REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

CREATIVE FORCES
NEA MILITARY HEALING ARTS NETWORK

COMBAT VETERANS/MILITARY AND VETERAN FAMILY RESILIENCE LITERATURE REVIEW AND NEEDS-ASSESSMENT REPORT

IMPACTS ON THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF MILITARY FAMILIES OF COMBAT VETERANS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES, POST TRAUMATIC STRESS AND ASSOCIATED PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH ISSUES

DESCRIPTION/SPECIFICATIONS/STATEMENT OF WORK

OVERVIEW

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The intent of this contract is to conduct a target population needs-assessment report for the National Endowment for the Arts’ Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network. The report will aggregate knowledge from multiple fields of study to improve capacity of Creative Forces clinical and community programs that seek to improve support for service members, veterans and families confronting the signature wounds of our most recent wars; traumatic brain injuries and their associated psychological health issues. The ultimate goal of the report is to provide pertinent background information on military and veteran family resilience and needs to inform efforts to improve the well-being and quality of life for these target populations via arts engagement support delivered by the Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network located in and around Creative Forces clinical sites.

Since 2011, this military healing arts partnership with the Department of Defense has supported creative arts therapies for service members with traumatic brain injury and associated psychological health issues initially with two military medical facilities in the Washington, DC, area—the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NCoE) at Walter Reed Bethesda in Maryland, and the NCoE Intrepid Spirit-1 at Fort Belvoir in Virginia. More information about Creative Forces can be found on the NEA website.
Beginning in the Fall of 2016, the Creative Forces program expanded to nine additional clinical sites, including a VA Medical Center, and the development of a telehealth program. The expansion effort includes increasing access to therapeutic arts activities and community-based arts programs for military members, veterans, and their families in local communities at each of the 11 clinical sites. This includes supporting the development of an arts and community-based military and veteran family support network made up of state, regional, and local arts agencies, non-profit organizations, artists, and other local partners. The intent of the local community network is to extend support for current and former creative arts therapies patients and their families as they transition from treatment in a clinical setting to post-treatment participation in therapeutic arts interventions and/or community-based arts programming in a non-clinical or community setting. Through these local networks, Creative Forces encourages increased opportunities for military and veteran family populations, including those who have yet to access clinical care, to participate in therapeutic arts and community-based arts engagement interventions and programs to achieve lifelong health and well-being.

The Creative Forces program is also investing in clinical research on the biological, psycho-social, and comparative cost effectiveness of impacts and benefits of art and music therapy on service members, veterans, and their families. This effort has resulted in the establishment of clinical metrics to evaluate the impact and benefits of art and music therapy across the current Creative Forces sites, as well as the development of a long-term clinical research agenda and strategic frameworks. Research results inform research and treatment that applies to all patient communities. This effort includes a partnership with the Creative Arts Therapies PhD program at Drexel University in Philadelphia. Together, the NEA, Drexel, and the NICoE have supported research on themes communicated through mask making from active duty service members with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). Information related to Creative Forces’ clinical research agenda can be found here.

The Creative Forces program is also seeking to build upon its clinical research and evaluation work by investing in complementary efforts to identify plausible outcomes and benefits for Creative Forces population and family members who participate in arts-engagement activities in community settings. The long-term goal of that report is to improve delivery of arts programming in community settings and develop metrics that will enhance our understanding of the impacts and benefits of community-based arts engagement on the Creative Forces target population of military service members, veterans, and their families.

The purpose of the Combat Veterans/Military and Veterans Family Resilience literature review and needs assessment report will be to aggregate knowledge that can provide additional context on key issues facing these target populations and improve understanding of the stressors and
other challenges that impact their quality of life. Given the evidence collected and compiled under this effort, organizations providing or considering providing therapeutic arts services to the target population will have access to the current needs of the population, in order to better align programming with the target population needs. The evidence created through the capture and compilation of the aggregated data will be used as one of the resources to guide CF’s strategic planning, evaluate programming, and consider new program design and implementation. Additionally, this content will be included as part of an online Creative Forces National Resource Center document library scheduled to be in place by the end of 2018 to support capacity-building efforts for the initiative and to enable more responsive support for these populations through Creative Forces clinical programming, research activities, and arts engagement efforts in clinical and community settings.

