**2025 Request for Contract Proposals**

**Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program**

*January 30, 2025*

A Jean Kennedy Smith Arts and Disability Program

The Office of Accessibility and VSA at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

**SUMMARY**

**Contract Description:** Implement internship opportunities for individuals with disabilities, ages 18-30, interested in pursuing technical and administrative creative careers, 5-30 hours per week. Serve 5 or more individuals with disabilities. Strong preference given to internships taking place in integrated settings.

**Contract Amounts:**  Up to $12,500

**Contract Proposal Deadline:** February 28, 2025, 11:59 PM EST

*To request an accommodation or receive these materials in an alternate format, contact: Stephanie Litvak,* [*sslitvak@kennedy-center.org*](mailto:sslitvak@kennedy-center.org)*, at least two weeks prior to the submission deadline.*

**Background**

As the nation’s performing arts center, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts welcomes all to create, experience, learn about, and engage with the arts. The Office of Accessibility and VSA (Access/VSA) is central to the Center’s longstanding commitment to individuals with disabilities, ensuring that the Kennedy Center’s activities are grounded in accessible practices. This extends to internship opportunities in competitive integrated creative careers. To this end, the Kennedy Center’s Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program seeks to improve outcomes in competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities by creating pathways to employment in the creative economy through internships. The goal is to increase opportunities and capacity for individuals with disabilities who wish to pursue creative careers to develop technical and administrative skills and critical business knowledge for 21st century job readiness. At the same time, intern employers receive education and training to better shape programs and employment opportunities, as well as provide appropriate support and accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

**Program Description:**

The Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program provides career development opportunities in creative industries, arts management, arts education, design, production, or technical theatre. for individuals with disabilities, ages 18-30. The program provides immersive, site-based internships that are designed to grow the individual’s potential for employment in a creative career and firmly set them on a path for future competitive employment. Program participants receive instruction and hands-on activities in which they develop critical 21st century business skills and knowledge needed for success in the creative career workforce, acquire real world experience, and have the opportunity to interact with peers and professionals in an employment setting.

In the Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program, organizations establish or demonstrate active partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, schools, school districts, colleges, universities, and/or disability service organizations to identify and support program participants throughout the internship opportunity. Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Programs have clear participant recruitment strategies, defined skill development/learning objectives and outcomes, and provide 5-30 combined instructional and experiential hours per week per individual.

**Scope of Work**

To accomplish the above, eligible and qualified contractors are being sought to perform an Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program that have the following core components:

1. Engaging and serving individuals with disabilities, ages 18-30, who demonstrate an interest in pursuing a creative career or working in a creative industry in immersive, site-based technical and administrative internships.
2. Serving 5 (five) or more individuals with disabilities.
3. Providing 5-30 (five to thirty) combined instructional and experiential hours per week per intern with a disability. Program must be delivered in-person. Strong preference given to internships taking place in integrated settings.
4. Pay each intern at least the minimum hourly wage for instructional and experiential hours worked.
5. Verify disability of interns by collecting proof such as, but not limited to, IEPs, letters from a medical professional, documents from a university office of disability, or referrals by a Vocational Rehabilitation agency. Self-identification of disability is insufficient to prove eligibility to participate in the program.
6. Have clear and articulated learning objectives and intended outcomes for each intern.
7. Implementing instructional and workforce experiences that develop professional skills and capacities and relate to real world practices. Some examples are:
8. Resume and cover letter writing, interviewing, portfolio development, use of social media for promotion, and networking;
9. Participation in professional associations and/or organizations, attendance at conferences;
10. Opportunities or workshops that offer discussion and exchange of ideas with established professionals working in creative careers, such as an arts manager, theater technician, museum exhibit designer, front of house theater staff, studio manager, or other professionals in technical or administrative creative careers;
11. Classes, lectures, or opportunities to learn about arts management strategies, or the “business of the business.”
12. Implementing on-the-job work experiences that cultivate business and professional skills necessary to obtain and sustain employment in a creative career and create viable pathways to future completive integrated employment.
13. Demonstrating the capacity to engage individuals with disabilities by having relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, school/school district, college/university employment offices, and/or disability service organizations/providers Taking many forms, examples of internships may include, but are not limited to:
14. Integrating individuals with disabilities into an existing internship program at a cultural arts venue where each individual has a work placement, and all interns go through the same professional development instruction together as a cohort;
15. Individuals with disabilities train at a studio to develop business and technical skills, such as preparing a studio for classes, or marketing art products for sale;
16. Individuals with disabilities train with a performing arts company to hone business and employable technical skills, such as structured instruction in lighting or sound techniques, or ushering in front of house.
17. Understanding and utilization of current effective instructional practices, strategies, and techniques that facilitate learning and skill development for individuals with disabilities.
18. Involving personnel, consultants, and/or advisors with experience in employment, transition to work, job coaching, and/or vocational rehabilitation in the development and/or delivery of the program.
19. Building awareness Vocational Rehabilitation resources by providing interns with information, referrals and connections to state/local Vocational Rehabilitation agencies in their community.
20. Are physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities, or are conducted such that requests for accommodation, effective communication, or physical access shall be fulfilled.

