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Request for Research Proposals for Creative Economy Employment Study & Artist Survey

Proposal Deadline: March 31, 2016

The New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) seeks research proposals for the third installment of the Creative Economy Employment Report of the New England creative sector to be published on NEFA's website in spring 2017.

Lead funding for the project activities in this RFP is provided by the Barr Foundation. Project partners for NEFA's creative economy research and programs are the National Endowment for the Arts and the six New England state arts agencies.

For the research consultant or team, this research project includes: 1) an employment analysis of the creative sector of each New England state, 2) mapping of employment clusters by locality where possible, 3) an update to the NEFA research definition of federally categorized creative industries and occupations, 4) a New England-wide artist survey, 5) and convenings of arts researchers, New England state arts agency directors, and creative economy leaders to gather input on all of the above. NEFA research manager Dee Schneidman will manage the project, and additionally coordinate work with regional stakeholders and other consultants to make associated updates to [CreativeGround](http://CreativeGround.org), New England's online creative economy database; and to design, publish, and promote the employment study and artist survey.

Background

Since 1978, NEFA's economic impact studies of New England's nonprofit cultural sector have provided state and local arts agencies and arts organizations with case-making data to advocate for critical public and private sector support. In the mid 1990's, inclusion of Internal Revenue Service data in these studies revealed the nonprofit cultural community in New England to be a more significant economic force than anyone had yet imagined. Leaders in the region's business, government, cultural, and educational sectors took notice, and the Creative Economy Initiative was formed in 1998. This partnership brought together the commercial and nonprofit components of New England's cultural sector to define the creative economy and analyze their collective economic impact in 2000.

That landmark report, [*The Creative Economy Initiative: The Role of the Arts and Culture in New England's Economic Competitiveness*](#), was the first in the series that focused on employment as a measure of an economic sector comprised of arts/culture nonprofits, for-profit creative businesses, and creative workers (including artists) that work in various settings.

Since then, NEFA has continued to update both data and analyses of the entire creative economy and its nonprofit subset. In 2002, NEFA created CultureCount (now [CreativeGround](http://CreativeGround.org)) as a data warehouse for this information, and in 2007, the second installment in the Creative Economy Employment Series was released. [*The Creative Economy: A New Definition*](#) included a definition of the creative economy cultural enterprise and cultural worker categories from widely available U.S. federal data sources; protocol for measuring these categories; data on cultural enterprise employment in each state of New England; and data and demographics on cultural workers in each state of New England.

We now seek to produce the third installment in our Creative Economy Employment Report Series, featuring enhancements to previous reports. The goal of this project, as with all of NEFA's creative economy initiatives, is to quantify and spotlight New England's creative sector to strengthen its identity, capacity, and support.

Through this project, we seek to answer several research questions surrounding the New England creative economy:

- What is the current employment and demographic profile of the creative sector of New England, including arts/cultural nonprofits, creative businesses, and creative workers?
- How does creative sector employment compare to employment in other sectors?
- Is the creative sector growing more or less than other economic sectors?
- What specific creative occupations and industries are most growth oriented?
- What economic conditions foster or hinder creative sector growth?
- What are the areas of growth and need, by locality, industry, and occupation, for each New England state's creative sector?
- How does the presence or absence of creative sector activity relate to other community conditions?

Project Scope and Deliverables

The Study

The New England Creative Economy Employment Report - an update of NEFA's 2007 [The Creative Economy: A New Definition](#) creative sector employment report in a way that facilitates direct comparisons between data, research definitions, data sources, and methodologies.

The research consultant/team will conduct an employment analysis of the federally categorized creative industries and occupations in New England, including where creative workers are employed, which creative occupations and industries are showing recession or growth, and how creative sector employment relates to the activity of other industries and other economic indicators. This report will effectively update the NEFA research definition from 2007 and give a timely and relevant report on New England's creative sector since 2000.