RESPONSIBILITIES

B. PROJECT SCOPE AND DELIVERABLES

This contract will lead to the development of a target population needs-assessment report that can inform program capacity development of Creative Forces clinical and community programs of Creative Forces, over the next three to five years. The needs assessment shall be build upon the current research and evaluation study findings, white papers or reports, interviews/facilitated discussion with individuals and organizations working with the target populations, and or other information (i.e., both academic and “gray” literature) and other information that can address the following subsets of the target population.
The overall population of Creative Forces includes: military personnel (to include Reserve and Air National Guard), veterans, their families, and caregivers dealing with the effects of traumatic brain injuries, Post Traumatic Stress, and other associated psychological health issues.

Specific categories of the target population that the contractor shall address include:

- Family Members
  - Spouses
  - Children
  - Parents, Siblings,
  - Other family members
- Caregivers of military members and veterans suffering from TBI, PTS, and other associated psychological health issues
- Needs based on phase of the military continuum
  - Pre-deployment
  - Deployment
  - Redeployment (resiliency)
Potential outcomes (such as but not limited to):

- Summary of needs by target population categories, including stressors and other challenges that impact quality of life
- Identification of prior needs and associated programming that has met the need
- Explanation of current programming designed to meet target population needs
- Identification of gaps in existing programming
- Provide context on unique needs related to community engagement

The knowledge domains are:

- Research findings that identify challenges facing military family members and caregivers
- Research findings (e.g., from secondary dataset analyses) that can improve a general understanding of the needs of military families confronting the challenges of a family member with traumatic brain injuries, Post Traumatic Stress, and other associated psychological health issues
- Relevant research and evaluation findings, measurement strategies, and data-collection tools associated with community-based health interventions (i.e., not just arts-related) that have shown promise for improving health and well-being of military families and caregivers
- Relevant research and evaluation findings regarding access to health intervention activities (i.e. factors such as transportation, program locations, etc)

Furthermore, the contractor shall engage a broad array of internal and external military family subject matter experts in relevant areas of research, program evaluation, community and individual wellness and metrics development, including those currently engaged with the Creative Forces clinical and community program build-outs in the local sites. With support from the project team, the contractor will plan and facilitate interviews, discussions, teleconferences, and/or focus groups to invite feedback, insight, and comments from SMEs across a diverse set of sectors. The purpose of these engagements shall be to:

- Assemble and synthesize findings on the needs of military families from the latest research and policy efforts. Examples of these could include but are not limited to: Resources from the Nathanson Family Resilience Center at UCLA; Research and resources highlighted by the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue; Blue Star Families deployment resources and associated programming for families
Toolkit for Non-Profit Organizations serving Post 9/11 Veterans from the George W. Bush Institute highlighting the needs of unique sets of cohorts within the veteran community; “Improving Support for America’s Hidden Heroes” and “Hidden Heroes: America’s Military Caregivers” Studies commissioned by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation.

- Gather best practices and review case studies to determine promising lines of inquiry, and potential alignment with Creative Forces clinical and community program outcomes. Examples of these could include but are not limited to: “The Creative Forces Clinical Research Framework and Agenda” (2018), “Creative Forces Research Inventory” (continually updated), “The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth” NEA report (2012) & “Serving Military Families in the 21st Century” and other resources from the Military Family Research Institute” & the “Arts, Health & Wellbeing Across the Military Continuum” report from Americans for the Arts

- Review program strategy and evaluation models, including but not limited to: “Engaging Veterans through Creative Expression” pilot evaluation guide from the Oklahoma Arts Council, Americans for the Arts’ “Arts Deployed” action guide for military arts programming, “The National Endowment for the Arts Guide to Community-Engaged Research in the Arts and Health” response to needs identified by federal Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development, and references on Creative & Credible

- Review efforts to develop metrics to measure relevant impacts or outcomes, including but not limited to: Research studies from the “The Veterans Metrics Initiative” and “When the Going Gets Tough” NEA report on barriers and motivations on arts attendance

