Request for Proposals: Facilitator – Jazz Focus Groups  
Submission Deadline: August 27, 2018

Introduction:
A new national jazz initiative, led by South Arts in partnership with the five other Regional Arts Organizations, will support professional development and technical assistance to early- and mid-career jazz artists, touring/residency support for jazz artists to work with existing and new/alternative-space jazz presenters (especially in rural areas), and the creation of online resources to assist both presenters and artists in expanding jazz touring across the U.S. Jazz, a musical tradition rooted in the African American experience, is by nature a communal music based upon the relationship between artists and their community. This program seeks to honor and perpetuate this tradition by bolstering connections between contemporary jazz musicians and communities across the nation. The project launched in July, 2018 and will run through June, 2022.

Scope of Work:
South Arts seeks an experienced group facilitator for six focus groups across the country to inform a new, national program which will bolster connections between contemporary jazz musicians and communities across the nation.

Each RAO will host a one-day, invitational focus group in its region between early October and mid-December, 2018. In the spirit of “nothing about us without us,” at least half of the participants shall be working early- and mid-stage jazz artists. Other stakeholders to be invited include jazz presenters, media/journalists/critics (as experts and network members), music/performing arts service organizations, and others with a significant interest in the health of the jazz sector.

In respect to this project, we seek a contractor to facilitate the meetings, working in collaboration with the event planning team. Each focus group will use the same agenda and process (with room for minor variations to serve regional needs). The facilitator’s scope of work shall include Preparation (materials review, agenda creation, agenda review and refinement); Onsite work (facilitation); and Followup Work (iterative enhancements if needed over the course of the six meetings, analysis of findings and final written report). All work products shall require the approval of the planning team. This is a Work for Hire project.

Background:
South Arts is the principal organization implementing Jazz Road, in partnership with our fellow Regional Arts Organizations (RAOs), which will ensure that this program reaches and serves jazz artists nationally. The Regional Arts Organizations include South Arts, Arts Midwest, Mid-America Arts Alliance, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, New England
Foundation for the Arts, and Western States Arts Federation/Western Arts Alliance. The program’s elements include grantmaking, technical assistance and professional development for artists, and the development of a comprehensive national asset map of the jazz sector. These six focus groups will serve as listening sessions and guided conversations about the state of jazz touring, current difficulties/strengths within the field, a chance to review/edit the assets mapped as integral to the project, and opportunities to provide feedback on the program’s draft design and guidelines. A significant goal of the conversations will be to test and refine the proposed guidelines, application, and reporting structures, since the program intends for the applications to be a low barrier-to-entry yet competitive enough to support qualified artists. The identification of means and networks through which the program opportunities reach jazz artists throughout the nation will also be a goal of the meetings.

Qualifications:

Significant experience facilitating diverse groups, particularly situations in which power dynamics are present and must be managed required

Demonstrated ability to document, analyze and synthesize the findings from a group process into a written report/recommendations required

An understanding of the ways in which performers’ artmaking and lives are fluid and can be unpredictable is preferred

Knowledge of the jazz field is strongly preferred

Knowledge of current performing arts touring in the U.S. is strongly preferred

Please submit:

A letter of interest describing your experience and approach to facilitating groups which would serve this project; and relevant experience in the performing arts and jazz in particular

Resumé including previous facilitation projects and clients

Availability for travel and facilitation between October 1 – December 15, 2018

Budget (itemized) for your services:

Preparation
Travel and onsite work at six focus groups
Followup call from each convening with project staff, to analyze/synthesize the results
Prepare final written report/recommendations

All travel expenses will be covered by South Arts.

Questions and Submission:
Please contact Mollie Quinlan-Hayes with any questions, mquinlanhayes@southarts.org, 404-874-7244 x 31.

Submit your proposal by 5:00PM EST on August 27, 2018 via email:
Mollie Quinlan-Hayes
Deputy Director for Programs
South Arts
mquinlanhayes@southarts.org

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Alternate formats of this publication may be obtained by contacting South Arts at 404-874-7244.