevant to this scope of work. Include examples of prior publications or studies produced by key members of your team that are relevant to your proposed project.
3. **Key Personnel:** Briefly describe the experiences and/or credentials of each of the individual(s) who will perform the work, including their role and responsibilities on the project team, their capabilities, and their qualifications. Please do not include full CV’s as separate attachments.
4. **Research Plan and Rationale:** Describe the proposed participatory research methodology, data collection sources and methods, and plans for analysis. Include any theoretical or conceptual frameworks you will draw upon in the design, implementation, and analysis of your study, as well as any research hypotheses or questions your team will bring to the research design. Discuss how your study will contribute to the existing research literature, address knowledge gaps in the arts and cultural sector, and/or meet the needs of practitioners. Be explicit about how the above-mentioned criteria will be met and the deliverables accomplished.

5. **Deliverables:** Clearly describe proposed research deliverables, including intended audience, use, and dissemination strategies.
6. **Timeline:** Provide a timeline for your proposed research plan, including key milestones, benchmarks, and anticipated periods of engagement with program participants and CRNY staff.
7. **Budget:** In a separate Excel document, please provide a budget reflecting the total fee for meeting all requirements and providing all deliverables:
 - a. Distinguish between personnel, subcontractors, data collection, travel, and other direct costs, and provide in-line budget notes explaining each line item.
 - b. Clearly identify how much funding will be allocated to compensate artists and organizations for their participation in the research. CRNY expects to see them compensated in accordance with the proposed level of their involvement in the study.
 - c. CRNY allows a 12% indirect rate on all direct costs.
 - d. Include a proposed payment schedule.
8. **References:** Provide up to three references who can speak to your expertise and/or working style.

7 | Proposal Review

Proposals will be reviewed by CRNY senior staff and select external advisors according to the criteria outlined above, as well as for quality of contents and responsiveness to the RFP.

Up to three finalists will be interviewed by video conference on Monday, June 12 and Tuesday, June 13 between 12:00 and 3:00 PM Eastern. Please hold time on these dates until further notice. The expectation is that all individuals who will be performing the services and conducting the research will be present for the interview.

The selected research consultant and all RFP respondents will be notified of CRNY's decision no later than 5:00 PM Eastern on Friday, June 16.

8 | RFP Terms

The terms of this solicitation are as follows:

1. CRNY will not reimburse respondents for the cost of developing or presenting a proposal in response to this RFP.
2. CRNY's solicitation of proposals does not obligate CRNY to select any respondent.
3. The successful firm or consultant will be an independent contractor to CRNY and no employer-employee relationship shall be created. Accordingly, the successful bidder will be responsible for his or her own insurance, benefits, materials, office and supplies.
4. The proposal must remain open and valid for at least 60 days from the date of the submission.

5. CRNY reserves the right to:
 - a. Reject any or all proposals submitted for any or no reason in its sole and absolute discretion; to waive informalities and irregularities in the proposals received; to terminate this RFP, and reissue a subsequent solicitation; and/or to remedy technical errors in the RFP process in its sole and absolute discretion.
 - b. Request additional information from any or all firms or individuals submitting proposals.
 - c. Conduct discussions with respondents for the purpose of clarification to assure full understanding of, and responsiveness to, the solicitation requirements.
 - d. Negotiate modifications to any respondent's proposal prior to final award.

9 | Questions

Questions concerning the RFP should be addressed to Jamie Hand, Director of Strategic Impact and Narrative Change, Creatives Rebuild New York, at jamie@creativesrebuildny.org with the subject line "AEP Participatory Action Research Questions."

10 | Information Session

Creatives Rebuild New York will hold an online information session for interested respondents on Thursday, May 4, 2023 from 4:00-5:30 PM Eastern. Registration is required; [click here to register for the webinar](#).

This information session will be tailored explicitly to research teams and institutions responding to this RFP. Bella Desai, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Artist Employment Program, and Jamie Hand, Director of Strategic Impact and Narrative Change, will provide an overview of the Artist Employment Program and how this study fits into CRNY's overall research agenda. We will reserve over half of our time together for Q&A; questions about the RFP may be submitted when you register.

11 | Appendices

Appendix A: [CRNY Artist Employment Program Guidelines](#)

Appendix B: [CRNY Artist Employment Program - By the Numbers](#)

Appendix C: [CRNY Artist Employment Program - Participants by Region](#)

Appendix D: [CRNY Portrait of NYS Artists - Survey Questions](#)