

**Request for Proposals for  
Business Artist Accelerator  
related to the  
American Rescue Plan Act**



**Important Dates:**

**RFP Date of Release: Monday, December 4, 2023**

**RFP Responses Due: Friday, January 5, 2024**

The Alliance for Economic Development  
105 N. Hudson Street, Ste. 101, Oklahoma City, OK 73102

Proposals must be submitted as PDFs sent via email.

Proposals and/or questions may be submitted via email at:

[Daisy.Munoz@theallianceokc.org](mailto:Daisy.Munoz@theallianceokc.org)

And

[Joseph.Laws@theallianceokc.org](mailto:Joseph.Laws@theallianceokc.org)

## **Introduction**

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 was signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021. The legislation established the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF), which is intended to support state and local governments as they address the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on their communities, residents, and businesses.

The City of Oklahoma City has been allocated \$122,507,590 from the SLFRF to respond to the public health emergency and its negative economic impacts by providing assistance to households, small businesses, nonprofits and severely impacted industries, such as tourism, travel, and hospitality.

On September 14, 2021, City of Oklahoma City Council (the City) allocated \$37,000,000 from its SLFRF apportionment towards addressing the negative economic impacts of COVID-19; and on February 14, 2022, the City entered into an Operation Agreement with the Alliance for Economic Development of Oklahoma City (the Alliance) to provide management services for the Business Support Programs which aid small businesses and nonprofits, assist minority and disadvantaged businesses, and provide workforce development and job training/upskilling programs.

The City ARPA plan provides funding for small business/nonprofit support programs like technical assistance. The scope of small business/nonprofit technical assistance support includes business pre-accelerator and accelerator programs designed to assist early- and mid-stage firms by bolstering access to professional mentoring and training, networking, and capital resources.

## **Project Overview**

The *Oklahoma City Community Economic Recovery & Resiliency Study (2021)* by EY found that many businesses, particularly minority-owned businesses, continued to face cultural, skills, social mobility, and communication barriers during the COVID-19 economic recovery.

To address those barriers and other pre-existing economic disparities, EY recommended the funding of an inclusive business accelerators. EY noted:

“There [appears] to be some significant challenges [...] inhibiting the potential of entrepreneurs of color to move to the next level. These obstacles include—but are not limited to—the absence of a platform for minority founders to connect with investors; and a distinct absence of technical assistance resources and programs that are marketed to underrepresented founders.”

Additionally, the *Oklahoma City Community Economic Recovery & Resiliency Study (2021)* by EY noted the need for programs and capital to support small businesses. The study recommended partnership with existing accelerator programs and other entities as a means to improve access to funding, technical assistance, and professional networks for underrepresented entrepreneurs and founders.

According to the *State of the Arts 2023* report by the Oklahoma Arts Council, the arts industry experienced a \$47.3 million revenue loss throughout COVID-19, including 3,141 canceled contract artists, and 3,072 canceled service contracts. Prior to the pandemic, *The Arts and Economic Prosperity Study (2015)*, found that the impact of nonprofit arts and cultural

organizations in Oklahoma City's total industry generates \$602.7 million in total economic activity.

To fully leverage the role of the arts industry in economic development and address the challenges addressed by EY, The City and the Alliance are seeking qualified consultants to provide access to business training for entrepreneurs in the arts industry.

## **Project Goals**

The goal of the business artist accelerator program is to address the specific business needs and challenges individual artists of the following disciplines face: Visual Art, 3D Art, Textile Art, Photography, Cinematography, Music, and Performing artists. Addressing specific challenges within the arts industry will allow local artists to gain business education, access to opportunities, and increase the success of the arts in Oklahoma City.

