

**The National Endowment for the Arts
ArtsHERE Grant Program Forms
OMB Information Collection Request - New Collection
Justification – Part B Supporting Statement**

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B1. Objectives

Project Objectives

The purpose of the proposed information collection is to monitor, evaluate, and generate lessons learned from the activities of the ArtsHERE pilot initiative. Motivating this evaluation project is an interest in understanding whether and how, by participating in this pilot initiative, subgrantee organizations have strengthened their engagement with underserved groups/communities that have rich and dynamic cultural identities. The National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) is also interested in learning from this initiative how it might support similar field-building initiatives in other areas of its portfolio.

Generalizability of Results

The developmental, descriptive study is intended to present an internally valid description of the implementation of ArtsHERE. Results are not intended to promote statistical generalization to other service populations.

Appropriateness of Study Design and Methods for Planned Uses

The study design for the ArtsHERE pilot initiative will apply a developmental, descriptive approach to achieve the study objectives described above. Developmental evaluation, pioneered by Michael Quinn Patton¹, involves diverse collaboration through inclusive co-design, requiring time for relationship-building, capacity-building, creativity, and consensus-building among partners. Flexibility is essential to adapt evaluations to the complex and evolving conditions within communities. For this reason, the ArtsHERE evaluation design will involve more than one information collection request (or amendment to the first PRA package) to ensure that these principles can be applied to the development of future data collection instruments.

The initiative's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) plan, shown in Attachment E, will use mixed methods to address the research questions proposed in Supporting Statement A. Multiple data collection strategies will be used to comprehensively capture quantitative and qualitative data. The study design is well-suited for evaluating ArtsHERE as it effectively captures developmental processes, aligning closely with the initiative's pilot stage of implementation and the NEA's prioritized evaluation questions and needs. The methods and measures are carefully sequenced to produce learning about the ArtsHERE pillars, outputs, and outcomes (see ArtsHERE logic model in Supporting Statement A). The MEL plan adheres to codesign and culturally responsive evaluation frameworks, prioritizing continuous adaptation and learning. These frameworks are well-suited for assessing pilot programs, focusing on understanding implementation dynamics, providing timely feedback, and fostering continuous learning.

The NEA will use the information collected to answer the research questions and provide insight into the overarching study objectives, documenting the implementation of the ArtsHERE pillars and learning from stakeholder (i.e., grantees, NEA, South Arts, RAOs) experiences throughout the initiative to inform future considerations for program and evaluation improvements. In addition, findings from this study will be shared with Technical Work Group (TWG) members and grantees. Beyond learning how ArtsHERE

¹ Michael Quinn Patton, *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use* (New York, NY: Guilford, 2011).

implementation might improve its own activities, the NEA plans to harvest lessons that can be shared with other funders, organizations, and cultural practitioners seeking to do this work.

The descriptive study will provide data on grantee, service provider, and ArtsHERE planning group perspectives and is not intended to be an impact evaluation. As noted in Supporting Statement A, this information is not intended to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

B2. Methods and Design

Target Population

Information will be collected from (1) the cohort of 95 grantees who are participating in ArtsHERE as part of their grant activities; (2) approximately 100 review panelists who participated in the second phase of the application review process; (3) approximately 15 learning opportunities providers (ArtsHERE technical assistance coaches and facilitators); and (4) up to 15 members of the ArtsHERE planning group (i.e., NEA, South Arts, and RAO representatives).

Sampling

The findings from this data collection and the larger process study are not intended to be generalizable; therefore, probability sampling is not a priority.

Required evaluation data collected from *grantees* (i.e., Grantee Baseline Survey, Grantee Learning Opportunities Quarterly Survey) will be collected by sending an invitation email to project directors (or designees) from all 95 ArtsHERE grant recipients. Recipients will receive a link to these web-based surveys in the invitation. In addition, required grantee reporting forms (i.e., the Annual Progress Report and the Final Descriptive Report) will also be used for monitoring by South Arts in addition to evaluation, and will be administered via GO Smart, a cloud-based grant application system.

Voluntary evaluation data collected from *review panelists* (i.e., Review Panelist Survey) will be collected by sending an invitation email to all panelists who participated in Phase II of the review panel process.² Recipients will receive a link to this web-based survey in the invitation.

