



Request for Proposals

ArtsEdSearch Consultant, Nov. 2022

Introduction

Arts Education Partnership (AEP) is a project within Education Commission of the States (ECS). ECS is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization focused on state-level education policy. ECS' approximately 60 staff members support 350 Commissioners who represent the spectrum of state policymakers, from governors and legislators to state boards and chiefs of education.

AEP has been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education since 1995, and has been administered by ECS since 2015. AEP has six staff members that serve more than 180 partner and affiliate organizations. Partners and affiliates work in all facets of arts education, from local arts organizations that provide classes for youth to national arts service organizations who engage in advocacy and thought leadership for the field. AEP staff members are dedicated to co-learning with partners and affiliates. As part of ECS, AEP focuses on arts education policy and is committed to remaining nonpartisan and not engaging in advocacy.

ArtsEdSearch, a project of the Arts Education Partnership, launched in 2012 as an online clearinghouse of research focused on the outcomes of arts education for students and educators, both during and outside the school day. Today, ArtsEdSearch includes summaries of key findings from more than 300 research studies. ArtsEdSearch currently focuses on sharing research that examines how arts education — in both discrete arts classes and integrated arts lessons — affects students' cognitive, personal, social and civic development, as well as how integrating the arts into a school curriculum affects educators' instructional practice and engagement in the teaching profession.

Twice a year, AEP conducts a multi-stage [review cycle](#) for adding new research to ArtsEdSearch. AEP developed the ArtsEdSearch review criteria in consultation with the American Educational Research Association and the American Evaluation Association. AEP works in partnership with a review panel of field experts to make recommendations for studies that meet the eligibility requirements of ArtsEdSearch. It is up to the discretion of the panelists to apply the Quality Criteria as they see fit. As field experts, AEP looks to the ArtsEdSearch Review Panel to evaluate the quality of research and content in each study.

In the summer of 2020, AEP began work to conduct a needs assessment of ArtsEdSearch and to answer questions about the research it included. Through our review of nearly 300 study summaries, we identified large gaps in the research available on ArtsEdSearch, which related to the age level of study participants, the learning environments where arts education took place, arts disciplines, and the associated outcomes with arts learning. Over the past two years, we have implemented a variety of engagement opportunities and outreach efforts, including focus groups, a four-part meeting series and a policy briefing, among other activities to gain insights and guidance for the next stages of our work.

Desired Outcomes

AEP seeks to design an updated set of criteria for research to be included in ArtsEdSearch. These criteria will be intentional to balance ArtsEdSearch as a trusted resource while addressing existing gaps in the database. The criteria will offer more breadth to the types of research, resources and information available on ArtsEdSearch.

Updated Criteria:

- Criteria will support a curated and trusted resource and reflect responsible research practices.
- Criteria help ensure that future resources included in ArtsEdSearch do not include deficit-based or harmful narratives about young people and/or their communities.

Address Gaps in Research:

- An updated set of criteria and review process will help fill existing gaps in ArtsEdSearch. These gaps include:
 - Age levels: Early learning and higher education
 - Learning Environments: Community arts spaces
 - Outcomes: Healing/mental health, non-academic outcomes
 - Student populations: Black, Brown, Indigenous and Asian students, students with disabilities, young people in transitory living situations (homelessness, foster care, and juvenile justice), students from low-resourced communities, LGBTQIA+ communities
- Euro-centric/colonized arts education research often excludes a wide array of disciplines, traditions and practices. Updated criteria will reflect and invite many understandings of arts education research in both school and community spaces and expand beyond a western narrative.

Breadth of Information:

- We know that different types of research and information can serve different purposes. By expanding the breadth and types of information included in ArtsEdSearch and including guidance on how it can be used, we can expand the utility of the resource for different audiences and use cases.
- ArtsEdSearch has capacity to offer a more diverse and inclusive collection of research, resources and information than it currently houses. An updated resource will help establish ArtsEdSearch as a starting point and connector to additional resources.

Additionally, AEP is working towards developing a new vision and five-year plan to grow the database:

Vision: AEP aspires to create a more diverse and expansive resource that reflects the current needs of the full arts education ecosystem. In the future, we hope that ArtsEdSearch will serve as a connector for researchers, practitioners and funders looking to share, report and discover outcomes about arts education.

Scope of Work

The purpose of this RFP process is to invite consultants to submit a proposal to assist AEP in designing updated criteria, conceptualizing a review process and developing a five-year plan for the resource. AEP seeks



consultant support in three areas: criteria design, review process conceptualization, and mentorship in developing a five-year plan.

Criteria design (approx. 40-50 hours)

- Review ~20-30 studies provided by AEP staff and determine a more inclusive set of evaluation criteria that would include such resources in ArtsEdSearch and respond to existing AEP staff findings, outreach and engagement feedback.
- Co-design a feedback process or focus group with key stakeholders to finalize criteria.

Conceptualize a review process (approx. 15 hours)

- Collaborate with AEP staff to design a review process to implement the new criteria.

Mentorship in defining a five-year plan (approx. 15 hours)

- Work with AEP staff to set realistic and measurable goals towards achieving a five-year vision.

The consultant will report to Mary Dell'Erba, AEP Assistant Director.

Project Schedule

RFP released	November 16, 2022
RFP close date	January 31, 2023, 11:59 PM EST
Evaluate proposals	February 1-11, 2023
Contract awarded	No later than February 17, 2023

Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include:

- A cover letter or statement that offers specificity of plans to meet desired outcomes; evidence excitement or passion for engaging in this work with AEP; commitment to learning and sharing knowledge with AEP staff; evidence of past work that reconsiders existing structures to design something more robust, useful and inclusive.
- At least three references from clients or mentors reflecting expertise in at least one of three areas: arts education research and evaluation, mentorship and strategic planning, and attention to considerations of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- A detailed budget

Send final proposals as a PDF document to:

Mary Dell'Erba, AEP Assistant Director

Email: mdellerba@ecs.org

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by AEP and ECS staff members on the following criteria:

- Specificity of plans to meet desired outcomes
- Commitment to sharing knowledge and building capacity for AEP staff



- Evidence of past work that reconsiders existing structures to design something more robust, useful, and inclusive

Budget

\$15,000