The research consultant/team should:

- Update NEFA's Creative Economy research definition from the [Appendix in the 2007 report](#), according to [America's Creative Economy](#) definition (2013) and input from national and regional stakeholders
- Report employment of the creative industries and occupations included in the updated research definition of New England's creative sector
 - Industry employment for each New England state, the region, and the US
 - Percentage of total employment that is creative for each New England state, the region, and the US
 - Relative position of industry employment in each New England state compared to the US (location quotient)
 - Top 10 industries in each New England state, the region, and the US
 - Workforce employment for each New England state, the region, and the US
 - Percentage of the workforce that is creative for each New England state, the region, and the US
 - Percentage of artists for each New England state, the region, and the US
 - Top 10 occupations for each New England state, the region, and the US
 - Concentration of artist types for each New England state compared to the US (location quotient)
 - 25 industries that employ the most creative workers
 - Workforce and artist demographics and how they compare to the region, and the US
 - Age
 - Gender and Marital Status
 - Ethnic Composition
 - Citizen, Veteran, and Disability Status
 - Educational Attainment

- Weeks Worked and Unemployment
 - Type of Employer
 - Earnings and Income
- Compare employment data to those in prior reports in the Series (2007 and 2000)
 - Identify trends of growth or recession
- Track employment of creative workers in specific industries
 - Separate out employment of arts/culture nonprofits
- Track employment by employer and non-employer census data
 - Suggest additional ways to better include artists
 - Include analysis of artist survey data (see below)
- Include other economic indicators most relevant to creative industry and occupation employment. For example:
 - Population density per square mile
 - Percentage self employed
 - Population
 - Housing
 - Retail sales
 - Cost of living index
 - Transportation
 - GDP
- Map creative industry employment clusters by county, Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), or Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA), where possible
 - Compare growth relative to other localities
- Create data sheet of highlights for each New England state, in collaboration with each New England state arts agency
 - Include CreativeGround profiles as report spotlights
 - Compare scope of the creative sector to other areas of investment for each state
- Summarize strengths and challenges of the region's creative sector
- Make recommendations for the sector and for further research and investment
- Provide a clear description of the report methodology, compared to that of *The Creative Economy: A New Definition*
- List updates to the federal codes of the research definition, compared to *The Creative Economy: A New Definition*
- Make meaning of the data with narrative descriptions that give context to the analyses in basic terms
- Advise on which charts and data visualizations would best illustrate the data
- Recommend additional data sources
- Determine which local data are usable

Data Sources might include:

- US Economic Census and County Business Patterns
- US Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)
- US Census Non-employer Statistics (NES)
- Decennial US Population Census Public Use Microdata Survey and Current Population Survey
- US Commerce Department Census Public Use File
- US Census American Community Survey

Artist Survey

In order to complement the employment analysis above to include a broader and deeper data set for New England artists, an online artist survey will capture information on the circumstances and needs of artists living and working in New England including income, demographics, existing support, and areas of needs. NEFA staff is already working with Artmorpheus and other local stakeholders on an artist survey of the artists and creative entrepreneurs of Massachusetts. We would like to complete the design of this survey as part of this New England Creative Economy Employment Study and extend it to the entire New England region.

The research consultant/team should:

- Review the draft of the Massachusetts artist survey
- Consult published sources – reports and other artist surveys such as those done in Colorado (2015) and Massachusetts (2008)
- Design/edit the survey instrument to be accessible and manageable for artists, and relevant to analyze alongside other federal employment data in the study
- Establish expectations for a representative sample of responses
- Help determine incentives for robust participation
- Analyze the data collected for each state
- Include findings in the regional employment study

Report Design and Data Visualization

The user-friendliness of the New England Creative Economy Employment Report is extremely important. Graphics and data visualization should be used to convey information clearly and meaningfully; simplifying important points through visual language. The design of the report as well as all surveys and collateral should remain consistent with NEFA’s brand and demonstrate the creative skills of the sector the report describes.