Required evaluation data collected from *learning opportunities providers* (i.e., Learning Opportunities Tracker) will be collected from all facilitators and coaches providing technical assistance to ArtsHERE grantees, and from staff and consultants directly involved in the delivery of support services to grantees.

Voluntary evaluation data collected from the *ArtsHERE planning group* (i.e., Learning Logs) will be collected by sending an invitation email to staff from the NEA, South Arts, and RAOs who are involved in the planning of the initiative. It is expected that up to 15 individuals will complete the logs at each administration point. Learning logs will be administered to the planning group on the following schedule:

² ArtsHERE is using a two-phase approach to ensure access and minimize the burden of a lengthy single application for grantees. In Phase I, organizations completed a short Expression of Interest, which was reviewed by at least three panelists identified as screeners in Phase I. Selected organizations from Phase I were invited to move on to Phase II to complete a full application, which review panelists will examine and discuss in review panel meetings.

- Learning log topic: panel/selection process in May 2024
- Learning log topic: analyses of application data in June 2024
- Learning logs topic: Grantee Learning Opportunities Quarterly Survey results every 3 months from January 2025 through January 2026
- Learning log topic: mid-pilot, APR reactions/reflections in December 2025

B3. Design of Data Collection Instruments

Development of Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments were developed based upon the essential data needed to answer the ArtsHERE research questions. The evaluation contractors engaged staff from NEA, South Arts, Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA), and other RAOs in various iterations of draft instrument review and worked to address all feedback provided.

All data collection instruments underwent cognitive testing to gauge comprehension, usability, and overall user experience of the instruments. The cognitive testing process followed a structured approach to obtain feedback on the surveys, forms, and other data collection instruments that will be used to gather information from ArtsHERE grantees, application review panelists, service providers, and members of the ArtsHERE planning group. Participants were asked to complete one or more instruments of their choosing along with the instrument review form for each instrument, allowing for real-time feedback on comprehension, usability, and overall user experience to improve the quality and reliability of the evaluation instruments. Testing was conducted in two parts, one set of instruments with 6 testers and another set with 4 testers, using two samples of informants in positions similar to intended respondents (e.g., artists, administrators, researchers, educators, and/or evaluators); no instrument was tested by more than 6 testers. These tests were instrumental in determining the burden estimates. Following the tests, the instruments were refined to minimize burden and improve utility. The revised instruments were subject to review and feedback by key stakeholders, including staff from NEA, South Arts, M-AAA, and other RAO representatives before they were finalized.

The **Review Panelist Survey** was developed using existing panel review overview and training documents as well as through discussions with South Arts and NEA. The purpose of the tool is to understand the experience of panelists in Phase II of the panel review process and identify areas for improvement. This voluntary web-based survey will be administered to application review panelists immediately following completion of the review panel process (September 2024 at the latest). The survey will consist of open- and closed-ended questions that capture panelists' demographic characteristics, experience serving on prior review panels, and perspectives on the panel review process. A link will be sent to each panelist for completion.

The two required grantee reporting forms (i.e., the Annual Progress Report and the Final Descriptive Report) were adapted from previously approved and field-tested instruments and ArtsHERE application questions. The evaluation contractors identified questions from the application materials that would benefit from follow-up to identify change over time. Additionally, standard descriptive questions from the NEA's reporting forms were included to ensure consistent data collection across NEA grant programs, enabling potential comparisons.

- **Annual Progress Reports** for all awarded grantees will be reviewed for information on distinct grantee practices (e.g., integration of arts/culture into programming), successes and barriers to engaging underserved communities, and experience of ArtsHERE (e.g., impact of ArtsHERE participation on future activities). The emergent learning from the annual progress reports will inform the learning component of the MEL plan as well as the development of case studies.
- **Final Descriptive Reports** for all awarded grantees will be reviewed for information organizational characteristics and any changes made. Topics of interest will include distinct grantee practices (e.g., updated approaches to strategies to enhance programming), successes and barriers to engaging the community, organizational practices (e.g., updated program/services in place, organizational capacity, knowledge gained from project), and overall organizational or program growth that occurred as a result of funding. Additionally, the Geographic Location of Project Activity (or GEO) portion of the final report, which is already cleared through OMB control number 3135-0140, will be used to better understand and track the location of activities and who is likely to benefit from them.

