

Request for Proposals

Community Creativity Cohort 2 Operating Partner

March 8, 2019

PURPOSE

The Bush Foundation seeks proposals for an operating partner to manage the implementation of the Community Creativity Cohort 2 (<http://bfdn.org/CCC2>) program from 2019 - 2021. The operating partner will be responsible for supporting grantees, coordinating capacity building supports, building a peer network among members of the cohort, planning and executing annual all-cohort convenings, and managing communication with grantees.

PROJECT

Community Creativity Cohort 2 is a participant-led capacity building program that supports organizations to make art and culture central to problem solving on more issues, in more communities and across more sectors in the Bush Foundation region. After an open application process, the Foundation invited 40 organizations to be members of Cohort 2 in August 2018, and Cohort 2 is expected to conclude by the end of 2021. All 40 organizations of Cohort 2 are led by and serve communities of color/Indigenous communities and/or rural communities.

As a participant-led effort, the members of Cohort 2 identify the types of capacity building support they want and need. This is important because each of the 40 organizations has different needs. This approach is grounded in the belief that the organizations are in the best position to identify what they need to improve their work (though they sometimes may need someone from outside their organization to ask them some questions or provide ideas and resources they may not be aware of). Our hope is that each organization will make progress toward increasing their positive impact by more deeply integrating art and culture in problem solving.

The Bush Foundation's desired outcomes from Cohort 2 are: "more, better and better together." We want to see *more* integration of art and culture in problem solving — on *more* issues, in *more* communities and across *more* sectors; we want to see *better* work and *better* organizations; and we believe by working together, organizations can learn faster and better, do more and better work, and, together, make the region better, faster.

To help us evaluate progress, we are working with a developmental evaluation consultant, TerraLuna Collaborative: <https://www.terralunacollaborative.com/>. TerraLuna is embedded throughout the Cohort 2 program. The operating partner will be expected to work closely with TerraLuna, providing information to them and making course corrections based on feedback provided by TerraLuna and the Foundation as needed.

The operating partner will be responsible for:

- Supporting grantees.
- Coordinating capacity building supports.
- Building a peer network/community of practice of cohort members.
- Planning and executing annual cohort convenings.
- Managing communication with grantees.

The operating partner is expected to provide on-going technical support and advice to all 40-member organizations of Cohort 2 to achieve their desired capacity building goals. The operating partner will be in regular communication with cohort members.

Cohort members have identified their interest in the following capacity building support: trainings, learning exchanges, learning tours, small group gatherings, opportunities to attend conferences and access to coaches/mentors/consultants. The operating partner will be responsible for working with members of the cohort to prioritize the desired capacity building supports and coordinate implementation. While the operating partner may provide some direct capacity building support, it is anticipated the operating partner will subcontract with other providers. The operating partner will be responsible for managing all subcontractors (selecting, paying, etc.) and ensuring services provided are high-quality and culturally competent. The operating partner will also be responsible for ensuring that cohort members are aware of opportunities being provided and are able to participate. Importantly, some supports may serve many members of the cohort (e.g. training) while others may be for specific organizations (e.g. learning exchange; coach/mentor/consultant). The operating partner will need to work to ensure all members of the cohort are benefiting from the capacity building supports offered and that opportunities are being equitably distributed.

The Foundation hosted a three-day convening to start building a peer network/community of practice in November 2018. To plan and facilitate this convening the Foundation brought together an advisory committee. The operating partner may choose to establish and manage an advisory committee that could include both representatives from Cohort 2 organizations and people from the initial advisory committee to help plan future convenings (and help prioritize the capacity building supports listed above).

For the 2019 convening there is a committee of cohort members helping with the initial planning. The Foundation has secured a venue (Oak Ridge Conference Center, October 28 - 30) and hired an event planner to help with logistics (Painted Skye Management: <https://www.paintedskymanagement.com/>). The Foundation will pay for both the venue and the event planner directly. The operating partner will be expected to be actively involved in the planning and execution of the 2019 convening. The operating partner will be responsible for planning, executing, and paying for the cohort convenings in 2020 and 2021.

The operating partner will be the key point of contact for communication with members of the cohort. This will include communicating about capacity building opportunities, annual convenings, knowledge-sharing and other topics as needed. In addition, the operating partner will work on behalf of the Foundation to ensure timely submission of required reports and will be expected to work closely with our developmental evaluation partner, Terra Luna Collaborative. The Foundation will initially work closely with the operating partner to ensure an understanding of the of the program and a smooth transition. The operating partner will report to the Foundation on a regular basis.

The operating partner will need to have:

- Strong financial management, contracting, project management, event planning and communication capacity.
- Ability to provide technical assistance to organizations with varying capacity building needs.
- Cultural agility to work with organizations led by people of color, Indigenous people and people working in rural communities.
- A deep understanding of the role of art and culture in community problem solving.