The research synthesis document will include:

- Description of military family member demographics and population profile (pre and post 9/11);
- Description of the unique challenges for military families who are dealing with the impacts of a family member with traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress and associated psychological health effects;
- Evidence-based recommendations of categories of plausible health and well-being-related outcomes for military families;
- Evidence-based examples of programs (may be both arts and non-arts) that are meeting family needs in one or more of these categories;
- Prioritization of the impacts that can be measured through the types of interventions delivered by non-clinical practitioners to achieve military and veteran family needs.
**Requirements for All Report Deliverables**

Each report deliverable resulting from this contract will include a Microsoft Word version. Consistent with other NEA publications, this report should follow *The Chicago Manual of Style* and the NEA style guide, which will be provided to the contractor at the time of award. All sources shall be fully cited in report deliverables. Electronic versions of all tables, charts, graphs, and data visualizations should be submitted in the program that was used to create them (e.g., Excel, Photoshop, Tableau), and the contractor shall work with NEA staff to determine an appropriate and compatible file format to use. The contractor shall be responsible for ensuring compatibility of submissions.

**C. DETAILED SPECIFICATIONS**

The contractor shall perform the following tasks:

C.1 *Project Coordination.*

a) Organize and attend a project kick-off meeting with the project oversight team
b) Prepare a detailed timeline and work plan
c) Communicate regularly with AFTA and the NEA including participating in regular teleconferences with the project oversight team and preparing minutes documenting these meetings and submitting mid-project update report.
d) Assign a project lead to serve as the primary point of contact for coordination of the project and execution of deliverables; provide contact information and bios for all personnel assigned to project

C.2 *Project Kick-off Meeting.* The contractor shall meet with the project oversight team to review project tasks, timeline and co-plan the project. The contractor shall prepare a memorandum summarizing the discussion and making note of decisions made. This meeting may take place on-site or via videoconference or teleconference.

C.3 *Timeline/Work Plan.* The contractor shall prepare a detailed timeline and work plan for accomplishing the remaining tasks of the contract, incorporating input from the kick-off meeting. The contractor shall first submit a draft timeline and work plan for review by the project director following the kick-off meeting. Following the receipt of feedback from the project director, the contractor shall prepare and submit a final timeline and work plan, which will include a detailed description of all analytical methods and data sources to be used in the study.
C.4 Communications. The contractor shall hold regular teleconferences with the project oversight team and prepare minutes documenting these meetings. Approximately 3 – 5 teleconferences shall be held and may be held more or less frequently at the discretion of the project director or upon request by the contractor. Contractor shall submit a mid-project progress report not exceeding 1 page on or by the 15th day of September.

C.5. Literature review. The contractor shall produce a synthesis report that includes a Literature review and Needs Assessment Report as outlined in Section B on the needs of military and veteran families with a family member coping with traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress and associated psychological health issues.

C.6 Summary of Subject Matter Expert (SME) Engagement. Throughout the implementation of activities, the contractor shall engage with the advice of the project team, various subject matter experts across relevant fields in the gathering of information and identification of promising practices. The contractor shall produce a summary of the subject matter expert (SME) interviews, discussions, and other engagement efforts conducted as a part of the needs assessment activities. The summary shall be included as an attachment within the literature review and needs assessment report.

While the NEA and AFTA Creative Forces project directors and the project oversight team will provide some materials to include in the review, the contractor is responsible for identifying materials to include in the literature review and needs assessment report.