The business artist accelerator consultant should provide qualified participants, at the minimum, the following during scheduled cohorts:

- Education on:
  - Career Planning
  - Organizational skills
  - Sound business practices
  - Time Management
  - Strategic planning and goal-setting
  - Market analysis
  - Accounting and financial management
  - How to fund your practice
  - Identifying and using resources
  - Grant Writing
  - Pricing
  - Access to inclusive capital networks
  - Contracts
  - Intellectual Property
  - Strategic communications
  - Personal Brand
  - Online presence and documentation
  - Learn how to bid on art projects
  - Engaging customers and selling your practice
  - Learn networking skills (elevator pitch)
  - Networking
  - Access to mentoring with industry professionals
  - The ability to learn and grow with other business owners
  - Learn how to leverage the experience of other leaders and their challenges
  - Accelerate business growth and become a better leader

## Program Participant Eligibility Requirements

Project funding can only serve accelerator cohort applicants who meet all of the following criteria:

- Be accepted to the Program
- For-profit business, registered with the Oklahoma Secretary of State
- Must be a practicing artist in Oklahoma City in any of the following categories since 2021:
  - Visual Art
  - 3D Art
  - Textile Art
  - Photography
  - Cinematography
  - Music
  - Performing artists
- Must be able to demonstrate records of business operations. Examples of records of business operations are contracts, articles of incorporations, tax returns, business license, business insurance, partnerships, evidence of completed work/projects, and income statements.
- Established at a physical location within Oklahoma City limits by March 3, 2021<sup>1</sup>, and at least one of the following: Either A, B, or C (at least one of the three):
  - (A) Minority-owned business
  - (B) Operating in Qualified Census Tracts (QCT)<sup>2</sup> ([see map here](#))
  - (C) Demonstration of negative impact due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, as defined and determined by the City of Oklahoma and the ARPA Program, since March 2021. The City of Oklahoma City will have final determination if an applicant's individual financial circumstance meets this criterion.
- The following businesses and organizations are ineligible to participate in the ARPA Program as beneficiaries:
  - Businesses that are not physically based within the City of Oklahoma City;
  - Businesses with any outstanding business-related liens or judgments;
  - Businesses that are in active default (not on a payment plan) with taxes or fees owed to the City of Oklahoma City or State of Oklahoma;
  - Government-owned entities or elected official offices;
  - Businesses engaged in any illegal activity; or
  - Any business related to the medical marijuana industry.

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<sup>1</sup> The business must be operating within Oklahoma City limits. To determine that, applicants must be able to demonstrate where normal business operations occur. P.O. Boxes or mail service location cannot be used to determine the physical location of a business. Businesses operating out of a co-working space as a place of business must have that business listed on their W9 as their official place of business and a lease or contract with said co-working space that began on or before April 1, 2022

<sup>2</sup> Use the primary place of business to determine if the business is operating within a Qualified Census Tract (QCT). Businesses must be located within the QCT by April 1, 2022, in order to qualify for the programs under QCT eligibility

## Organizational Experience

The Alliance is seeking RFP Respondents who meet the following criteria:

- Minimum of 3 years of experience in providing access to business training, professional development, mentoring, networking, and financial education in a short-term, cohort format.
- Delivery of a comprehensive local curriculum that addresses the challenges and opportunities for artists.
- A strong understanding of the barriers and challenges that inhibit the prosperity of historically underrepresented, marginalized, and disinvested artists as entrepreneurs.
- A proven ability to deliver a cohort structure that is additive and impactful to the larger arts industry and entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Relationships with professionals, leaders, and investors across multiple in the arts industry and across other sectors.

## Project Timeline

Project funds are allocated for use through September 2024. Priority will be placed on programs that are capable of:

Implementing and initiating with expediency  
Structuring a cohort in 2-6 month timeframe  
Completion of services by September 2024

## Policies and Regulations

RFP Respondents providing services under contract must follow all regulatory guidance pertaining to the SLFRF issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury, including the [Final Rule](#) and [Compliance and Reporting Guidance](#). Furthermore, any other federal, state, or local legislation that dictates requirements for spending ARPA funds must be adhered to as well. Respondents are strongly encouraged to read these regulations prior to submitting their response to this RFP.

In compliance with federal law and regulations, each contracted organization shall provide regular reports, backup documents, or information in regards to any ARPA grant award, including information about funds expended, the population served, and/or narratives or statistics demonstrating program success. Such reports, backup, or other information may be necessary for the Alliance and the City of Oklahoma City to comply with federal regulations and reporting requirements under the American Rescue Plan Act and Part 200 of the Uniform Requirements for federal funding.

Reimbursement of will be withheld if any requests for reports, backup, or other information are delinquent. More information on reporting will be provided at the time of award.