**Contract Amount, Term and Payment Structure**

The Kennedy Center is seeking proposals from contractors to perform an Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program. The Center will accept only 1 (one) proposal per contractor. Contract award is subject to Kennedy Center funding availability for the Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program.

1. **Contract Term:** The term of the contract will be for no more than 3 (three) months, from June 2 – August 31, 2025, and execution of the services must take place within this period.
2. **Contract Amount**: Up to $12,500 per contract. The Kennedy Center reserves the right to award less or more than the proposed amount based on the scope of proposal submitted. The contract must be based on a firm, fixed-price quote that contains all information necessary to allow the Kennedy Center to comprehensively evaluate the proposed costs (see page 11).
3. **Payment Structure:** Payment will be made monthly, upon demonstrated satisfactory completion of tasks and receipt of invoice from the contractor outlining completed deliverables.
4. **Reporting Requirements**: Contractors will be required to participate in the Kennedy Center Competitive Integrated Employment in Creative Careers (CIECC) evaluation project conducted by the George Washington University through the completion of monthly reports as guided by the evaluation team. In addition, contractors will be required to participate in pre- and post- goal identification interviews. A final report must be submitted with the final invoice no later than Monday, September 1, 2025, at 11:59 PM EDT. The final report must address the actual results of the Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program and report in depth on participation data, program activities, outcomes, and impact at the end of their programs. The Kennedy Center reserves the right to conduct site visits and to request progress reports at any time during the contract period for amplification and clarification of contract activities.
5. **Acknowledgement and Logo**:Contractors will acknowledge their performance of an Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program on behalf of the Kennedy Center by using the required credit line and/or logo, and disclaimer on all program-related material and webpages/sites.
6. **Public Performance or Display:** Contractors must inform Kennedy Center staff of any intended public performance or display of material developed during the Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program.
7. **Professional Learning:** Contractors will be required to participate in the virtual CIECC Employer Community of Practice and attend the Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability (LEAD) Conference August 20-22, 2025 in Cleveland, Ohio. All travel expenses and registration fees will be the responsibility of the contractor.
8. **Unallowable Costs:** Contractors should not include the following expenses in proposed contract fee (see list of examples on page 7):
   * Food and beverages
   * Performance costs
   * Exhibit costs
   * Space rental, including workshop/residency/training classroom space
   * Equipment and durable education and art supplies (non-durable art supplies are acceptable costs, but must be listed in budget section)
   * Costs for culminating events, public events, receptions, fundraisers, tours, exhibitions, or performances
9. **Subcontracting:** Subcontracting is permissible only so long as contractor receives advance approval from the Kennedy Center before expenses are incurred and payments made. Contractor should not proceed until receiving written prior authorization. *For the purposes of this RFP, subcontracting is defined as the relinquishing of significant oversight and management to a third party or paying 65 percent or more of the total value of the contract to a third party.*
10. **Contract, Not Federal Grant**: Contract will be supported through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to the Kennedy Center. Although the Contract will not constitute a Federal grant or sub-award, the contractor will be subject to the reporting and auditing provisions of Title 2 Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance). The expenditure of Federal monies will be subject to all applicable Federal guidelines. The Kennedy Center requires that the contractor adhere to such guidelines while providing services hereunder.

**Contractor Eligibility Requirements**

1. Eligible contractors may submit 1 (one) proposal 2025 Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program Requests for Contract Proposals.
2. Non-United States entities and individuals are not eligible and will not be considered.
3. Contractor must have at least three (3) years of experience operating an internship, apprenticeship, or pre-professional training program that focuses on positive employment outcomes in creative careers.
4. Contractor must demonstrate past practice or experience in working with individuals with disabilities.
5. Contractor must involve personnel, consultants, and/or advisors with experience in employment, transition to work, job coaching, and/or vocational rehabilitation in the development and/or delivery of the program.
6. Contractor must establish or demonstrate relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, schools/school districts, college/university employment offices, and/or disability service organizations/providers that will identify individuals to participate in the program.
7. Contractor must provide a clearly articulated plan to identify and recruitindividuals with disabilities, ages 18-30, to participate in the program, or demonstrate past history of success in recruiting individuals with disabilities for programs.
8. Contractor must demonstrate that it has the resources, staff, and capacity to manage and execute the proposed Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program and comply with professional learning and reporting requirements within the designated timeline.
9. Contractor must comply with any state, local, and, if applicable, organizational requirements regarding criminal background checks for program employees, contractors, and volunteers.
10. Contractor must comply with all federal, state, and local laws in the course of completing the Contract.
11. Contractors must: (a) conduct or be prepared to conduct upon request or need, the proposed program in spaces that are physically accessible to individuals with disabilities and (b) be able and prepared to provide, appropriate accommodations and effective communication upon request during all stages of the Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program.

