

NEA Program Solicitation: Independent Film & Media Arts Field-Building Initiative

Script from the RFP Info Session (on 6-29-2022, 3:00pm-4:00pm)

[SLIDE 1]

INTRODUCTIONS / OVERVIEW OF INFO SESSION

- Applicants should visit our website to review the full program solicitation and review the application process.
- The information presented in this webinar is featured in the Program Solicitation section of our website: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/FY23-Independent-Film-and-Media-Arts-Field-Building-Initiative.pdf>

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OVERVIEW OF KEY DETAILS

PURPOSE OF THIS SOLICITATION

- To select a Cooperator to administer the Initiative.

GOAL OF THIS SOLICITATION

- To strengthen connectivity across the independent film and media arts field through knowledge exchange and peer learning, with a focus on equity and career sustainability.

KEY DATES

- **DEADLINE TO RECEIVE PROPOSALS | Tuesday, August 9, 2022 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time** Tuesday, August 9, 2022 by 11:59pm ET.
- Applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov, the federal government's online application system.
- We strongly recommend that you **submit your application early** to give yourself ample time to resolve any problems that you might encounter.
- **NOTIFICATION | Anticipated in November 2022**
- **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE | No earlier than March 1, 2023**

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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT for this Program Solicitation

Documentary Sustainability Summit & Report (2017)

LINK: <https://www.arts.gov/impact/convenings/documentary-sustainability-summit>

Summit topics included:

- Shifting business models and impact of digital streaming

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- Best practices and model partnerships
- Effective public sector partnerships
- Strategies to advance the field (at-large)

Action items and recommendations included the Summit Report:

- Organize and participate in knowledge exchange, technical assistance, cross-sector collaboration, and field-building opportunities
- Participate in collecting/sharing research, data, and metrics
- Continually engage and educate public sector

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CURRENT COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT – (2019-CURRENT)

- To address the challenges outlined in the Documentary Sustainability Report, we developed a **Cooperative Agreement** focused on **knowledge exchange and capacity-building in 2019**.
- Sundance Institute was selected as the Cooperator for this initiative in 2019, which will run through the end of October 2022.
- With Sundance as a co-host, we launched the **Independent Film and Media Arts Group (IMAG) in 2020**, which is a national field-building initiative bringing together practitioners across the wide-ranging interests of the indie film and media arts field with a focus on equity and career sustainability.
- **Relative links:**
 - **IMAG Website** | www.sundance.org/imag/
 - **IMAG Resources / COLLAB SUSTAIN** | <https://collab.sundance.org/resources-we-love/Sustain>

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- During this time, Sundance expanded the initiative to go **beyond the scope of the Documentary field, and** sought to strengthen the connections between local, regional, and national stakeholders, including artists and collectives, film and media arts organizations, film festivals, art house cinemas, cultural institutions, content distributors, broadcast entities, arts service organizations, and funders.

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- **Activities have included knowledge exchange, cross-sector collaboration, and sharing of relevant resources** through **quarterly meetings and trainings** held in partnership with regional leaders.
- The initiative has also been a **catalyst for the development of self-organized working groups** to address regional needs and opportunities.
- For example, one of those regional working groups has named itself as **“Indie Media Arts South”** and includes about 70 members representing arts organizations, film festivals, funders, and filmmakers across the southern region.
- In addition to the quarterly meetings, as part of this Cooperative Agreement, Sundance co-hosted a series of facilitated world-building sessions that engaged more than one hundred practitioners to **collaboratively prototype a more abundant media arts system** through the practice of **systemic reform, using restorative values**.
- Topics of these world-building sessions included:
 - Regenerative Economic Models for Artists
 - Exploring the Impact of Policy on Artists as Essential Workers
 - Institutional Investments in Systemic Change
- These world-building convenings also documented how the pandemic magnified existing inequities, **which will be released later this year as a new field report issued in partnership between Sundance and the Arts Endowment**.
- As you can see...while activities of the Cooperative Agreement aim to **strengthen** the connective tissues **across** the field, the initiative seeks to **raise visibility** of existing issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the media arts field...which often run parallel to issues facing colleagues within our broader arts and cultural infrastructure.
 - For example:
 - The challenge for individual artists and artist collectives to access **adequate funding** and set **fair artist compensation** rates critical to their livelihoods, Shifting **business models** in a digital world,
 - And issues related to an economic landscape that presents challenges and opportunities for the growing class of **contracted and freelance arts workers**.