The research consultant/team should:

- Include design and data visualization in your proposal only if you have related experts on your team with whom who have previously worked. This is not a requirement for this proposal and will be contracted separately if necessary.

Research Meetings

To further inform the research methodology and update the research definition for the New England Creative Economy Employment Report, NEFA will convene arts researchers and creative sector leaders for knowledge sharing and collaboration. We seek to hold the first meeting in June 2016 to capitalize on the wealth of knowledge that will be present in Boston surrounding the Americans for the Arts annual convention. NEFA and the research team will also gather input on the artist census and the report from creative economy leaders at NEFA’s New England Creative Economy Network (NECEN) meetings.

The research consultant/team should:

- Facilitate the discussion of the research definition and artist survey methodology at the June 2016 research meeting
- Present interim findings and solicit feedback at NECEN meetings in fall 2016 and winter 2017
- Present highlights of final report at the Creative Communities Exchange June 2017

Geographic Area

The geographic area covered by this research project is the New England region as a whole, the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and localities within these six states.

Desired Project Timeline

Request for Proposals Open	March 3, 2016
Proposal Deadline	March 31, 2016
Consultant Selection	April 15, 2016
Project Start Date	May 2, 2016
Arts Research Convening	June 19, 2016
Artist Census Opens	August, 2016
New England Creative Economy Network Meeting	September, 2016
New England Creative Economy Network Meeting	January, 2016
Project Completed	March 1, 2017
Presentation at Creative Communities Exchange	June 2017

Desired Skills and Expertise of Consultant Team

- Deep knowledge of the components, challenges, and opportunities of the New England creative economy sector, as related to other economic sectors

- Demonstrated experience designing and implementing research methodologies, data collection, data analysis, and comprehensive reporting on creative industries, arts/culture nonprofits, and artists
- Familiarity with NEFA's past methodology and other relevant national literature and research studies
- Capacity to create a plan to both improve prior reports in the Series and maintain continuity with a longitudinal analysis across reports
- Skill in summarizing and translating data findings clearly in writing and in person
- Expertise working with and mapping local creative sector data
- Experience building artist surveys that successfully collect a large sample of data and yield useful analysis
- Strong track record of organizing multiple stakeholders and delivering materials according to budget and timeline of contract
- Well-articulated process of keeping NEFA and other stakeholders informed of project progress on at least a monthly basis
- Demonstrated experience in suggesting effective approaches to report dissemination and end-use
- (Optional) Expertise in creating compelling online publication design, data visualization, and communications materials

Proposal Requirements

1. A one-page **cover letter** that summarizes the consultant/team's understanding of the project goals and deliverables and how your approach, experience, and relationships would successfully address them.
2. A **work plan/timeline** that defines the activities required to accomplish the deliverables described in the RFP.
 - a. Suggested study design and methodology
 - b. Suggested data sources
 - c. Timeline of all activities and milestones to project completion
 - d. Outline of roles and responsibilities of the consultant/team
 - e. Outline of final study
3. **Qualification of investigators and collaborators**
 - a. Contact information and C.V of all team members, including subcontractors
 - b. Summary of relevant experience (data analysis, survey writing, etc.)
 - c. Recent client list
 - d. Links to samples of similar past work
 - e. Contact information for three references
4. **Budget request**
 - a. Detailed project budget for all activities, fees and expenses including hourly rate

Deadline for submitting proposals (independently or as part of a group) is March 31, 2016.

Please direct questions to NEFA's research manager, Dee Schneidman, at 617-951-0010 x530, and submit complete proposals via email to research@nefa.org.

Optional Addendum Project

Localities within New England might be interested in additional geographically targeted analysis of the artist survey data in order to share findings with agencies focused on economic development and ultimately strengthen the support for creative entrepreneurs and artists. The analysis and dissemination of local findings from the artist survey may be contracted by a different party for that work separately. Please note in your proposal if you would be interested in quoting separately on this project.