



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:  
WORKSHOP LEADERS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES  
AND CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS**

**CLIENT**

Tacoma Arts Live

New Small Business Incubator, **Accelerating Creative Enterprise (ACE)** at the Historic Tacoma Armory

Proposals accepted December 16, 2022 – January 18, 2023

Project runs through May 31, 2023

Contact: Antonio Gómez, Director of Community Engagement & Extended Learning  
[tonyg@tacomaartslive.org](mailto:tonyg@tacomaartslive.org)

**OVERVIEW**

Tacoma Arts Live seeks proposals by potential contract vendors to provide professional development, workshops, training and limited coaching for emergent small businesses and nonprofits with a focus on creative sectors.

Vendors will work with Tacoma Arts Live as part of its incubation program, **ACE**, which focuses on building capacity for BIPOC, women-owned, Hilltop-based small businesses (for-profit and non-profit) as well as Artists.

As a three-part initiative, ACE provides rent-free co-working office space at the historic Tacoma Armory, as well as professional development for participants. The subject of this RFP is to solicit contract resources for the professional development components of ACE services. Please offer a proposal for a program to develop micro-enterprise leaders, non-profits, and artist-led business systems.

**TIMELINE**

Proposals accepted December 16, 2022 – January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Interviews will occur in January of 2023

Work to be completed by May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023

## **LOCATION**

Tacoma Armory (In-Person preferred, Virtual considered on a case by case basis)  
1001 S. Yakima Ave.  
Tacoma, WA 98405

## **SCOPE**

Tacoma Arts Live is seeking contract vendors to provide workshops, training, and coaching. As participants are identified and enrolled, they will complete a needs assessment to help tailor services to them. Topics for professional development include but are not limited to:

- 1) Small business workshops and coaching for emergent entrepreneurs and independent creative professionals.
  - Strategic Development/Competitive Advantage
  - Designing a Business Plan
  - Budgeting and Finance
  - Permitting/Licensing (Optimal Classification (Sole Proprietor, LLC, etc.))
  - Strategic Understanding of Market/Customer
  - Sourcing Products/Services and Getting to Market
  - Independent Creative Professional in a Gig Economy –
    - Optimizing Your Service as Your Product
  - Time/Task Management
  - Branding/Marketing/Communications (Pop Up/Social Media, Etc.)
  - Contracting
  - Financial Assessments and Sustainability
  
- 2) Workshops for emergent nonprofits
  - Evaluating Pathway: Nonprofit versus For-profit
  - Developing Mission & Vision
  - Strategic Development/Competitive Advantage
  - Building and Recruiting a Board
  - By-Laws and Governance
  - Budgeting
  - Diversifying Funding
  - Grants 101
  - Project Management - Event Production
  - Program Evaluation
  - Branding/Marketing/Communications (PopUp/Social Media, Etc.)
  - Time/Task Management
  - Contracting
  - Collaboration and Partnered Projects
  
- 3) Professional Development for Creative Professionals
  - Managing 1099 work in the Gig Economy
  - Event Production 101
  - Professionalization for Independent Theater Artists, Musicians, Dancers,  
Visual Artists, Literary Artists

Budgeting for Arts Professionals  
Content Collaboration - Playwrights, Composers, Choreographers  
Arts Branding/Marketing/Communications - In Person and Online  
Getting the Gig  
Electronic Press Kits and Portfolios  
Building a Network of Presenters, Producers, Galleries  
Contracting  
Invoicing and Bookkeeping for Independent Performing Artists  
Tax Considerations (Budgeting/Tracking Expenses & Projected Income)  
Commissions/Grant Opportunities  
Know Your Worth: Sharpening Your Negotiation Skills  
Artist Management - When/If to Retain?

## **BUDGET**

We anticipate several contractors to support the needs stated above. Please draft a budget that would demonstrate the cost for each aspect of the project you would like to fulfill. For example, if you anticipate offering six workshops for small business development, submit a budget accordingly. Or, for an eight-session module for creative professionals, submit a corresponding budget.

Rates should be competitive with other business accelerators or trainings in the South Sound region. Rates may be commensurate to expertise and experience, however funding for this project originates with federal funds, which sets certain parameters for federally identified reasonable rates.