THIS CONCLUDES THE BACKGROUND CONTEXT....AND TAKES US TO NOW.

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NEWLY POSTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT RFP & AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Through this previous work, the NEA identified areas of special interest that warrant further exploration, which you will see in the posted program solicitation on our website:

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<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/FY23-Independent-Film-and-Media-Arts-Field-Building-Initiative.pdf>

The purpose of this solicitation is to select a Cooperator to administer the Initiative, which has honed in on four areas of interest:

- 1) Providing a forum for ideas exchange, peer learning, and technical assistance** to improve career pathways and support networks for emerging and established film and media artists and practitioners, with a focus on the inclusion of individuals and historically underserved communities whose opportunities might be limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.
- 2) Strengthening connectivity between existing networks and media arts communities across the United States**, as well as strengthening the capacity of local, regional, and national arts infrastructure to better serve independent film and media artists. This includes fostering awareness of the interconnected issues, systemic challenges, and opportunities facing the independent film and media arts field and the broader cultural sector.
- 3) Elevating strategies, best practices, and exemplary models for building accessible and equitable career pathways** into the film and media arts industry, and providing relevant expertise to local and regional cultural organizations and service providers.
- 4) Promoting the contributions of the independent film and media arts field to the wider arts sector** and beyond, including aspects such as strengthening communities through the power of storytelling.

Applicants should **propose a comprehensive plan** for the cooperative agreement that addresses its goal and the areas of special interest, which we will go over later in this session.

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Scope of Work

The purpose of this program solicitation is to select an organization (Cooperator) to administer the Initiative as described below. In brief, the Cooperator will:

- **Plan, organize, and implement a comprehensive work plan** and manage the project activities, which may include hosting field meetings and activities that engage cross-sector partners and stakeholders on topics critical for field advancement, such as building accessible and equitable career pathways for independent film and media arts practitioners. Activities will provide a forum for participants to share best practices, models, and resources available in the field, and provide a mechanism for relationship-building across the various local, regional, and national networks and communities. Collaboration with various partners in the independent film and media arts field is strongly encouraged.
- **Implement a comprehensive communications strategy** for the Initiative.
- **Facilitate open communication among stakeholders** throughout the year.

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- **Routinely meet with groups of regional stakeholders to stay abreast of current resources, trends, and initiatives** in the field, and provide quarterly reports summarizing communication among regional groups.
- **Produce and publish an annual report for the public** that provides a summary of presenters, meeting attendees, topics explored, and key lessons and takeaways, as well as tracking impact and outcomes resulting from the Initiative.

All obligations and program elements must comply with federal civil rights laws, which includes ensuring activities are open to the public. If you need more information about this, we can drop a link in the chat to a helpful webinar.

ADDITIONAL NOTE: *Throughout this Program Solicitation, there are references to activities such as technical assistance consultations and peer-networking opportunities. If these activities are scheduled to take place in-person, they must occur in accordance with relevant health guidelines. However, it is expected that all such activities will be designed to be adaptable to an accessible virtual format, as agreed to in writing by the parties. It is also expected that the Cooperators will plan activities to minimize or avoid cancellation costs that might occur if they are not conducted in-person, since such costs cannot be included in the project budget.*

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OVERVIEW OF DETAILED REQUIREMENTS

- The Cooperator will work with the NEA's Media Arts Director and other agency staff on all aspects of this program.
- Work with the NEA Project Director to refine the details, budget, and schedule of all project components.
- Develop and implement a work plan for the activities supported by this Cooperative Agreement; and meet regularly with the NEA Project Director to monitor progress in completing the **project activities**.