**Contract Proposal Deadline**

1. Proposal Submission Deadline: February 28, 2025, at 11:59 PM EST.
2. Notification: Selected recipients will be notified by April 28, 2025.

**How to Submit a Contract Proposal**

Contractor may submit only 1 (one) Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program proposal for consideration. It is permissible for other organizations to name the Contractor as partner or collaborator in a separately submitted proposal.

1. Proposals must be submitted online at [**https://thekennedycenter.smapply.io/prog/accessvsa\_creative\_career\_internship\_program\_proposal\_2025**](https://thekennedycenter.smapply.io/prog/accessvsa_creative_career_internship_program_proposal_2025) by the submission deadline. Proposals received after the proposal submission deadline will not be considered. The Kennedy Center is not responsible for any delays in transmission of proposals via the Internet.
2. Proposals must be well-written, error-free, and adhere to the word limits indicated in each section of the online proposal form.
3. Attached to this RFP is a list of questions asked on the online proposal form.
4. Information and materials submitted in connection with the proposal process will not be returned, will be treated confidentially, and will not be shared.

**Questions**

Please direct questions about this RFP to:

Stephanie Litvak, Manger, VSA Programs

Tel: 202-416-8847, Email: [sslitvak@kennedy-center.org](mailto:sslitvak@kennedy-center.org)

**Review Criteria**

Proposals will be reviewed utilizing the Contractor’s:

1. **Strength**, based on:
2. Past practice and experience providing quality creative career internship, apprenticeship, or pre-professional training and employment programs.
3. Demonstrated ability to identify, recruit and engage individuals with disabilities ages 18-30. *Please note that organizations without specific programming for individuals with disabilities, but with evidence of organizational strength in the area of disability employment, accessibility or inclusive programming will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.*
4. Quality and clarity of the program goals and objectives.
5. Capacity to manage and execute the program.
6. Appropriateness of the budget and the resources involved.
7. Qualifications of the personnel involved.
8. **Merit** of the proposed program, including the:
   1. Alignment of the program to the core components of the Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program (see page 2 of this RFP).
   2. Quality of the internship experience and skill-building opportunities for program participants.
   3. Number of individuals with disabilities, ages 18-30served and per capita cost per individual with a disability.

Additionally, the Kennedy Center will take into consideration the geographic range of applicants in order to support its objective of national breadth in programming.

*This program is funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Grant #H421F240164; however, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education. You should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.*

**Examples of Unallowable Costs**

Unallowable costs are those identified in CFR 200 including, but not limited to the following:

**Food and beverage:**

* All beverages, non-alcoholic and alcoholic
* All food
* Snacks, coffee breaks, or meals for activity participants
* Snacks, coffee breaks, or meals for staff, teaching artists, professional development presenters, etc.

**NOTE:** If a hotel stay is required for a professional development presenter, or to fulfill required Access/VSA LEAD Conference attendance, per diem per the GSA rate for the traveler is allowed. <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

**Production costs (performances and exhibits):** Any and all costs associated with putting on a performance or mounting an exhibition.

* Producing and presenting a performance
* Producing and presenting an exhibit
* Staff costs (organization staff, actors, directors, stage managers, production staff) to produce and present a performance or exhibit.
* Rehearsals
* Sets, props, costumes
* Framing, presentation easels, hanging materials

**Durable Equipment and supplies:**

* Computers, tablets, mobile phones, cameras
* Furniture
* Ramps, elevators, building signage, facility improvement

**Space rental:**

* Performance space
* Exhibit space
* Workshop classrooms
* Studio space
* Office space

**Culminating activities:**

* Performance and rehearsal spaces
* Tours of performances or exhibits
* Receptions, fundraisers
* Public events

**2025 Access/VSA Creative Career Internship Program**

**List of Proposal Form Questions**

**Proposals must be submitted using the online form at**

[**https://thekennedycenter.smapply.io/prog/accessvsa\_creative\_career\_internship\_program\_ proposal\_2025**](https://thekennedycenter.smapply.io/prog/accessvsa_creative_career_internship_program_%20proposal_2025)