Two instruments were designed to measure experiences with providing and/or receiving technical assistance through ArtsHERE learning opportunities:

- The **Learning Opportunities Tracking Form** was developed to capture the supportive services that are provided to grantees, including cohort convenings, one-on-one coaching, and topical expert workshops. As the provider of learning opportunities, M-AAA was closely involved in the development and planning of the tracker. Following each organizational service occurrence (November 2024 through April 2026), this required web-based tracking form will be completed by learning opportunities providers. The form will consist of open- and closed-ended questions that will cover topics including service type, content of service provision, participating partners, engagement experience, facilitators, and challenges.
- The **Grantee Learning Opportunities Quarterly Survey** was developed to understand grantees' self-assessment of learning opportunities received, including cohort convenings, one-on-one coaching, and topical expert workshops. As the provider of learning opportunities, M-AAA was closely involved in operationalizing key domains assessed in the survey. This required web-based survey will be administered to all grantees quarterly, beginning after month 3 of the grant period (January 2025 through April 2026). It will consist of open- and closed-ended questions that capture grantees' satisfaction with learning opportunities, including: engagement, quality, relevance, and effectiveness of cohort-based and one-on-one organizational services, as well as perceptions on how services can be improved.

The **Grantee Baseline Survey** was developed as a needs assessment for grantees and also will collect specific grantee background and demographic information to obtain a comprehensive grasp of grantees' baseline characteristics. This includes organizational strengths, capacities, community connections, NEA and peer relationships, partner involvement, and capacity-building goals. This required one-time web-based survey will be administered to all grantees upon acceptance of a grant award (approximately October 2024). One survey response will be submitted by each grantee and should reflect input from the core group involved in local planning and implementation.

The **Learning Logs** were developed to capture the reflections of ArtsHERE planners on the processes and learning at key milestones of the initiative. These voluntary reflection results will also inform group discussions and MEL plan changes. The learning logs are part of the ArtsHERE learning plan, which is intended to facilitate the development of, and respond to, learning questions from the team, inclusive

of NEA and South Arts, to potentially inform decision making and improvement. Members of the ArtsHERE Evaluation Committee provided input on the learning logs during cognitive testing. Each log will consist of 4 open-ended prompts intended to facilitate ongoing reflection on experiences and 'emergent learning' after key program activities/milestones.

B4. Collection of Data and Quality Control

The evaluation contractors will administer all web-based evaluation instruments (i.e., Review Panelist Survey, Learning Opportunities Tracking Form, Grantee Learning Opportunities Quarterly Survey, and Grantee Baseline Survey) electronically through a FedRAMP compliant platform. Each respondent will receive an invitation to participate in the survey via email (Attachment B). Email invitations will be addressed to each staff person by name and each individual will receive a unique survey link. If required by IRB, informed consent will be obtained electronically before the respondent proceeds to the survey questions. Respondents can complete the survey at a time that is convenient for them, including over multiple sittings, if needed. By using unique survey links, the evaluation contractors can troubleshoot any challenges that individual respondents may have accessing the survey and schedule email reminders to only respondents who have not completed the survey. The evaluation contractors will send up to 2 email reminders (Attachment B) to staff who have not started or completed the survey.

The Annual Progress Report and Final Descriptive Report are required grant reporting forms that will be administered through the GO Smart grants management platform. The evaluation contractor and GO Smart team will use the GO Smart system to email all grantees at their GO Smart profile addresses, directing them to the grant portal to complete required reports. Grantees will log in using existing credentials to access their private account, which they used to submit their statement of interest and application. Grantees will find the Annual Progress Report and Final Descriptive Report linked to their original application. They can click START to begin or EDIT for forms in progress, and may return to the portal as needed before the deadline to submit the reports. Once submitted, they will receive an email confirmation with a copy of their completed report. After submission, reports cannot be modified by the applicant unless granted additional access by an ArtsHERE administrator or evaluation contractor. All report responses will be accessible via PDF and CSV spreadsheet to ArtsHERE and GO Smart administrators as well as the evaluation contractor.

