

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FACILITATOR

DESCRIPTION/SPECIFICATIONS/STATEMENT OF WORK

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The intent of this contract is to develop a series of conceptual frameworks for the Creative Arts Therapies (art, music, and dance/movement) and the therapeutic writing program within **Creative Forces™: NEA Military Healing Arts Network**.

Creative Forces™: NEA Military Healing Arts Network is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in partnership with the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs and the state and local arts agencies. This initiative serves the special needs of military patients and veterans who have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions, as well as their families and caregivers. Administrative support for the initiative is provided by Americans for the Arts.

This task is intended to support the goals outlined in the Creative Forces Clinical Research: A Strategic Framework and Five-Year Agenda (2018-2022). In an initial step to establish a theoretical basis for its future research activities, Creative Forces will develop conceptual frameworks for understanding better how the individual creative arts therapy disciplines (and therapeutic writing) function within the entire program. This project will avail fully of existing clinical research tools, paradigms, and expertise within individual creative arts therapy disciplines. Creative Forces seeks a Contractor to facilitate the development of these conceptual frameworks. The ultimate goal of this project is to support development of new research hypotheses while informing recommendations for common inputs, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes (short- and long-term) for the Creative Forces clinical program.

Since 2011, this National Endowment for the Arts partnership with the Department of Defense has supported creative arts therapies for service members with traumatic brain injury and associated psychological health issues. Beginning in the fall of 2016, the Creative Forces program expanded to nine additional clinical sites, including a VA Medical Center, and a telehealth program. In addition to increasing access to Creative Arts Therapies, the expansion effort includes growing 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. 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. More information about Creative Forces can be found on the NEA [website](#).

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](#).

B. PROJECT SCOPE AND DELIVERABLES

This contract will entail development of conceptual frameworks for the Creative Arts Therapies disciplines and the therapeutic writing program within the National Endowment for the Arts' Creative Forces: NEA Military Healing Arts Network. In an initial step to establish a theoretical basis for its future research activities, Creative Forces will develop conceptual frameworks for understanding better how the individual creative arts therapy disciplines (and therapeutic writing) function within the entire program. This project will avail fully of existing clinical research tools, paradigms, and expertise within individual creative arts therapy disciplines. Thus, the ultimate goal of the conceptual framework process is to support development of research hypotheses, while also informing recommendations for common inputs, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes (short- and long-term) for the Creative Forces Clinical program.

Developing Creative Arts Therapies Conceptual Frameworks (inform a research model). Many layers of complexity surround the creative arts therapies, both as discipline-specific interventions

and as research domains. The creative arts therapies are distinct, regulated health professions and they differ on multiple dimensions: modality, clinical implementation, scopes of practice, standards of practice, ethical codes, and the like. Further, within each discipline, a variety of theoretical perspectives are currently being used to drive clinical practices and explain treatment outcomes. For an effective and rigorous research program within and across creative arts therapies, there is a need for theory-driven research guided by compelling research questions and hypotheses.

To that end, a conceptual framework will be developed for each of the four areas of clinical focus within Creative Forces' clinical services, representing three creative arts therapies professions: art therapy, music therapy, and dance/movement therapy—plus the therapeutic use of writing. Conceptual frameworks synthesize existing knowledge and identify and illustrate the relationships among all relevant systemic, organizational, individual, or other salient factors/variables that may influence program/project operation and the successful achievement of program or project goals. Conceptual frameworks help clarify assumptions about causal relationships and can help identify indicators for measurement. Conceptual frameworks set the stage for presentation of hypotheses that drive research investigations.

The Contractor will work with four Task-Specific Working Groups to develop conceptual frameworks and research hypotheses for each of the three professions (art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy) and for therapeutic writing. The Working Groups will be established by the Creative Forces Clinical Research Advisor prior to the contract start date. The Working Groups will include Creative Forces therapists and field experts (researchers, practitioners). The Contractor shall provide guidance for developing a theory-based conceptual frameworks for each profession and therapeutic writing and prescribe a reporting cycle and reporting template for Working Groups to use to document their work. The Contractor shall convene Working Groups separately and as needed to review theoretical works and current research in their discipline and draft, or assist Working Group members in drafting, a conceptual framework for each profession and therapeutic writing, research hypotheses, and an inventory of current, vetted research protocols and measures used in the respective fields. The Contractor shall work with the Clinical Research Advisor in obtaining feedback from other Creative Forces creative arts therapists and field experts (both researchers and practitioners) prior to finalizing the documents.