**by February 28, 2025 at 11:59 PM EST**

1. General information
   1. Name of Organization
   2. Legal Name of Organization (if different from above)
   3. Mailing address (for checks)
   4. Physical address (if different from above)
   5. Website
2. Primary contact for contract
   1. Name
   2. Title
   3. Telephone
   4. Email
3. Alternate contact for contract
4. Name
5. Title
6. Telephone
7. Email
8. Fiscal agent for contract (if applicable)
   1. Name of fiscal agent
   2. Address of fiscal agent
   3. Fiscal agent contact name
   4. Title
   5. Telephone
   6. Email
9. Total proposed contract fee

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1. Projected number of interns (integers only)
   1. Number of interns with disabilities
   2. Number of interns without disabilities
   3. Average number of hours per week one intern will spend on instructional and experiential activities combined (5-30 hours a week minimum)
   4. Average number of weeks per internship
2. Is this internship program an integrated opportunity where individuals with disabilities and without disabilities will learn together as a cohort?
3. Summary of proposed program (maximum 200 words)
4. What are the program’s goals and objectives? (maximum 200 words)

10. Which on the job experiences will the program include? Indicate the percentage of time interns with disabilities will spend on the following areas:

1. Specific instruction in workforce skills: e.g., job-seeking, exchange with professionals, “business of the business”
2. Arts administration/management: Duties that support and assist in the contracting organization’s mission and work.
   * 1. Technical job skills: Training and/or professionally-led time spent learning and doing in the technical aspects of the creative career intern job.
3. What are the expected intern learning and employment outcomes?

Be specific about what interns with disabilities will be able to do, know, or understand in each of the following areas (maximum 300 words):

* 1. Professional skills
  2. Job site specific skills
  3. Work-appropriate social skills

1. What adaptive strategies will you use to support interns with disabilities to be successful in the program? (maximum 200 words)
2. List and describe the instructional and workforce development experiences interns with disabilities will undertaketo develop their professional skills and capacities. (maximum 200 words)
3. Proposed dates and locations of internship placements of interns with disabilities. (maximum 100 words)

15. How will you reach out to your community to identify interns with disabilities for this program? (maximum 100 words)

Name(s) of partner Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, schools/school districts, college/university employment offices, and/or disability service organizations/providers, including name and title of contact person.

1. Primary purpose or mission of organization (maximum 100 words)
2. Organizational qualifications
   1. Is your organization a United States nonprofit entity?
   2. Is your organization a United States commercial entity?
   3. How many years of experience does your organization have operating an internship, apprenticeship, or pre-professional training program?
   4. How many years of experience does your organization have working with individuals with disabilities?
   5. Describe your organization’s experience and capacity to deliver proposed program (maximum 150 words)
3. Personnel

Provide short biographies of key program personnel, including staff, consultants, and advisors. (maximum 100 words each)

1. Proposed Contract Fee Justification

Enter below a budget that provides sufficient transparency into the calculation of the proposed contract fee using the expense categories provided. Only include Other Sources Amount of income if a line item calculation exceeds the line amount proposed for Access/VSA Contract Fee Amount. *Please note that unallowable costs will be removed from Access/VSA Contract Fee Amount (see RFP page 4, #8 and page 7 for a list of unallowable costs).* Whole numbers only.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expense Category | Show Calculation & specify items | Enter Access/VSA Contract Fee Amount | Enter Other Sources Amount (if calculation is for more than the Access/VSA contract fee) |
| Personnel  Organization staff  Costs associated with staff working directly on program delivery  (person x rate x hours) |  |  |  |
| * 1. Fringe (of personnel) |  |  |  |
| * 1. Program Travel   (mileage, parking) (person x trip x rate) |  |  |  |
| * 1. Required Access/VSA Conference Travel   (Per person costs limited to: rt airfare $500, lodging $150/night, GSA per diem $69/day (3 days) + 75%/day (2 travel days), conf registration $450) |  |  |  |
| 1. Supplies   List supply items and show calculation. |  |  |  |
| 1. Contractors   (person x rate x hours) |  |  |  |
| 1. Other   List items and show calculation |  |  |  |
| 1. Subtotal Direct Costs |  |  |  |
| 1. Indirect Costs   Not to exceed 14% of 19h Subtotal.  Costs associated with your organization’s operations and management.  List items and show calculation. |  |  |  |
| 1. Total proposed contract fee amount, should match amount in question 5 |  |  |  |