



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**South Arts Diversity, Equity, Inclusion,**  
**and Accessibility Assessment**

South Arts seeks proposals from qualified contractors to perform a 360-degree organizational evaluation with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The contractor will assist in defining goals and benchmarks for success that will help South Arts take meaningful steps toward reflecting the organization’s central values in all corners of operations and programming, thus facilitating equitable service to a broad region of diverse constituents.

**Background**

Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, [South Arts](#) is a nonprofit regional arts organization empowering artists, organizations, and communities and increasing access to arts and culture. Our mission: advancing Southern vitality through the arts. In partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the State Arts Agencies of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee—with additional funding from other public and private donors such as the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Mellon Foundation—South Arts supports artists and organizations through a rich and responsive portfolio of grants, fellowships, and programs. South Arts believes that the arts elevate the region, increasing connectedness and inspiring meaningful change in the process.

In the past few years, South Arts has recognized the need to strengthen commitments to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in its programming and team culture. The South Arts Equity Committee was established in 2019 with the intent of prioritizing equity values at South Arts, fostering a culture of learning for staff, and establishing systems of transparency and accountability. In 2020, South Arts began an equity orientation process that included a series of five workshops with staff and board members and the subsequent development of an equity plan for South Arts. The process has been led by the Equity Committee with the consultation of Donna Walker-Kuhne of Walker Communications Group. Walker-Kuhne was contracted to facilitate a series of workshops and advise the development of the equity plan. In the time since, South Arts staff and portfolio of programs have grown considerably, with 10 new staff positions created since the start of 2021. As a result, now is an important time to engage an outside consultant to evaluate how our core values are currently realized throughout the organization, and to help identify next steps in this ongoing work.

The following organizational goals were identified in conversations with South Arts staff:

- Embody equity values in South Arts programs, communications, operations, and board and staff culture.
- Support and engage a diverse representation of artists, organizations, and program participants.
- Provide resources and guidance for the arts field to embrace equity values.

The goals of the Equity Committee include:

- Keep South Arts’ equity plan, mission, dashboard, and resource library current and robust.
- Work with the board and staff to establish systems of accountability that ensure South Arts’ integrity regarding equity values and goals.
- Support staff in establishing evaluation systems that deeply involve diverse constituents.
- Guide ongoing staff learning.

### **South Arts Equity Statement**

South Arts envisions a future in which everyone has equitable access to the arts regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, ability, geography, religion, and thinking/communication styles. South Arts commits to centering those who have been systemically excluded from participating equally in the arts as well as acting deliberately to challenge oppressive and exploitative systems in the South and the arts field. Only by creating a more equitable arts landscape can we meet South Arts' mission of advancing Southern vitality through the arts.

### **Scope of Work**

South Arts seeks a contractor to perform a 360-degree organizational assessment of South Arts programming and staff culture, with an eye towards how well South Arts' professed values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are realized throughout the organization. This assessment should include an in-depth survey of staff members, as well as analysis of current South Arts program offerings, program evaluation protocols, external communications and fundraising methods, and other internal operations systems. The assessment will culminate in a summary report defining current successes, areas for growth, and recommendations for next steps.

South Arts will consider the results of this assessment to define future road mapping, strategic planning, and staff training needs.

### **Contractor Attributes**

The ideal candidate should have experience working with non-profit and arts-focused organizations, preferably in the Southeast United States in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. The contractor should apply a mixed-methods approach—including qualitative and quantitative methods for collecting and evaluating data—and should demonstrate familiarity with both organizational development consulting and program development. The contractor should have experience creating a safe and productive environment for staff of diverse backgrounds to share their perspectives, individually/privately or in small groups. Experience working with executive-level/C-suite leadership is a must.

The contractor may be an individual or a team of two consultants. Being able to meet with staff in-person in Atlanta, Georgia, for at least part of the contract period is a plus, although work may also be done remotely/virtually.

### **Expected Outcomes and Deliverables**

- Survey of/interviews with South Arts' 21-person staff, gathering perspectives on programming and internal systems as pertains to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Top-level analysis of current South Arts' program offerings, protocols for evaluating and developing new programs, communications, operations, and fundraising.
- Summary report to staff presenting results of surveys/interviews and analysis of programs and internal systems, including identified successes, areas for growth, and suggestions for next steps. The report may be entirely written or multi-media, based on discussions between the contractor and staff to determine the best format.
- Thoughts expressed during individual staff surveys/interviews should be kept private, and any material drawn from surveys for the report should be anonymized.

## Timeline

Ideally, this evaluation will occur during spring 2023, with deliverables presented to South Arts by June 30, 2023.

## Proposals

Respondents are asked to submit a proposal that provides:

- Relevant education and/or experience in conducting organizational evaluation and training pertaining to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- Proposed workplan, including proposed approach to South Arts.
- Unique strengths and perspectives you bring to the work.
- Fee proposal.

Required support materials:

- Biography/Resume.
- References – Submit three references (at least two must be from organizations) who can speak to your experience.

## Selection Criteria

- Relevant experience in conducting organizational evaluation and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility training.
- Feasibility of proposed work plan.
- Reference responses.
- Fee.

## Questions?

Please contact the South Arts Equity Committee at [equitycommittee@southarts.org](mailto:equitycommittee@southarts.org) or 404-874-7244 x818.

South Arts is committed to accessibility. To request an alternate format of this RFP or discuss the format of your proposal, please contact the Equity Committee.

*South Arts encourages applicants to contact us with questions more than 48 hours before the RFP deadline; due to the volume of requests, South Arts team members may not be able to respond to inquiries submitted after that time.*

**Proposal along with fee, bio/resume, support materials, and references must be RECEIVED by 5:00 PM (ET) on Wednesday, February 15, at [equitycommittee@southarts.org](mailto:equitycommittee@southarts.org).**

South Arts is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Alternate formats of this document may be obtained by contacting South Arts at 404-874-7244.