## **BACKGROUND**

Tacoma Arts Live will support and amplify BIPOC and women-owned small businesses and entrepreneurs located in Tacoma's Hilltop, specifically working with emergent professionals in creative and artistic sectors to transform "gig economy" arts work into more-sustaining microenterprise.

Tacoma Arts Live's long history as a promoter/producer in the performing arts and arts education (43 years' experience) combined with its recent acquisition of the historic Tacoma Armory – a venue ready with its large gathering spaces, and its inventory of commercial office suites, offers the perfect ingredients to incubate and accelerate creative enterprise.

While the short-term goal is to increase capacity for community-rooted microenterprise and provide temporary relief of overhead costs for offices and producing of events, the long-term goal is firmly centered on sustaining community businesses and sheltering them from neighborhood gentrification.

The overall initiative, developed and executed by Tacoma Arts Live in partnership with the Economic Development Board with funds from the Washington State Department of Commerce, includes the following elements:

- 1) **INCUBATE:** Provide coworking space for up to 18 businesses (or individuals) at the historic Tacoma Armory, complete with furnished office space, artistic space, two state-of-the-art hybrid conference rooms, connectivity, and printer/copiers – creating a hub for the “business of the arts” centered in an historic community of color.
- 2) **ACCELERATE Training for Business Development:** Working with a specialized set of trainers/consultants, services will integrate business planning, accounting, licensing and taxes with field-specific technical assistance in microbusiness and the arts. In addition to the support of basic business operations, the trainings will support arts professionals to strengthen “gig work” toward more sustainable businesses. Participants will also have access to professional development funds for conferences or other opportunities.
- 3) **INVEST:** Provide support for participants to hold special events at the Tacoma Armory’s Parade Floor or elsewhere. Participants will access a large event infrastructure (venue, lights, sound, security) beyond the reach of most small businesses, to help them feature product(s), build a client base, make connections and generate income. Grant support will pay for special event occupancy expenses (one-time event), production expenses, marketing, staffing, etc. at the Tacoma Armory. Events will occur prior to 5/31/23.
- 4) **EXPAND** capacity-building for arts microenterprise through a series of professional development intensives (as listed in the three focus areas above) offered by contracted specialists. Through an innovative synthesis of business and artistic learning, the program will support the professionalization of the region’s lively performing and visual arts ecosystem, as participants shape artistic endeavors into more viable economic activity.

## **SUBMISSION PROCESS**

Pre-submission inquiries are welcome: Please contact Antonio Gómez, Director of Community Engagement & Extended Learning at [tonyg@tacomaartslive.org](mailto:tonyg@tacomaartslive.org).

Potential Contractors may submit proposals by addressing all three of the major areas outlined in the SCOPE section above or focus on only a portion of the services.

Submit the following by email to Antonio Gómez, Director of Community Engagement & Extended Learning, no later than 5:00 p.m. PST on January 18, 2023:

- Overview of your proposal
- Sample scope and sequence of trainings and/or coaching services

- Timeline (keeping in mind 5/31/23 end date)
- Budget (see guidelines above)
- Summary of prior experiences relevant to the project: Serving BIPOC and/or Women-owned businesses; Fostering small business/micro enterprise in marginalized communities/neighborhoods; Serving creative professionals, specifically performing artists. Ensure we have a deep understanding of the services you might provide.
- Three References
- Respond to either set A or B, or both as noted below:

*A.) What are the potential positive outcomes as well as the challenges facing the historic Hilltop Neighborhood in 2023? How can your services contribute to the economic vitality of this neighborhood and to the communities of color in the South Sound?*

*B.) How can the arts spur the economic health of our community?*

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

All submissions will be evaluated by a diverse team of professionals who will first score submissions blind to the applicants and within an unattributed ballot. Then, a second round of scoring will be made based on the past practices and references of submissions. Each submission will be reviewed for:

- Comprehensive nature of the proposal with manageable timeline and competitive budget
- Demonstrated successful prior experience working with one or more of the following:
  - Small businesses/nonprofits/creative professionals
  - BIPOC and Women owned/led ventures
  - The arts economy with an expertise of a specific genre
- Exhibit an understanding of potential and challenge for marginalized communities, neighborhoods, and artists – preference will be given to those submissions who display a familiarity with the South Sound region and the Hilltop or similar communities