The Learning Logs will be administered through a secure shared workspace that is a FedRAMP compliant platform. Respondents will receive a link to access the log, which will be accessible to other members of the ArtsHERE planning group. Responses will be shared anonymously in the workspace. Information collected in the learning logs is not to be distributed outside of the planning group. Responses provided through this form will inform follow-up discussions with the planning group.

Data will be monitored for quality and consistency through weekly data quality check reports. These reports identify duplicates, missing values, validations, date inconsistencies and valid ranges. Team members will follow up on any quality issues identified in the reports with the respondent, if appropriate.

B5. Response Rates and Potential Nonresponse Bias

Response Rates

Maximizing response rates is critical to the administration of these data collection efforts. The content and format of the instruments were developed in close consultation with key stakeholders, and the grantee reporting forms were informed by previously developed, OMB-approved instruments. Though these data collection activities are not designed to produce statistically generalizable findings and participation in the optional evaluation data collection activities is wholly at the respondents' discretion, response rates will be collected when applicable and possible for quality improvement purposes. Based on previous evaluator experiences with similar data collection instruments, the following response rates are estimated:

- For the review panelist survey, the target response rate is 90%, with an expected response rate of 70%.
- For optional grantee evaluation surveys and forms, the target response rate is 75%, with an expected response rate of 50%.
- For required grant reporting forms, the target response rate is 100%, with an expected response rate of 90%.
- For service providers' learning opportunities tracking forms, the target response rate is 90%, with an expected response rate of 70%.

Data collection strategies that emphasize flexibility, privacy, and a respect for the respondent's time facilitate timely participation. The following strategies will be implemented to maximize participation in the data collection:

- *Introduction and notification:* Strategies to introduce and notify respondents about data collection are used for several instruments. The purpose of each instrument is clearly stated in the introductory text, as is the time estimate for completion of each instrument.
- *Timing of data collection:* Individualized discussions were held with stakeholders to determine optimal periods for data collection to minimize respondent burden and to facilitate recall.
- *Administration:* For surveys, reminder emails will be sent (per discussion above) to promote participation and a high response.
- *Alternate response methods:* Respondents will be given the option to use an alternate method for responding to surveys or interviews, such as submitting a paper or PDF version with written responses to questions, or by submitting responses over the phone, if this method helps to increase participation.
- *Assurances of data privacy:* Respondents to all surveys and interviews will be assured that reported data are aggregated and not attributable to individuals or specific grantee organizations. The following text is included in the introductory text of all grantee evaluation instruments:

“These data will be made available to the program Evaluator and will not be shared with the NEA, South Arts, and RAOs except as described below. Information collected for evaluation purposes, including individual information deemed sensitive in nature, is considered confidential and will remain anonymous and private to the extent permitted by law. When results of the

ArtsHERE evaluation are shared with the public via reports, presentations, and other materials, these results will only be shared in aggregate form (percentages, means, summaries) to protect the identity of participants. Any subject-identifiable information (including names, contact information, etc.) will not be released without a participant's explicit permission. The Evaluator may ask to identify a participant to attribute direct quotes or case studies to it in reports, presentations, or other materials, and the participant may choose to remain anonymous.

"Reporting on grant activities, including annual progress and final reports, and completing forms or surveys intended to collect information or feedback that can inform ArtsHERE services is required of all grantees. Your responses in this survey will not impact your current or future awards from the NEA or its partners. You will not receive any compensation for responding to the survey. You may decline to answer any question you wish. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The OMB control number for this survey is OMB No. 3135-XXXX, which expires XX/XX/XXX."

NonResponse

As participants will not be randomly sampled and findings are not intended to be representative, non-response bias will not be calculated. The evaluation contractor will, however, track refusal rates and refusal demographics, to gain an understanding of potential patterns in data collection participation and refusal. For some data collections, respondent demographics (i.e., non-identifiable grantee organization descriptors) will be documented and reported in written materials associated with the data collection.

B6. Production of Estimates and Projections

The data will not be used to generate population estimates, either for internal use or dissemination.