The contractor is responsible for preparing a written report summarizing the findings. The report, excluding attachments, will not exceed thirty to forty pages and will be written in plain language suitable for a general audience. The contractor shall submit a proposed outline of the paper for AFTA and NEA approval prior to preparing the first draft. The AFTA and the NEA may review up to two drafts prior to accepting the final deliverable.
D. DELIVERY SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Phase/Task</th>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Due Date (Weeks after Kick-off Mtg)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  Project kick-off</td>
<td>Planning meeting with NEA and AFTA staff</td>
<td>0 weeks</td>
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<td>Memo summarizing discussion &amp; decisions</td>
<td>1 week</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.  Timeline/ work plan</td>
<td>Draft of timeline &amp; work plan</td>
<td>1 week</td>
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<td>Finalized timeline &amp; work plan</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
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<td>3.  Communications</td>
<td>Regularly scheduled meetings and minutes</td>
<td>3 – 5 TBD</td>
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<td>Mid-project Report</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
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<td>4.  Research Synthesis</td>
<td>Interview Protocol</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Literature Review &amp; Field</td>
<td>Draft Lit Review and Needs Assessment Report (to include attachments)</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
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<td>Scan)</td>
<td>Final Lit Review and Needs Assessment Report *</td>
<td>NLT Oct 31, 2018</td>
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* The contractor shall provide for up to two (2) rounds of feedback from the project oversight team on all draft deliverables.

E. CONTRACT PERIOD AND AMOUNT

The work contained under this contract shall begin on or about Aug 10, 2018 and conclude on or about Oct 31, 2018. All work must be completed by Oct 31, 2018.

The cost for support services and deliverables of this RFP shall not exceed $50,000

F. EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD

EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Understanding of the Project (40 points)
2. Technical Approach (20 points)
3. Personnel Qualifications and Experience (30 points)
4. Price (10 points)

Understanding of the Project (40 points)

The contractor demonstrates a thorough understanding of the project, as shown through discussion of the rationale and purpose for the project. The contractor provides evidence of a clear understanding of the state of research, program evaluation and metrics development.
across various fields on impacts and benefits of clinic-to-community collaborations and community-based art opportunities in support of Creative Forces military and veteran populations. The contractor does not simply repeat the statement of work, but shows an independent understanding of the issues and context inherent to qualitative research.

**Technical Approach (20 points)**

The contractor’s approach is succinct and logical in format, consistent with the tasks to be accomplished, and fully addresses the purposes described in the statement of work. The proposed technical approach clearly specifies and describes the intended work under each task and presents a work schedule by task that includes a timetable for deliverables. The proposal discusses the contractor’s proposed approach to all deliverables, including the structure and contents of the research synthesis and strategic framework document. The contractor identifies potential challenges to the project’s success and presents strategies for addressing them. Overall, the technical approach is of a high quality and demonstrates a thorough technical proficiency.

**Personnel Qualifications and Experience (Past Performance) (30 points)**

The contractor demonstrates that the proposed personnel, including subcontractors (if applicable), possess experience conducting literature reviews and environmental scans; the ability to synthesize intelligence and information from across multiple fields of knowledge collecting information through interviews, and other engagement strategies such as focus groups. The contractor provides evidence of having conducted tasks similar to the work outlined in the RFP (with examples cited, and links to relevant work products). The proposed project manager has demonstrated experience in managing projects of comparable scale and complexity (cite examples).

**Price (10 points)**

The proposed budget is appropriate to the administration of the project. Americans for the Arts will evaluate the contractor’s proposed prices to make a determination that the costs are fair and reasonable in relation to the services provided. The contractor shall provide a reasonable breakdown of their costs to allow Americans for the Arts to make an assessment of the various components of the overall price. The breakdown shall clearly identify and provide costs by key personnel and task as well as the breakdown between labor costs and other direct costs.
REQUIREMENTS

G. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

SUBMIT:
- Cover Letter
- Proposal
- Resume(s) of all project personnel
- 2 to 3 Writing Samples

SUBMIT PROPOSALS TO:
- By email: creativeforces@artsusa.org.
- By mail: Attn: Creative Forces Project Administrator, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, 6th Floor, Washington DC 20005

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:
- By email: Received no later than 5:00 pm EDT, July 20, 2018.
- By mail: Postmarked no later than Jul 20, 2018

SUBMITTING QUESTIONS:

All questions pertaining to this solicitation may be directed to creativeforces@artsusa.org. All responses to applicant questions will be posted to the RFP public site at www.AmericansfortheArts.org/creativeforces. All questions must be submitted no later than 4pm EDT on Jul 16, 2018 in order to guarantee posting to the public site. All responses will be publicly posted to the website on an ongoing basis.