



Request for Proposals- Strategic Planning Services **August 25, 2023**

Summary: The Vermont Arts Council is seeking a consultant to facilitate the process of developing a new strategic plan for the organization. The consultant will support the staff, board of directors, community members, and key stakeholders in a process to create a five-year strategic plan that sets a bold vision for the role of the arts in Vermont and how to achieve it. Working with a Strategic Planning Core Team made up of 6-7 members of the staff and board, the consultant will craft and implement the strategic planning process, gather data and input from a broad coalition of stakeholders and community members, and provide support and facilitation to shape the strategic plan. The strategic plan will be finalized by June of 2024.

Background: The Vermont Arts Council has been the state's primary provider of arts funding, advocacy, and information since 1965. Our work is based on the understanding that the arts transform individual lives, connect people more deeply to each other, energize the economy, and sustain the vibrant cultural landscape of Vermont. The Council invests in artists and the creative process, arts-integrated learning in K-12 classrooms, cultural organizations that engage audiences, and creatives across the region in outstanding arts experiences and opportunities.

The Vermont Arts Council is also the home of the Vermont Creative Network, a collaborative, statewide effort to bring together Vermont's creative sector, quantify its impact, and advocate for its growth in the future. We believe that a thriving creative sector is core to sustainable economic development and thriving communities in Vermont.

The Council has a deep commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and works, both within the organization and throughout the state, to advance anti-racism and accessibility practices.

More information can be found at <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/>.

Project Description/Scope of Work/Timeline: The Council seeks a consultant to facilitate the process of developing a new strategic plan for the organization. This includes:

- Lead a data gathering process to evaluate the state and needs of the field and identify challenges/opportunities/major changes that will impact the strategic plan. This may include a statewide survey, small group data gathering sessions, or one-on-one interviews (this data gathering phase will have inclusion and access at its core). *October-December 2023*
- Summarize findings from data gathering *December 2023- January 2024*
- Facilitate board/staff strategic retreat and summarize takeaways from the retreat that will impact the strategic plan *January 2024*



- Create and implement a system for gathering input and feedback on the strategic plan from board, staff, and stakeholders *Winter 2024*
- Facilitate Core Team meetings to discuss and shape the mission, vision, and values of the organization; identify key plan priorities; and outline the strategic plan *February-April 2024*
- Facilitate small group meetings to draft key goals, and actions to support key plan priorities *February-April 2024*
- Support the Core Team to create a final draft of the plan and get review and input from board, staff, and stakeholders *May-June 2024*
- 6-month and 1-year follow up meetings with the Core Team to assess the functionality of the plan *January 2025 and July 2025*

Qualifications: We are seeking a consultant with experience in community-based facilitation and strategic planning, with a commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. Consultants should be practiced in consent-based decision making and have an understanding that a strategic plan is only as strong as the process and relationships that built it. We are looking for a consultant who can use the creative process to develop a strategic plan that reflects the values of the organization, and can bring fun, play, and creativity to facilitation.

Proposal Submission: Please submit proposals to info@vermontartscouncil.org by September 25, 2023. Proposals should be no more than 2 pages in length and should include your experiences and strategic planning philosophy and approach, qualifications, relevant examples of past work, and a quote for services. Proposals will be reviewed by the Strategic Planning Core Team, with an estimated start date of late October 2023.