



# **Field Studies by Research-Practice Partnerships Advancing Arts Organizations Founded By, For, and With Communities of Color**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**LETTERS OF INTENT DUE: January 19, 2024**

**PROPOSALS DUE: April 22, 2024**

[ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org](mailto: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 as they explore strategies to advance their well-being and that of their communities, the foundation invites researchers and/or arts organizations founded by, with, and for communities of color to propose research-practice partnerships intended to address important questions relevant to the work/research agenda of both partners. The Wallace Foundation is inviting two kinds of proposals:

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

The 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. A second purpose is to support early career scholars of color through their inclusion as part of the research teams. A third purpose is, through supporting research-practice partnerships, to support 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 that is 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; Ishimuru et al., 2022). RPPs are grounded in problems of practice that are of mutual interest and importance to all partners, involve original data analysis, and are 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 and reference the literature on RPPs as they design their studies and write their proposals.

**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 detailed research 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 is aligned to project scope and potential impact, and reflects a true partnership. While any organization can submit a Full RPP proposal, we strongly encourage the research partner to take a lead role in addressing the gap in the scholarly 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 proposals** 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; the issues/questions that must be addressed during a planning phase before it is possible to draft a full research proposal; and a process for developing a full RPP proposal/research design. The main project partners must be identified before submitting a RPP Planning grant, however, the planning period can be used to identify additional researchers and practitioners with different forms of expertise.

## **2.0 ABOUT THE WALLACE FOUNDATION**

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

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

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

### **2.1 Research and Equity**

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

- Our work foregrounds racial equity but is not limited to it. We are concerned with the marginalization of people based on any element of their identity and circumstance.
- We believe achieving equity requires constructively addressing historical, structural, and

- systemic causes of racial and other forms of inequity and why they exist.
  - Specific definitions of equity will vary from one context to another. As a funder, we are careful to avoid imposing a single definition on grantees.

Wallace is 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 RESEARCH-PRACTICE PARTNERSHIPS**

In 2024, Wallace expects to fund five or more Full RPP and RPP Planning proposals. RPP planning grants are expected to produce Full RPP proposals, which will be reviewed on a non-competitive basis if submitted within a year of receiving the planning grant. Full proposals produced by the planning grant will be subject to internal and external review, and evaluated using the same criteria described below for a Full RPP proposal.

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 overall benefit to the field is the most important review criteria, along with the strength and detail of the research planning process or design.

#### **3.1 Deliverables**

*Planning grants* should produce, as a final deliverable, a Full RPP proposal, with a detailed research design, as described in Section 5.2 for Full RPP proposals. 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, how they anticipate results being used, and a due date for each deliverable. 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 (1) a full report for your intended audience, which Wallace will use (with your review and agreement) to develop a research brief to be posted on its website and aimed at the Wallace Foundation audience, and (2) at least one academic publication, as a part of our overall intent to expand the literature and academic and policy discussions about the arts.

#### **3.2 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
- Demonstrated experience working with diverse stakeholders on issues of equity and culture
- Excellent project management, writing, publication, and communication skills
- At least one research team participant should be an early career scholar of color

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

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

##### **4.1 Research Learning Community**

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

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

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

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

- **Virtual Meetings.**
  - Two annual two-hour learning community meetings with other initiative grantees
  - Two 90-minute meetings with research methods advisors and ASO mentors to provide grantees with research guidance and support
  - Monthly 30-minute meetings with your Wallace research officer
- **Travel.** You are responsible for budgeting all travel costs for your team—including meetings at Wallace, initiative-wide learning communities, researcher specific learning community meetings, and all data collection activities.
  - Budget travel costs to send a team of one to three individuals to attend one ASO Field Study-specific learning community meeting in New York each year.

- Budget travel costs for site visits/data collection and dissemination activities as relevant to your plan.
- **Written project updates.** Proposers should budget time for developing and submitting a brief monthly email to their Research Officer that research activities of the prior month, plans for the following month, and any challenges or changes that have arisen.

### 4.3 Publications

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

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

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

## 5.0 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. We also encourage you to [schedule a 30 minute meeting](#) with us to discuss your project ideas. The goal of this discussion will be to help you draft the most competitive proposal. The window for meetings is late January and February 2024.

### 5.1 Letter of Intent to Submit

Letters of intent are due to us on or before January 19, 2024. 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 who you would like us to send future information to 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, 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).

### 5.2 Proposals

Proposals are due to us on or before April 22, 2024. In no more than 15 pages, single spaced, 11 pt font, please describe:

## **RPP Planning Proposal**

1. A brief introduction to your partnering organizations, no more than one page total.
2. 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?
3. 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.
4. Your project activities: What do you need to accomplish during the planning period that requires funding before you can write a full research design? Provide a rationale for and a timeline of planning period activities.
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 activities. What led you to seek to work with one another? What structures will you create to intentionally develop relationships, center equity, and develop a full proposal?
6. References—References do not count toward the page limit.

## **Full RPP Study Proposal**

1. A brief introduction to your partnering organizations, no more than one page total.
2. 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?
3. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks you will draw upon in the design, conduct, and analysis of your study.
4. A detailed research plan (this should be the bulk of your proposal) including:
  - Research questions
  - Research methodology
  - Research activities
    - Data collection sources and methods
    - Data analysis plans

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. 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?

7. References—References do not count toward the page limit.

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

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

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

With the exception of the Excel budget, all of the attachments 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)

### **5.3 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, should include the active involvement of the arts 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 arts organization in all phases of the study.

#### 5.4 RFP Timeline

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

Letters of Intent Due	January 19, 2024
Optional Office Hours	January-February, 2024
FAQ Sent	March 2024
Proposals Due	April 22, 2024
Proposal Decisions	September 2024
Project Start Date	As soon as November 2024

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

#### References

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- Diamond J. (2021, July 19). *Racial equity and research practice partnerships 2.0: A critical reflection*. William T. Grant Foundation. <http://wtgrantfoundation.org/racial-equity-and-research-practice-partnerships-2-0-a-critical-reflection>
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