



## **Arts Ed Collaborative Strategic Planning Consultant RFQ**

### **About Arts Ed Collaborative**

Since 1998, Arts Ed Collaborative (AEC) has partnered with educators to unlock the transformative power of the arts in Southwestern Pennsylvania. We do this by facilitating professional learning, conducting program evaluations, advocating for arts education, and connecting educators to one another and to resources in the field. We envision a diverse network of educators in Southwestern Pennsylvania that immerses young people—regardless of appearance, ability, income, or ZIP Code—in powerful, personally relevant arts learning that transforms their sense of self, ability to share thoughts and feelings, and capacity to shape communities.

AEC is an independent project of Carnegie Museum of Art (CMOA), one of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh (CMP). AEC operates as an independent project of CMOA under its own distinct mission. AEC is operationally distinct from CMOA, employing dedicated staff and operating a separate organizational budget. AEC fundraises independently from other CMP fundraising efforts and, while accessing some institutional resources at CMP, has developed an independent sustainability plan. Work at AEC is guided by an advisory committee that remains separate from CMOA and CMP.

### **Planning needs and consultant role**

We are coming to the end of our current strategic plan and are seeking technical assistance with a new plan that moves us closer towards our vision in a sustainable and impactful manner given available resources. The mission, vision, and values we developed in 2019 still guide our work in meaningful ways today. The theory of change we developed as an extension of our vision has been well received across diverse audiences, both locally and nationally, and will be an important tool for future planning work. Our primary strategy for achieving our vision is engaging at the educator level. This occurs at the individual level as well as programmatically, structurally, and systemically. Our primary tactics include: professional learning, program evaluation, advocacy, and networking. Determining the balance of our portfolio across these four areas is a priority for our new planning process.

Over the past year, our advisory committee has engaged in some early strategic planning activities. This included:

- revisiting our values and identifying how they are currently manifested in our work as well as areas of growth (June 2022)
- aligning aspects of our theory of change to our current portfolio (February 2023)
- analyzing stakeholder survey data to inform challenges in the arts education field that AEC may need to address, AEC's strengths, and potential changes to AEC's portfolio (June 2023)

While our mission, vision, and values are strong, we need to improve how we translate these into action through clear goals and timelines. We also need to develop transparent decision-making processes. An outside consultant would greatly benefit AEC's executive director's professional growth and the entire AEC team. Hiring a consultant would also increase AEC's bandwidth to authentically include different stakeholder groups in the planning process.

Arts Ed Collaborative seeks to hire a planning consultant with deep expertise in inclusive facilitation and liberated practices. The goals for the engagement include:

- Authentically including diverse stakeholder groups in the planning process
- Decerning what kind of portfolio AEC needs to build to be effective over the next several years
- Developing transparent decision-making processes to guide future decisions about AEC's efforts in the region
- Creating a new staff role to support the new plan (increasing staff back to five from the current team of four)
- Translating AEC's mission, vision, and values into action through clear goals and timelines

A successful planning process will include time and space for staff, advisors, and stakeholders to reflect, imagine, and co-create together. The planning consultant will design planning meetings, send agendas in advance, document each session, record the evolution of our collective thinking, and draft a final strategic planning document.

AEC has already blocked the following times for planning work to take place:

- Wednesday 11/15/23 from 4-6pm @ Carnegie Museum of Art: meeting with AEC staff and Advisory Committee
- Thursday 12/14/23 all day: AEC staff
- Friday 12/15/23 all day: AEC staff

## **Budget and timeline**

There is a budget of \$30,000 allocated to support the above activities.

- October 2023: publish RFQ + consultants submit materials
- November 2023:
  - select consultant, finalize contract, initiate planning, and calendar
  - document review and preparation for planning meeting
  - facilitate meeting with AEC staff and Advisory Committee
- December 2023: stakeholder engagement and staff planning retreat
- January 2024:
  - finalize strategic plan that refines AEC's portfolio and articulates transparent decision-making processes to guide future decisions about AEC's efforts in the region
  - develop job description for fifth AEC staff position to support the new plan
- February-March 2024: translate AEC's mission, vision, and values into action through clear goals and timelines and staff assignments

## **Submission process**

Interested parties are asked to submit the following by October 31, 2023:

- A company description
- Resumes for all consultants who would work on this project
- Descriptions and/or artifacts from 1-2 past projects that demonstrate past experience with the kind of planning support sought by AEC

Please submit all material to Yael Silk at [silky@artsedcollab.org](mailto:silky@artsedcollab.org) by 10/31/23.