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PROJECT REQUIREMENT | PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The core of this Cooperative Agreement is **to plan and conduct field-building activities** in collaboration with various partners in the independent film and media arts field.

This includes:

- **Hosting quarterly field meetings for stakeholders** in the independent film and media arts field from across the United States.

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- These quarterly meetings should feature presentations by independent film and media arts practitioners and collectives, new and existing resources, and initiatives focused on topics critical for field advancement, such as building accessible and equitable career pathways for independent film and media arts practitioners.
- Presenters may be paid with Cooperative Agreement funds for their participation at the quarterly field meetings, but not for work outside of the activities defined within the scope of the Cooperative Agreement.
- These meetings should be held independently from an organization's general activities.

- **Hosting additional convenings, forums, webinars, and training sessions** for regional and national practitioners intended to strengthen connections supporting the independent film and media arts field and provide opportunities for knowledge exchange, technical assistance, cross-sector collaboration, and expanding professional networks.

- **Hosting meetings with various stakeholders** to elevate the role of the independent film and media arts field within civic infrastructure and amplify the needs, values, and contributions of the field in healing, uniting, and lifting up communities.
 - These meetings should strategically focus on relationship-building and engage current or potential stakeholders, such as arts and humanities service organizations, state arts agencies, regional arts organizations, local arts councils, or other entities interested in bolstering support for the field.

Activities should be open to the public--and may be held in-person, online, or in a hybrid setting.

APPLICATION TIP: We strongly encourage applicants to include partners to conduct these activities.

- Potential partners may include (but are not limited to) local, regional, and national organizations, institutions, collectives, networks, field service organizations, alliances and field coalitions
- This may also include individuals that engage in the support and development of artists, especially emerging artists from historically underserved communities, or demonstrate commitment to strengthen existing regional and national arts infrastructure serving the independent film and media arts field.

APPLICATION TIP: Make sure your proposed budget includes any details related to arranging or paying for any resources necessary to undertake these activities

- For example: venue rental, marketing dollars, virtual platforms, and any travel expenses and presenting fees for any speakers, participants, consultants, or contractors, as appropriate.
- You must also ensure that all meetings, programs and activities, either in-person or virtual, are accessible and compliant with federal laws and regulations. Therefore, your budget should include any expenses related to making these activities compliant.

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PROJECT REQUIREMENT: COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

- Implement a comprehensive communications strategy for the Initiative and maintain an online presence for the program:
 - **Includes clear communication** about dates and times for upcoming field meetings and special topic sessions, and a list of publicly available field resources.
 - **Publicize activities** widely and manage the registration processes.
 - **Post meeting agendas** and minutes after quarterly meetings.
 - **Post documentation of activities and online events**, such as a virtual recording, if deemed appropriate between the Cooperator and the NEA.
 - **Manage and moderate an email listserv**, contact group, or other similar electronic communication system to facilitate communication amongst stakeholders.

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PROJECT REQUIREMENT | ANNUAL REPORT

- **Produce and publish an annual report for the public, which includes:**
 - Summary of presenters, meeting attendees, and topics explored
 - Key lessons and takeaways from activities
 - Tracking impact and outcomes resulting from this Initiative

The draft of the annual report would be presented in advance to the NEA Project Director for editorial review and approval.

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COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT AMOUNT

- The NEA expects to award one Cooperative Agreement of up to \$100,000, contingent upon the availability of funds.
- This Cooperative Agreement requires a nonfederal cost share/match of at least 50% of the Cooperative Agreement amount.
- Cost share/matching funds cannot include funds from any NEA or other federal sources.

Period of Performance

- This Cooperative Agreement will begin on or after March 1, 2023, and may extend for up to 12 months.

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- The NEA will work with the Cooperator to identify dates related to specific project activities before the Cooperative Agreement is finalized.

Notification Timeline

- It is anticipated that applicants will be notified about the selection of a Cooperator in **November 2022**.