The conceptual frameworks that result from this process will identify the intended outcomes for each of the three professions (art therapy, music therapy, dance/movement therapy) and for therapeutic writing, and they will explain how the distinct outcomes are achieved. This is essential groundwork for theory-driven research. The Contractor will bring to this process expertise in conceptual frameworks, research, group facilitation, analysis, and reporting.

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) Prepare and distribute agendas for four meetings (one in-person meeting and three virtual) for each Working group (16 meetings total), prepare read-aheads and reports, and facilitate the meetings (Creative Forces provides logistical and financial support for convening the Working Groups, including meeting time/date, location, and travel coordination and travel support for Working Group members);
- d) Communicate regularly with AFTA and the NEA including participating in regular teleconferences (every other week for the project duration) with the project oversight team and preparing minutes documenting these meetings and submitting a mid-project update report;
- e) Assign a project lead to serve as the primary point of contact for assistance with 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. Prior to the kick-off meeting, the Contractor shall review pertinent resources, including Creative Forces Clinical Research: A Strategic Framework and Five-Year Agenda (2018-2022), Mapping a Clinical Research Agenda for Creative Forces, and the Creative Forces Research and Scholarly Manuscripts Inventory.

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. The work plan will include the Contractor's proposed method for development of conceptual frameworks, identification of research hypotheses for each creative arts therapy profession and therapeutic writing, and creation of an inventory of current, vetted research protocols and measures used in each field. This can be based on Maxwell's (2005¹)

¹ Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach (2nd Ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

method, or other method recommended by the Contractor. 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 methods to be used.

C.4 Facilitation of Conceptual Framework Development. The Contractor shall implement the approved work plan to guide and facilitate the development of theory-based, conceptual frameworks for four Working Groups (art therapy, dance/movement therapy, music therapy, and therapeutic writing) under the oversight of the Clinical Forces Research Advisor. The Contractor is responsible for collecting the input from the working groups and authoring Conceptual Framework drafts, soliciting input, and producing final drafts. The final deliverables – the four conceptual frameworks and associated research hypotheses and inventories of current, vetted research protocols and measures – will be reviewed by the Clinical Research Advisor and other individuals assigned to the review; the Contractor shall anticipate up to three rounds of feedback before the final deliverables are accepted.

D. DELIVERY SCHEDULE

Project Phase/Task	Deliverable	Due Date (after award)
1. Project Kick-off	Planning meeting with NEA and AFTA staff	0 weeks
	Memo summarizing discussion & decisions	1 week
2. Timeline/work plan	Draft of timeline & work plan	1 week
	Finalized timeline & work plan	2 weeks
3. Communications	Regularly scheduled meetings and minutes	every other week
	Mid-project report	12 weeks
4. Facilitation of Conceptual Framework Development	Hold Initial Tel/Con meetings with each of the four Working Groups	Weeks 2 – 6
	Hold at least one in-person meeting with each of the four Working Groups	8 weeks
	Conceptual Frameworks Completed	6 months

E. CONTRACT PERIOD AND AMOUNT

The work contained under this contract shall begin on or about November 5, 2018 and conclude on or about April 30, 2019. All work must be completed by May 31, 2019.

The cost for support services and deliverables of this RFP shall not \$60,000

F. EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD

EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

Understanding of the Project (30 points)

The Contractor demonstrates expertise in generating conceptual frameworks, research hypotheses, and related protocols and measurement strategies, as well as a thorough understanding of the overall project, as shown by discussing the rationale and purpose for the project. The Contractor provides evidence of a clear understanding of successful group facilitation methods. The Contractor does not simply repeat the statement of work but shows an independent understanding of the issues and context inherent to researching and developing conceptual frameworks through skilled engagement with stakeholders.

Technical Approach (30 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 details of the model for development of the four conceptual frameworks, research hypotheses, and an inventory of already-vetted research protocols and measures, which will be produced by engaging effectively with the Working Groups. 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 he or she possesses experience in the development of conceptual frameworks, group facilitation, research, analysis, and reporting. 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). Ideally, the Contractor is a field expert in a health-related research.

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.

G. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

SUBMIT:

- Cover Letter
- Proposal
- Budget
- Resume(s) of all project personnel

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, October 14, 2018**.
- **By mail:** Postmarked no later than **October 14, 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 by email to**

creativeforces@artsusa.org. All responses will be returned in writing and publicly posted to the website on an ongoing basis. Questions must be received **no later than 4pm EDT on Monday, October 1, 2018** in order to guarantee posting to the public site.