

Innovation Fellowship RFP – Performing Arts

Background

The Metcalf Foundation advances innovative approaches to sustainability, equity, and creativity. We do this, in part, by contributing to system-level reform through the generation of strong policy ideas. We believe there is great value in seeking out and supporting new ideas that probe current practices. One of our most important tools in this work is the funding of research and studies through our Innovation Fellowship program.

Under the Innovation Fellowship program, Metcalf periodically releases Requests for Proposals (RFPs), commissioning research around a specific issue. The purpose of this RFP is to stimulate study around next generation practice in the performing arts sector. More specifically, we want to address challenges related to the use, sharing, and/or distribution of resources in the performing arts.

Challenge

The performing arts sector is remarkably resilient. New creators and new companies continue to find new ways to work, even though both organizations and independent artists are often facing human and financial resource deficits. The sector is growing faster than the resources that have traditionally supported it. As Jane Marsland wrote in *Shared Platforms and Charitable Venture Organizations*, “Artists need a way to obtain the resources they require to create, produce, and connect their work to an audience efficiently and economically. In particular, they need a mechanism to help them develop and support more diverse revenue resources beyond project grants from public arts funding agencies.”

Some people argue, however, that the performing arts sector has more resources than it realizes. In “The Scarcity Matrix,” David Dower wrote, “When...you delineate all the other resources that could be used to bridge over the money gap, however, the true abundance of our time comes into view.” He wonders at the number of unused hours in rehearsal facilities, the number of properties stored in warehouses, the number of training programs, the number of development opportunities, and questions whether we should be stewarding and sharing our resources in different ways.

When we consider the resources — financial and otherwise — that are required to produce art and reach audiences, a number of questions arise. Are there social enterprises or other models that the sector could use to generate ancillary revenue to support artists and arts companies? How can other resources, including non-financial resources like those referenced by Dower, support the sector? Are there ways in which partnerships could be leveraged? Could established companies, which have traditionally controlled more of the sector’s resources, better facilitate the work of emerging artists?

Through Metcalf’s Innovation Fellowship program, we are interested in exploring some of these questions and thereby support next generation arts practice. We expect to commission one or two Innovation Fellows to **explore alternative resource or revenue models for performing arts companies**. The Foundation is primarily interested in papers that will propose **tangible, achievable, results-oriented solutions** to resource challenges in the sector. We are hoping to produce materials that can shape the conversation at a sector, funder, and policy level over the next five to ten years.

Who Is Eligible to Apply?

The Metcalf Innovation Fellowship is aimed at individuals who have vision, commitment, intellectual rigour, and a willingness to ask hard questions and propose novel, yet viable, solutions. In response to this RFP, we welcome applications from **people working throughout the performing arts sector – practicing artists, administrators, organizations, consultants, or academics**. We also welcome collaborative submissions that marry the experience and expertise of people from across these areas of practice. Eligible applicants must have a significant record of achievement and be recognized as a leader within the sector.

You **do not need to have charitable registration** in order to apply to this RFP. If successful, individual applicants could enter into a contract for services with the Foundation.

What is the Application Process?

Applications should not exceed six pages and should contain:

- a detailed overview of the idea, issue, or model you want to explore including:
 - the challenge or opportunity this initiative is intended to address and why this work would be important and innovative;
 - a rationale for, and description of, Fellowship activities;
 - a brief overview of what others are doing in this area; and
 - how you believe that this Fellowship will contribute to the conversation around alternative resource or revenue models for performing arts companies;
- a list of the people and organizations you envision involving in order to advance your thinking;
- the projected output or deliverables and your preliminary plans to disseminate or advance the ideas being investigated; and
- a preliminary budget.

Owing to the fact that Metcalf Innovation Fellowship opportunities typically result in the publication of formal papers, **significant emphasis will be placed on the quality of your written materials**.

In addition to the items listed above, applicants must include:

- two or three letters of reference from professional colleagues who can comment on the idea, issue, or model you want to explore and on your capacity to undertake the proposed work;
- a copy of your résumé, including items directly relevant to your proposed Innovation Fellowship; and
- a completed Metcalf Foundation application cover page (attached, or download at metcalffoundation.com/downloads).

Please submit a paper copy (printed double-sided) of the application materials **and** send a pdf of the full application package to mjones@metcalffoundation.com. All application materials **must be received** at the Foundation prior to 5:00 pm on **Monday, November 17, 2014**; late or incomplete applications cannot be considered. Results will be delivered to all applicants by mail in early January 2015.

In addition to your written submission, some applicants **may** be asked to attend a brief interview at the Foundation's office.

Please remember that Metcalf is hoping to produce materials that can shape the conversation at a sector, funder, and policy level over the next five to ten years. We are not looking for sectoral surveys or literature reviews examining existing challenges. Additionally, we are not likely to consider applications to examine

or reshape public funding models in the arts sector, or proposals to create new private sector fundraising databases or resources. As with any Metcalf program, the Foundation is under no obligation to accept any of the submitted proposals.

How Will Applications Be Assessed?

All submissions will be reviewed by Metcalf Board and staff with the assistance of subject matter experts as appropriate. Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- background and qualifications of the applicant(s);
- applicability of the proposed response to the issue outlined above;
- proposed methodology for your study/work;
- scope of the project, its creativity, originality, and rigour, and its potential contribution to longstanding or systemic issues;
- likelihood that the ideas expressed could gain traction in the context of current practice and policy; and
- writing quality of the submitted materials.

What Are the Project Parameters?

Typically, Metcalf Innovation Fellowship opportunities result in the publication of formal papers, which are expected to be approximately 20-35 pages in length (up to 15,000 words). We might also consider applications that include other communication vehicles (infographic, video, virtual presence) of a permanent nature.

The Foundation invests significant resources in the editing, formatting, and presentation of our Innovation Fellowship papers, and writers should anticipate a significant investment of time around the editing process. A typical rule-of-thumb regarding the creation of these papers is that one third of time is spent in planning and research, one third in development and writing, and one third in review and revision. We anticipate that a Fellowship typically takes up to one year to complete.

Funding can be used to support costs associated with project activities; awards of up to a maximum of \$20,000 will be considered under this RFP, but awards are more typically in the range of \$15,000. One third of the award will be paid upon execution of a contract and agreement of terms, one third paid on delivery of the final completed draft to the Foundation, and the final third will be paid upon participating in events supporting the release of the paper.

All payments under this program are contingent upon the Innovation Fellow producing materials according to a mutually agreed upon schedule. Metcalf reserves the right to reconsider its commitment to the project, and to all unissued payments, if the Fellow cannot adhere to this schedule.

While Metcalf will work with Innovation Fellows to determine appropriate means of dissemination, authority regarding such decisions remains with the Foundation. The goal of the Foundation is to use these papers to stimulate as much discussion and action on the topic as possible.

All rights related to the publication of any research paper or study performed under contract to the Metcalf Foundation shall remain with the Foundation. That being understood, the intellectual capital shall remain the property of the Innovation Fellow, and Metcalf would encourage that individual to continue their work in this area subsequent to the completion of the Fellowship.

Innovation Fellowship

APPLICATION COVER PAGE

Name of Organization

Contact Name

Position

Address

City

Province

Postal Code

Telephone

Fax

E-mail

Website

Charitable Registration Number

Total Organizational Revenue (from last audited statements)

Signature

Date

This organization would traditionally apply to the following Metcalf Foundation program:

☐ Inclusive Local Economies

☐ Environment

☐ Performing Arts

Amount Requested

Duration (specify months or weeks)

Projected Completion Date

Please provide a short description (250 words or less).