We recognize a single organization may not have expertise in all these areas. We are open to proposals from partnerships of more than one organization. If organizations choose to apply as a partnership, they must identify the primary organization (i.e. grant recipient) responsible for subcontracting with other partners, reporting to the Foundation and ensuring all work is completed.

BUDGET

We envision committing up to \$1,750,000 from 2019 – 2021 to support members of Cohort 2, including funds for the operating partner's services. At least \$1,000,000 will be dedicated to capacity building support for cohort members. Some of the capacity building support may be provided directly by the operating partner while other supports are expected to be provided by subcontractors selected and managed by the operating partner. The remaining funds, up to \$750,000, will be allocated for the cohort convenings in 2020 and 2021 and direct costs of the operating partner to support grantees, coordinate subcontractors, and work with the Foundation and its evaluation partner, etc.

PROPOSALS

Proposals will be evaluated based on responses to the points outlined below.

Please provide an overview of how you propose to:

- Support grantees. How will you develop and manage relationships with all 40 organizations and support the progress of each organization towards their self-defined goals?
- Coordinate capacity building supports. How will you coordinate capacity building supports requested by Cohort 2 members including prioritizing what is needed, coordinating trainers and/or other subcontractors, ensuring members are able to participate fully, etc.?
- Build a network. How will you support members of the cohort to build a strong peer network/community of practice by facilitating communication between and among cohort members?
- Execute annual convening. How will you oversee all aspects of the annual cohort convening including logistics (e.g. identifying and securing venue, managing food/beverage, registration, lodging, reimbursements for travel costs, etc.) and content (e.g. planning agenda, contracting facilitators/speakers, etc.)? The Foundation has started this process for the 2019 convening and will share this information with the operating partner.
- Manage communication. How will you manage communication with all 40 organizations, including communication with the developmental evaluation partner, Terra Luna Collaborative?
- Other. Please include information about other elements you think might be important for the successful implementation of Cohort 2.

Proposals should outline the applicant's qualifications, including (1) examples of similar work or processes you've led in the past; (2) why you are interested in leading this work and (3) why you think you are the right fit for this opportunity. Please address:

- Mission/Values. Include your mission and values.
- Cultural competency. Provide evidence of your ability to work respectfully and effectively with communities of color – particularly Native American communities – and rural communities. Provide experience working with people from the Bush Foundation region.
- Qualifications of organization and key personnel. Experience and/or evidence of ability of key personnel to:
 - o Advance the integration of art and culture into community problem solving.
 - o Support the capacity building of nonprofit organizations.
 - o Coordinate a wide range of capacity building supports.
 - o Support the creation of a community of practice or peer network.

- Develop and execute convenings.
- Manage communications, particularly between a Foundation and grantees.
- Provide adequate financial management and oversight.
- Partnership. If applying as a partnership, identify the primary partner (i.e. grant recipient). Outline the roles and responsibilities of each partner and provide information about each partner's qualifications and experience. Provide information regarding partners experience working together in the past.
- Subcontractors. Provide information on your experience working with subcontractors (e.g. selecting, hiring, managing, paying, etc.). Provide information on how you envision using subcontractors and how you will go about identifying and selecting subcontractors. Please provide information about any subcontractors you expect might participate.
- Budget. Provide a budget for the proposed work from 2019 – 2021 that does not exceed \$1,750,000.

SUBMISSION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Proposals will be accepted from both 501(c)(3) public charities, government entities and other types of businesses. Applicants do not need to be in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota or one of the 23 Native nations that share the same geography, but preference will be given to applicants with experience working in this region.

Submit proposals of no more than 10 total pages to communitycreativity@bushfoundation.org by noon Central on Thursday, April 11, 2019.

Organizations interested in this opportunity are encouraged to participate in an informational webinar from 10:30 – 11:30 am CT on Monday, March 25, 2019. To register for the webinar, please visit <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8145731192156376332>. If you are not able to participate in this webinar, it will be recorded and available at <http://bfdn.org/RFPCCC2>.

The webinar will also cover a separate opportunity we are offering – the opportunity for a nonprofit organization to operate the Creative Community Leadership Institute: <http://bfdn.org/RFPCCLI>

If, following the webinar, you have other questions or need more information, they can be submitted by e-mail to communitycreativity@bushfoundation.org.

A team of Bush Foundation staff will review all proposals and select finalists. Finalists will be notified by the end of April and may be asked to meet with Foundation staff either in-person or by video conference at that time. Final selection is expected by the end of May and we hope to have the operating partner under contract before June 2019.

ABOUT US

The Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native Nations that share the same geography. Established in 1953 by 3M executive Archibald Bush and his wife, Edyth, the Foundation works to inspire and support creative problem solving – within and across sectors – to make our region better for everyone.

The Foundation's Community Creativity strategic initiative is grounded in our belief that art and culture are vital assets for people and communities working to solve problems and discover new opportunities because they can help:

- People think bigger and differently about what's possible.

- Encourage more people to make a difference in their community.
- Build stronger connections between people.

We are particularly interested in supporting communities of color, Indigenous communities and rural communities.