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APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- Nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organizations; units of state or local government; or federally recognized tribal communities or tribes may apply.
- To be eligible, **the applicant organization must meet** the National Endowment for the Arts' "[Legal Requirements](#)" at the time of application.
- An organization may submit only one proposal under this program solicitation.

Important Notes:

- An organization may submit only one proposal under this program solicitation.
- You may apply to other NEA funding opportunities, including Grants for Arts Projects, in addition to this program solicitation. In each case, the request must be for a distinctly different project. No project costs or staff time may overlap with activities executed as part of other federal awards.

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APPLICATION REVIEW

- Proposals are reviewed by an advisory panel.
- Panel recommendations are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts, which then makes recommendations to the NEA Chair. The Chair makes the final decisions on all awards.
- It is anticipated that applicants will be notified about the selection of a Cooperator in **November 2022**.
- Proposals will be reviewed on the basis of the **artistic excellence** and **artistic merit**.

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Artistic Excellence:

Degree to which the proposal:

- Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the goals, areas of special interest, scope of work, and requirements of this field-building Initiative.
- Reflects expertise in addressing and responding to the needs of artists and organizations within the independent film and media arts field.
- Addresses the areas of special interest for this field-building Initiative.
- And, the quality of similar or related programs administered by the applicant organization, including experience managing the interests of cross-sector stakeholders.

Artistic Merit

Ability to:

- Provide guidance and structure for the program based on a sound understanding of policies and practices in the film and media arts field.
- Formulate and implement an effective communications and outreach plan.
- Carry out the project based on such factors as the appropriateness of the budget, the quality and clarity of the project activities and goals, the resources involved, and the qualifications of the project's personnel.
- And, provides evidence of access to experts in the independent film and media arts field, and, as relevant, the broader arts and cultural field.

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APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

HOW TO APPLY

- Go to the Grant Opportunity Package in Grants.gov
- **Funding Opportunity Number: NEAPS2202**
- Organizations are required to submit their applications through Grants.gov, the federal government's online application system.
- **The Grants.gov system must receive your validated and accepted application no later than 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on August 9, 2022.**
- We strongly recommend that you submit by July 29, 2022, to give yourself ample time to resolve any problems that you might encounter.

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- **Applicants should visit our website to review the full program solicitation and review the application process and requested application materials.**
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QUESTIONS / ANSWERS FROM THE OPEN Q/A PORTION:

Is there a limit on how many partners can join on application?

- There isn't a limit to the number of partners, you do have a limited amount of space to describe your partners. There is a five-page limit stated in the instructions.
- **SEE PAGE 13 (Header: THE ATTACHMENTS)** of the Program Solicitation RFP, which includes specific information about the attachments you submit as part of your proposal. **Follow these instructions carefully.**
- While there is a page limit but you can also say project partners will “include but aren't limited to...” which may help panelists see what you are thinking in terms of future potential partners, presenters, etc.
- If you look at the review criteria, you'll see this is an important aspect as there a few ways the review panelists will evaluate your project in relationship to partnerships. For example (excerpts from the review criteria):
 - Quality of similar or related programs administered by the applicant organization, including experience managing the interests of cross-sector stakeholders.
 - Ability to provide guidance and structure for the program based on a sound understanding of current policies and practices in the independent film and media arts field.
 - Evidence of access to experts in the independent film and media arts field, and, as relevant, the broader arts and cultural field.
 - Ability to carry out the project based on such factors as the appropriateness of the budget, the quality and clarity of the project activities and goals, the resources involved, and the qualifications of the project's personnel.
- Include the role of the partner instead of a laundry list. Give context so review panel can actually see how they're working together and how they might be instrumental in executing and implementing this initiative with you as a team.
- Letters of support are not accepted as part of the application.

Can there be more than one project director?

- I'm not sure if there's space in the technical part of filling out that form, but, YES, you can always add in the narrative that your proposal includes project co-directors.
- If your proposal is selected, you'll also have an opportunity to fine-tune the work plan. there are ways to incorporate that if you'd like.