

ATTACHMENT E
Justification for No Material/Nonsubstantive Change (OMB No. 3135-0142)
May 27, 2020

This request for a Nonsubstantive Change is needed for the Survey of American Artists Participating in International Exchanges to implement minor adjustments to the pilot study timing and outreach plan in order to achieve a higher response rate. As outlined below, the adjustments include re-opening and extending the survey period, increasing the number of email reminders, adding a phone outreach component, and modifying the introductory language for the instrument.

(1) Re-opening and extending the survey period

A key factor in the low response rate is likely to be the timing of the original pilot test. Spanning from March 9-20, 2020, this 2-week period overlapped with the most disruptive period for event cancellations, postponements, and business closures related to the Covid-19 crisis. These disruptions heavily impacted the performing artists who made up the survey sample. Re-opening the survey during a different time is likely to address some of the low response rate; moreover, extending the collection window from 2 to 4 weeks will allow more time for outreach. For this reason, we propose to re-open the survey for responses from the same sample for a period of 4 weeks in June 2020.

(2) Increasing the number of email reminders

In the initial pilot test, the sample received an initial invitation email and a reminder email mid-way through the survey period. Drawing on discussions with our contractor, our OMB desk officer, and two OMB statisticians, we believe that weekly follow-up with the sample will increase response rate. Based on this, we propose to send an email reminder to non-respondents during each of the 4 weeks, as well as 1 final reminder 48 hours prior to survey closing.

(3) Adding a phone outreach component

Based on discussions with OMB, as well as experience with past survey deployment for a different NEA program, we believe that adding phone outreach will improve response rate. In addition, during the first round of pilot testing, we discovered a number of incorrect email addresses in the sample. Adding phone outreach will help us address inaccuracies in the contact list, and it may yield insights about how our instructions to forward the message is being interpreted and/or carried out. For this reason, we propose to call all non-respondents (including those with bad email addresses) at the beginning of the survey period, and to follow up with a phone reminder during the final week of the survey period.

(4) Modifying the introductory language for the instrument

During the analysis and review of the pilot testing results, suggestions were made for improving the clarity of survey's introductory, including (a) emphasis of the survey's potential role in justification of future funding cycles, and (b) prominence and better articulation of the instructions for forwarding the survey. The proposed adjustments are below.

Original Introductory Language

The National Endowment for the Arts (“the Arts Endowment”) conducts an annual survey of artists participating in the USArtists International (USAI) program. If you or your organization have received more than one USAI grant, please answer this survey thinking about the grant that sponsored your travel in (month, year) [WEB SURVEY POPULATES], as noted in the survey. The questions will ask about benefits of your participation in the USAI grant program.

We are specifically looking for performing artists that used USAI support to travel to international festivals or arts marketplaces to respond to this survey. **If you are not an artist that meets these criteria, please forward the survey link to an artist who did use USAI support to travel to an international festival or arts marketplace.**

Please answer all questions honestly; responses provided will be used to understand how the program benefits U.S. artists. Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential and the survey data will only be analyzed and reported in aggregate. Your responses to this survey will in no way impact the outcome of any present or future grant applications, contract proposals, or cooperative agreement proposals with the Arts Endowment or its partners.

Please note, if you cannot complete the survey in one sitting, you can save it and complete it at a later date. The survey will take about 5–8 minutes to complete. **Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may stop at any time if necessary. We thank you for your participation and cooperation in this very important study.**

Proposed revision

The National Endowment for the Arts (“the Arts Endowment”) conducts an annual survey of artists participating in the USArtists International (USAI) program. If you or your organization have received more than one USAI grant, please answer this survey thinking about the grant that supported your travel in (month, year) [WEB SURVEY POPULATES], as noted in the survey. The questions will ask about benefits of your participation in the USAI grant program.

We are specifically looking for performing artists that used USAI support to travel to international festivals or arts marketplaces to respond to this survey. If you are not an artist who meets these criteria, please forward the survey link to an artist who used USAI support to travel to an international festival or arts marketplace.

Please answer all questions honestly. Your response to this survey will help the Arts Endowment understand how the USAI program benefits the careers of U.S. artists. Evidence of the success of the USAI program is vital to the continuation of the program and will benefit the broader community of U.S. artists. Your responses to this survey will be kept confidential and the survey data will only be analyzed and reported in aggregate. Your responses to this survey will in no way impact the outcome of any present or future grant applications, contract proposals, or cooperative agreement proposals with the Arts Endowment or its partners.

Please note, if you cannot complete the survey in one sitting, you can save it and complete it at a later date. The survey will take about 5–8 minutes to complete. **Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may stop at any time if necessary. We thank you for your participation and cooperation in this very important study.**