B7. Data Handling and Analysis

Data Handling

The evaluation contractors will be responsible for collection, storage, and maintenance of the data. Exceptions include data collected in GO Smart (i.e., the Annual Progress Report and Final Descriptive Report); those data will be securely transferred to the evaluation contractors for handling and analysis. All sensitive and personally identifiable information will be stored and maintained in accordance with NEA requirements; the evaluation contractors have capabilities for the safe storage of sensitive information meeting federal guidelines.

Once the data have been received, the evaluation contractors will utilize statistical software, such as SAS, to process and clean the data. This involves renaming variables, converting character variables to numeric, cleaning dates, and cleaning data entry errors. Next, the evaluation contractors will remove duplicates, recode missing variables, create clean variables, assign labels, and recode write-ins. The contractors will create any needed analysis variables. The qualitative data from open-ended fields in surveys will be retained verbatim in analysis files (if answers are collected by hard copy or by phone, responses will be entered verbatim into the analysis files by an evaluator).

Data Analysis

The primary and secondary data collected will be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Examination of data from a variety of sources will provide a cross-check on the different data collection activities and may point to issues to be further explored in subsequent data collection activities or analyses.

- **Qualitative Data.** Standard qualitative procedures will be used to analyze and summarize information from the grantees and federal and RAO stakeholders. Qualitative data analysis software will be used to organize, code, triangulate, and identify themes. In preparation for qualitative analysis, evaluators will use standardized templates to organize and document the information abstracted from data sources. Qualitative data will be integrated with quantitative and analyzed together when practicable. This full integration will facilitate data triangulation. Qualitative analysis of secondary data will be more targeted, as it will draw from specific variables within each identified data source (e.g., qualitative data will be pulled directly from applications, annual progress reports, and final descriptive reports to answer research questions). The data will be entered into the standardized templates and will be systematically reviewed and categorized according to the pre-established indicators.
- **Quantitative Data.** For secondary data sources, such as Cooperator program data, the activities conducted by the planning group, grantees, and learning opportunities providers will be summarized by type and frequency. For quantitative data generated from web-based surveys such as the Grantee Baseline Survey and Grantee Learning Opportunities Quarterly Survey, frequency distributions will be calculated to summarize trends and patterns across survey items and to examine variability in the data. The evaluation contractors will produce descriptive statistics to summarize variances and means for relevant quantitative items and groups of items. For instance, survey items that rate each grantee's self-perceived level of engagement in learning opportunities activities will be tabulated as means and percentages. The survey data will be examined across all grantees participating in the evaluation, as well as by key descriptive characteristics (e.g., organization budget size, organization or program activity location, new grantees, disciplines) to learn more about grantee perceptions and experiences.

Data Use

Evaluators do not intend to create a public-use data file based on the information collected. Information collected may be aggregated and incorporated into documents or presentations that are made public such as through conference presentations, websites, or social media. The following are some examples of ways in which the evaluation contractor may share information resulting from these data collections: learning opportunity/technical assistance plans, brief memos (to the ArtsHERE planning group, TWG, grantees), presentations, infographics, project-specific reports, or other documents relevant to stakeholders such as NEA leadership and staff. In sharing findings, evaluators will describe the project methods and limitations with regard to generalizability and as a basis for policy.

B8. Contact Person(s)

James Bell Associates is conducting this information collection and developed the plans for data collection in collaboration with the NEA under Task Order Call # 59310522F0015. For questions around how data will be collected and analyzed, please contact Connie Park, park@jbassoc.com.

Table of Attachments

Attachment A: Instruments

- Instrument 1: Review Panelist Survey
- Instrument 2: Grantee Baseline Survey
- Instrument 3: Annual Progress Report
- Instrument 4: Grantee Learning Opportunities Quarterly Survey
- Instrument 5: Learning Opportunities Tracker
- Instrument 6: Learning Logs
- Instrument 7: Final Descriptive Report

Attachment B: Email Invitation and Reminder Language

- Template 1: Review Panelist Survey Email Template
- Template 2: Grantee Baseline Survey Email Template
- Template 3: Grantee Learning Opportunities Quarterly Survey Email Template
- Template 4: Learning Opportunities Tracker Email Template
- Template 5: Learning Logs Email Template

Attachment C: Cognitive Testing Report

Attachment D: IRB Determination Letter

Attachment E: MEL Plan