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

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. Studies can be up to three years in duration and have budgets of up to $500,000.

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 assist 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.

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 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.

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. We do not fund internationally.

The Wallace Foundation's mission is to help all communities build a more vibrant and just future by fostering advances in the arts, education leadership, and youth development. 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 organizational developmental journey to more deeply center equity in all of the work that we do.

Wallace 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 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" seeking 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.

Our current $100+ million, five-year arts initiative, *Advancing Wellbeing in the Arts,* 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 regranting program, via networks of arts service organizations, to smaller arts 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 roughly three RPP proposals. 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 design.

3.1 Deliverables
Proposals should describe the deliverables the research project will produce, their intended users, how you 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 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. Wallace will develop, with your review and approval, a two-page research brief summarizing your full report for the Wallace audience, which may differ from your own intended audiences.

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 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.

4.1 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 two-day cohort meeting, meant for 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.
  - An annual 3-hour arts research cohort zoom meeting.

- **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.** Proposers should budget time for developing and submitting 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.

4.2 Publications
Generating and disseminating knowledge that can benefit the field more broadly is a crucial aspect of the Foundation's philanthropic strategy. Wallace undertakes extensive communications efforts to share insights from its initiatives, both on its own and with the arts service associations and issue organizations with which it partners. In 2022, research reports on arts organizations were downloaded nearly 37,000 times from the foundation's website. Proposers should budget time for the following:

- Roughly 4 hours of your time to review, comment, edit, and approve a Wallace-generated research brief summarizing your study's final report (as described in Section 3.1). The brief, which is intended for the foundation's typical users of policymakers and practitioners, will fully credit your authorship and ownership of the study, and link to your final report and other deliverables. We will only complete and post the brief with your and our mutual agreement.
- Roughly 2 days of your time for us to complete courtesy reviews of any academic papers you submit for publication. Wallace will review the papers only for accuracy, and—with your agreement—will draft a 2-page research brief summarizing published papers, for the same purposes as described above.
  - Please also budget costs for making your academic paper(s) open access, which will ensure a much greater reach of your research results.

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. After receipt of the letter we will reach out to set up an optional 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 2025.

5.1 Letter of Intent to Submit

Letters of intent are due to us on or before January 20, 2025. 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? How is it structured?
- 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 a 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.

5.2 Proposals

Proposals are due to us on or before April 21, 2025. In no more than 15 pages, single spaced, 11 pt font, please describe:

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? (roughly 2 pages)

2. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks you will draw upon in the design, conduct, and analysis of your study. (roughly 1 page)

3. A detailed research plan (this should be the bulk of your proposal, 8-10 pages) 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.

4. How your RPP will be structured to build trust and share power and decision making. (roughly 1 page)

5. Research deliverables, including intended audience, intended use, and dissemination strategies. (roughly 1-2 pages)

6. A brief description of your organizations and qualifications of key members of the project team (1-2 pages, depending on team size). 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 <u>do not count</u> toward 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, broken down by year. Include full budgets for any subcontracts. We expect to see the community development organization's staff time on the project fully budgeted, reflecting their active involvement in all phases of the study. Wallace allows a 20% indirect rate on all direct costs. Budgets should include:
    a. costs for ensuring open access to any published journal articles
    b. costs for IRB review (including an exemption decision)

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 their 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. Two examples of prior publications produced by key members of your team that are relevant to your proposed project.

6. A project timeline, including due dates for all project deliverables.

7. Letter(s) of commitment from project partner organizations or leads, not including the submitting organization. The letter should be one page and describe why the partner is interested in participating in the study.

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

5.3 Proposal Selection Criteria
Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- 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 20, 2025
Optional Office Hours	January-February, 2025
FAQ Sent	March 2025
Proposals Due	April 21, 2025
Proposal Decisions	September 2025
Project Start Date	December 2025

Questions about this RFP can be sent to <u>ArtsResearch@wallacefoundation.org</u>

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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