# Submittal Requirements

## Timeline

<b>RFP Date of Release</b>	12/4/2023
<b>RFP Submissions are Due</b>	1/5/2024 at 3 PM CST

## Requirements

Respondents will submit information to the Alliance in a single PDF. Response packets will include the following:

- Respondent’s name, address, email and telephone number.
- Designate the legal structure of the Respondent (e.g., 501(c)(3) nonprofit),
- Provide a concise description and history of the organization, and
- Articulate an “elevator pitch” for why the Respondent is best qualified to execute the project outlined in this RFP.
- Previous experiences with respect to business accelerators/pre-accelerators or serving historically underrepresented, marginalized, and disinvested entrepreneurs.
- Previous experience with federally funded programs
- Describe the program’s structure, eligibility requirements, intake/applicant screening process, partners, and goals/outcomes, to include descriptions of:
- Length of time required for applicants to complete training program or programs (short-term or long-term or both).
- Expected enrollment, graduation, and placement numbers (estimates).
- Engagement & recruitment strategy.
- Method of differentiating between eligible and ineligible cohort applicants
- Outreach to be conducted in diverse and marginalized communities (ethnic and demographic groups, women, veterans, individuals with criminal backgrounds, individuals with recent COVID 19 related job loss, etc.).
- Community partners participating and supporting engagement (please list and describe partnerships).
- Metrics to measure outreach methods and outcomes.
- Proof of active registration with the U.S. System for Award Management (<https://SAM.gov>).
- Clearly state if this is an existing program (with no changes to structure and/or eligibility), modified program (with changes to structure and/or eligibility), or an entirely new program being proposed.
- Cost proposal to support the project outlined in the RFP and fully encompass all activities in the Respondent’s proposal, including cost of program-by-program participant, outreach costs, and administration/overhead.

## Evaluation Criteria

Respondents will be evaluated based on overall experience and depth of resources.

Respondents will be evaluated on understanding of the project, technical proposal, adequacy and adherence to all rules and regulations governing the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) as established in Sections 602 and 603 of the Social Security Act, and the provisions of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200) (the Uniform Guidance), including the cost principles and restrictions on general provisions for selected items of cost.

The Alliance reserves the right to reject any and all responses, to amend this RFP and the process itself, or to discontinue the process at any time.

### Evaluation Criteria

Category	Range of Available Points
Understanding of Project	0-30
Technical Proposal	0-30
Staff Availability	0-20
Qualifications of Personnel	0-30
Past Performance	0-25

## Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, creed, religion, sex or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

## Anti-Lobbying.

Consultant agrees that it or any agent or agency thereof, will not and has not used Federal appropriated funds to pay any person or organization for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of Congress, officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a member of Congress in connection with obtaining any Federal contract, grant or any other award covered by 31 U.S.C. § 1352.

## Conflicts of Interest.

Consultant and no other officer, employee, or agent of Consultant who exercises any functions or responsibilities in connection with the planning or carrying out of the Scope of Work, shall have any personal financial interest, direct, or indirect, in this Agreement. Consultant shall take appropriate steps to assure compliance with this Section.

## Attachment A

Program eligibility information. Vendor will be responsible for obtaining from applicants.

Business Primary Question	Component/Follow Up Question
Registered Business Name	
Physical Business Address	
Individual Name (First and Last)	
Primary Business Email	
Primary Business Telephone	
Business Website (if they have one)	
Ownership structure	Owner names Ownership %s Race/ethnicity of owners Gender Identification
Does your business have any physical locations outside of Oklahoma City Limits?	If Yes, please list addresses
Business establishment date	
Do any of the owners have outstanding liens/judgements?	If yes, a certification that you will not use this program to directly or indirectly remediate the outstanding lien/judgement
Have you received federal funding to cover Covid-related expenses you are seeking assistance for?	If Yes, please explain
Do any of the owners, their spouses, or any household members work for the Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority, the Alliance for Economic Development of Oklahoma City, or the City of Oklahoma City?	If Yes, please explain.
Art medium	
Type/description of business	
Please describe your experience as a practicing artist	
Estimated Business Revenue	
/Media consent	
Have you participated, applied for, Photo or been awarded funds/services from any other ARPA-funded program?	