

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Project Name: Connecticut's Long Term Funding Roadmap for Arts, Culture, and Tourism

Organizing Entity: ACT Consortium

Due Date: April 29, 2022

1. Background

The ACT Consortium seeks the services of a qualified consulting firm to conduct an eight-month project to create a recommendation for a long-term funding roadmap for the state's arts, culture, and tourism (ACT) sectors. The intent of the plan is to act as a blueprint for legislative decision makers as they determine how state resources are best allocated to these sectors. The need for such a plan is driven by historical underfunding of the sectors, instability in funding from year to year, and a lack of parity in how funds are distributed.

While the economic value of the sector has been well established, state funding has been widely variable. Until the FY22/23 biennium, funding for the marketing of Connecticut's considerable tourism assets has been insufficient to compete in expensive markets such as New York and Boston while that for arts and culture has decreased to the point where individual organizations and consortia have sought and received specific line items to survive. A culture of funding scarcity has pitted one sector against another and the lack of a consistent funding strategy at the state level has resulted in missed opportunities to maximize the economic value of cultural tourism. Funding levels in the current biennium and new leadership in statewide organizations have created new opportunities through partnership and collaboration. It is in this environment that we hope to demonstrate the need and provide the incentive for a better funding model.

The timing of the project is right as the ACT Consortium believes we are at a critical juncture where movement will be possible. Factors include:

- The 2023 legislative session will produce the next biennial budget and offers an opportunity to introduce changes that benefit the sector.
- The legislature has recently recognized the importance of the sector by providing unprecedented funding in FY22/23 in response to the pandemic.
- There has been increased cooperation among Connecticut Office of the Arts, Connecticut Office of Tourism, Connecticut Arts Alliance, Connecticut Humanities, Connecticut Tourism Coalition, the state's 7 regional arts service organizations and 3 tourism districts.
- A new director at the Office of Tourism offers the advantage of a fresh perspective on the inter-relationships between arts, humanities, and tourism.
- Increased commitment to and investments by the Connecticut Office of the Arts in building a stronger arts and culture infrastructure.
- The state-funded Connecticut Cultural Fund, administered by Connecticut Humanities in collaboration with Connecticut Office of the Arts, has collected data on 600+ cultural organizations. The fund illustrates what an infusion of funding can do for the ACT sector and its distribution model offers a persuasive example of how more equitable funding can be achieved.

The project is spearheaded by Connecticut Arts Alliance (CAA), Connecticut Humanities (CTH), and Connecticut Tourism Coalition (CTC), organizations that represent statewide

constituencies in each of the three sectors. The proposal will identify the challenges and opportunities inherent in existing funding policy, recommend a level of funding adequate to the needs of the 3 sectors, and present models for funding distribution that can be used by legislators to craft policy.

The budget for this project is subject to negotiation.

2. Project Description

This project will produce a roadmap for how state funding for the arts, culture, and tourism (ACT) sector can be made more predictable, equitable and sustainable. The roadmap will be used to help guide decision makers in the executive and legislative branches of the State of Connecticut as they craft policy. The project will be led by a steering committee composed of statewide stakeholders in the arts, humanities, and tourism sectors, including Brett Thompson, Executive Director of Connecticut Arts Alliance, Jason Mancini, Executive Director of Connecticut Humanities, Frank Burns, Executive Director of Connecticut Tourism Coalition, Representative John-Michael Parker, Elizabeth Shapiro, Connecticut Director of Arts, Preservation and Museums, Noelle Stevenson, Director of the Connecticut Office of Tourism, and with the possibility of adding up to 4 additional members representing important affinity constituencies.

The steering committee will be divided into working groups that will focus on specific aspects of the project and their work will inform refinements to the roadmap. A series of regional charrettes will be held to gather input from a broader array of stakeholders and to build support for the roadmap.

