Request for Proposal (RFP) for Program Evaluation Services

Deadline to Apply: 11:59 PM (EDT) on August 31, 2023

Objective

Josephine Sculpture Park seeks to conduct a full systematic review of our Artist in Residence (AiR) program. This external program evaluation will focus on program implementation, performance, processes, facilities, staff capacity, DEIA, impact on artist and community, as well as strategic planning for long-term goals of program. JSP is seeking a consultant that has successful experience in helping similar organizations with their evaluation work.

JSP expects that the results will highlight program and process methods for improvement as well as basic equipment, facility, safety, and accessibility improvements. The results will help JSP staff and board to make informed decisions about program changes to be implemented in 2024 and beyond that will result in a strengthened AiR program that is sustainable and effective for years to come. While this evaluation will focus on JSP’s AiR program, JSP would like to make generalizable “lessons learned” and “best practices” information available to other artist residency programs and organizations such as the Artist Communities Alliance.

Background

Josephine Sculpture Park (JSP) is a 501c3 public sculpture park open to visitors for free from dawn until dusk 365 days per year and is located on 30 acres of reclaimed farmland in Franklin Co., KY. Its 70+ artworks, primarily large scale sculpture and graffiti murals, are strategically placed along walking paths among a variety of KY’s natural habitats. JSP is a unique setting, a gallery without walls, an oasis of art in the heart of Central KY. Located 50 mi. from Louisville, 30 mi. from Lexington, our community includes a wide audience from Central KY and visitors from all over the US and beyond.

The mission is to connect people to each other and the land through the arts. JSP hosts year-round programming in addition to the exhibition, including tours, art education, demonstrations, artist talks, music concerts and art and nature workshops. JSP was founded in 2009 to fill a deep arts and cultural void. JSP had 2,000 visitors in its first year and is currently hosting 2,000 visitors per month.

JSP believes art is for everyone and is committed to removing barriers that prevent people from living artful lives. JSP is free, removing financial obstacles, helpful for the 18% of Kentuckians living in poverty. It is easy to find and located off of a main highway, accessible to the 40% of Kentuckians who live in rural areas. JSP curates a vibrant Art in Public Places program, with over 30 installations where people live and
work, primarily in downtown Frankfort. 45% of visitors report that JSP is the only art museum/gallery they visit in a year.

**Artist in Residence Program**

JSP’s Artist in Residence (AiR) program provides artists with time, funding, housing and studio facilities as well as technical, educational, and administrative support to create, install, and exhibit new work at JSP. Artists engage the community at large and populations considered to be underserved by the arts through workshops, lectures, artist talks and informal interactions. This program is significant in two primary ways: 1) it encourages artists to take risks, experience professional growth, and develop new innovative work that is immediately visible and 2) it connects community members to contemporary art and the artists who create it through meaningful, personal exchanges, which are otherwise unavailable in our region.

JSP AiR program provides artists in various career stages the opportunity to experiment, challenge their practice and create new art in a supportive, safe and inclusive environment. Residency details are tailored to each artist and scope of project, typically range from 2-6 weeks and are designed around 3 main components: 1) artwork creation, installation and exhibition, 2) informal public interaction, 3) participation in at least one public event (community workshop, lecture or artist talk) with programming targeting artistically underserved populations through existing partnerships.

Artists are encouraged to challenge themselves and push beyond their comfort zones, supported by experienced artistic staff and specialized equipment including loaders and cranes to create large scale works on site. Artists receive technical support from staff and regional artists, hands-on assistance from community volunteers and interns, material support including access to sustainable materials found onsite, 24/7 access to a 2,000 sq. foot fully equipped studio that includes wood working, metal fabrication, ceramic kilns, and a 2,000 sq. foot outdoor work pad with gantry. They are provided with a living stipend and housing facilities that include a furnished private trailer and shared bathroom, kitchen and laundry facilities. Created artwork is installed and exhibited for at least 2 years at JSP or when appropriate, at other locations, such as part of the Art in Public Places Program.

JSP visitors interact with artists as they are working, providing insight into and appreciation for the creative and technical process. Public events offer a more formal opportunity for artists to share their work while gaining professional development. Each artist works with JSP to plan the format of the program, including topics such as art methodology, technical and material exploration, or conceptual inspiration. The community interaction is designed to benefit the artist and bolster their career by providing opportunities to interact with an audience and present their work publicly both on site at JSP or off-site in the community.
JSP’s AiR program was formally established in 2011 with 1 visiting artist and has had at least one artist in residence every year until 2023. To date, the program has provided residency opportunities to over 40 artists from the US & beyond. Artists have connected with a variety of community groups, including the River City Drum Corps, Migrant Education Program, King Center, and Stewart Home and School.

**Scope of Work**

JSP seeks the assistance of a consultant with expertise in program evaluation. The awarded contractor will create and implement a detailed evaluation for our Artist in Residence program. This external program evaluation will focus on program implementation, performance, processes, facilities, staff capacity, DEIA, impact on artist and community, as well as strategic planning for long-term goals of the program. The contractor will provide a final report with an executive summary that describes evaluation findings.

Evaluation activities may include data collection through methods such as surveys, interviews, document review, staff interviews, focus groups with former artists in residence and representatives from partner organizations. Stakeholder engagement should include JSP visitors, community members, other artist residency programs, and partner organizations such as River City Drum Corp, King Center, and Kentucky State University.

Contractor will commit to regular communication via email, in-person and virtual meetings throughout the duration of the project timeline. Contractor will share all data collected in relation to this evaluation. Contractor will purchase their own supplies and manage the expenses in the budget agreed upon with JSP. This consultancy would begin in mid-October 2023 and be completed no later than the end of March 2024.

**Proposal Requirements**

Prepare responses to address the proposal requirements found below. Proposals should be no more than eight pages and must contain the following:

1. **Executive Summary** includes a cover letter describing the organization or person applying, their qualifications and capabilities, experience and expertise, and a brief description of mission alignment with this RFP. Must include a primary contact person, address, email and phone number.

2. **Description of Activities** for carrying out the scope of services. This section of the proposal should describe the way the organization or person applying will provide the scope of services requested in this RFP. Visuals may be included as necessary.

3. **Schedule**: Proposed schedule/duration of activities required for scope completion.

4. **Proposed Budget** for the scope of work within defined range.

5. **References**: Please provide at least 2 references relevant to scope of services.

**Project Budget**

The budget for the program evaluation is $6,000 – $8,000. Your budget may include but is not limited to: staffing, supplies, data collection tools, meals and travel, and other misc. costs. JSP has $1,500 budgeted separately to directly pay incentives for stakeholder participation in focus groups, surveys or otherwise.
**Questions and Response Instructions**

Questions about the process should be directed to Josie Kirker by email: josie@josephinesculpturepark.org.

Please submit a PDF copy of your response **no later than 11:59 PM (EDT) on August 31, 2023**, to Josie Kirker, Grants Manager & Public Art Administrator: josie@josephinesculpturepark.org.

**Selection Criteria**

JSP staff will review qualifications of submittals and evaluate the respondents, based on the following criteria:

1. Qualifications and experience to execute proposed activities.
2. Reasonable and fair budget to execute activities to fullest potential.
3. Past performance on similar projects.
4. Alignment with JSP’s mission and Artist in Residence program objectives.
5. Demonstration of the experience and capacity to perform the services required in the scope of work.

Final reference checks will be conducted with the apparent awardee prior to making the final selection.