The project's end date in October will provide the steering committee with a shared vision and common voice to present at the January opening of the 2023 legislative session, during which the fiscal year 2024/2025 budget will be established. It is our intention that the roadmap will guide legislators during the budget process as they consider state funding for the ACT sector.

The project will require the collection, analysis and synthesis of data to make our case, a study of funding models from other states as examples, and understanding the needs of and gaining support from constituencies within the ACT sector as well as involved governmental agencies. CT Humanities will be able to augment data collection and analysis through its work already underway, and CT Arts Alliance has collected some data on the arts community.

These reports based on previous work are available:

- *Recommendations of the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Committee* was created by a task force of representatives from the ACT sector at the request of Governor Ned Lamont
- *ACT Caucus Summit Report* was produced by Odyssey Associates following a convening of members of the ACT sector organized by the ACT Caucus of the Connecticut State Legislature.
- Report of the Speaker's Blue Ribbon Panel
- *A Vote for Tourism is a Vote for Connecticut Jobs*, created by the CT Tourism Coalition

3. Project Goals

A 5 to 10 year plan/vision/roadmap that focuses on:

- Greater predictability and sustainability of funding from year to year.
- A set of suggested distribution models that increase parity, uniformity, and equity with special consideration for historically under-represented communities
- AF funding level that places Connecticut on par with neighboring states and those with similar populations on a per capita state investment (or that places Connecticut in the x percentile of per capita investment)
- Sustainable source of funding to market and promote Connecticut
- Maintain and improve the quality of life and cultural experiences for visitors and residents
- Address the need for workforce development for the ACT sector

4. Scope of work

- Convene and facilitate 6 steering committee meetings
- Identify and collect relevant data and data sources. Analyze and synthesize information
- Collect community input through regional charrettes with community stakeholders and/or survey instruments
- Convene and facilitate 6 steering committee working group meetings
- Guide strategy development
- Produce the ACT Roadmap

Final scope of work to be finalized with input from the consultant.

5. Deadlines and milestones

April

29: RFP submission deadline

May

13: Select consultant

Convene steering committee

Approve statement of purpose and outline of roadmap

Schedule community meetings

Assemble relevant documents

June

Community partner meetings

Create workgroup committees and meeting times

Update and brief key legislators & establish regular meetings for updates.

July / August

Workgroup committees meet

Community partner meetings

September

Workgroup reports and approval

Community partner meetings
Integrate with Create the Vote Campaign

October

Workgroup revisions and final document

6. Required Information and qualifications

- proposed cost of services
- Samples of past work
- Proof of technical skills and familiarity with Connecticut’s ACT community
- Proven success with similar projects of this scope and scale
- Identity and qualifications of key project personnel
- Proof of possessing the necessary resources to complete the project.
- Experience engaging, working with and convening diverse communities and interests
- Minimum of 2 references from projects of similar scope and scale

7. Critical Success Factors

- Any funding comparisons to other states must consider that Connecticut does not have county or municipal taxing authority, which is the case in other states.
- Consensus, common vision, support from the ACT community
- Alignment between nonprofit, governmental, for profit communities.
- Strong Communications/relationship building
- Ongoing communications with legislative leadership
- Reconciling disparate data sources
- Persuasive, unified value statement for ACT
- CAA, CTC, CTH as trusted partners for the legislature
- Perception of the ACT sector as a cohesive whole, while recognizing the unique needs and contributions of each. Reconcile that we sometimes have overlapping or competing needs.
- Must meet strict project timeline and produce the final roadmap by October 31, 2022

8. Guidelines for submitting the proposal

The deadline for submitting proposals is 5 PM, April 29, 2022. Proposals submitted after this date will not be considered.

Interested parties should submit their proposals in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF to Sheldyn Oliver (soliver@cthumanities.org) . Please add “PROPOSAL FOR LONG TERM FUNDING ROADMAP” in the subject line. Be sure to include contact information for the proposal’s primary contact person.

Direct questions to: Brett Thompson
Connecticut Arts Alliance
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