



arts.gov/creativeforces

CREATIVE FORCES

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

CREATIVE FORCES®: NEA MILITARY HEALING ARTS NETWORK NORTH FLORIDA SOUTH GEORGIA VETERANS HEALTH SYSTEM CLINICAL RESEARCH INVESTIGATOR

SECTION A

DESCRIPTION/SPECIFICATIONS/STATEMENT OF WORK

A. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The work to be completed under this request for proposals for a Creative Forces Clinical Research Investigator is to advance research within the North Florida South Georgia Veterans Health System (NFSGVHS), part of the Veterans Health Administration, and across Creative Forces VA sites is issued through the Creative Forces®: NEA Military Healing Arts Network (the Network, or “Creative Forces”) initiative. Americans for the Arts serves as a Cooperator for Creative Forces, which implements standardized Creative Arts Therapies programs for service members, veterans and families in clinical settings across the country; supports community arts engagement in and around Creative Forces clinical sites, and; builds capacity through clinical research and the development of an online National Resource Center. Funding for this Creative Forces RFP is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to Americans for the Arts as a Cooperative Agreement. Creative Forces® is a registered trademark of the National Endowment for the Arts.

The mission of the Creative Forces Network is to improve the health, wellness, and quality of life of trauma-exposed military service members and veterans, as well as their families and caregivers, by increasing knowledge of and access to clinical creative arts therapies and community arts engagement.

Furthermore, the Creative Forces Network aims to promote research collaborations among the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, to advance knowledge, leverage subject-matter expertise and promote utilization of best practices

to benefit targeted patient populations. Clinical and research representatives supported by the National Endowment for the Arts are bound to the terms, processes and oversight of the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs and/or required Federal-wide assurances. Each partner that participates in the Creative Forces Network does so in a manner consistent with its organizational or agency mission and only to the extent permitted by its role in the Network.

The program has three components: **1. Clinical.** Creative Forces places creative arts therapies at the core of patient-centered care in military medical facilities, and in a telehealth program for patients in rural and remote areas; **2. Community Engagement.** Creative Forces provides increased community-based arts opportunities for military and veteran family populations around clinical site locations, and; **3. Capacity.** Creative Forces invests in capacity-building efforts, including the development of manuals, training, and research on the impacts and benefits of the treatment methods, as well as the development of an online National Resource Center/Enterprise Software Platform.

Creative Forces invests in research on the impacts and benefits – physical, emotional, social, and economic – of creative arts therapies as innovative treatment methods. Creative Forces is committed to the pursuit and promotion of clinically relevant biomedical and behavioral research on the effectiveness of creative arts therapies for service members, veterans, family members, and caregivers. Several strategies are critical to the success of our research program. They include: informed selection of rigorous research designs; support for multisite studies; funding of research opportunities at Creative Forces sites, and collaboration with other health/rehabilitation disciplines and partners.

Through Creative Forces, the National Endowment for the Arts is leveraging national clinical and research networks to advance new research ideas and approaches that can accelerate healing for targeted patient populations and advance research and practice across associated creative arts therapies fields. A catalogue of completed, current, and pending research and clinical practice papers is included in the **Creative Forces Research Inventory**. The findings from these studies provide a solid foundation to inform more in-depth research.

This contract is intended to support research activities across the Network to achieve goals and objectives as stated in the *Creative Forces Clinical Research: A Strategic Framework and Five-Year Agenda (2018 – 2022)*¹ and the Research Strategic Plan established in 2019. The Research Investigator will work as a research asset at the North Florida South Georgia Veterans Health System (NFSGVHS) to advance Creative Forces research within the NFSGVHS and across Creative Forces VA sites by providing scientific support and developing content for the National Resource Center (NRC). Capacity is a key mission element of Creative Forces and research advances the science and understanding of the benefits of clinical creative arts therapies and

¹National Endowment for the Arts (2018, October). *Creative Forces clinical research: A strategic framework and five-year agenda (2018 – 2022)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/CF-Clinical-Research-Framework-and-Agenda-10.23.18.pdf>

arts engagement in the trauma-exposed, military-connected population and creates content for the NRC. The ability to conduct research across the Network will be bolstered through the establishment of this Clinical Research Investigator with a priority focus on clinical creative arts therapies research. Capacity to support research is variable across the Network, but to date some of the most promising opportunities exist within a few locations, including the NFSGVHS. The NFSGVHS is an active research site with a proven record of productivity in rehabilitative medicine and telehealth; it is a hub for collaboration across Office of Rural Health telehealth network; its leaders possess knowledge of VA research policy/practices; and, it is poised for expanding clinic-to-community research support such as through its close collaboration with the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine extending research reach into Arts Engagement.

The work outlined in this contract will be executed in collaboration with the NFSGVHS and the Veterans Rural Health Resource Center aligned at the NFSGVHS, under the guidance of the Creative Forces Senior Military Medical Advisor and the Clinical Research Advisor. The contractor will report directly to the Clinical Research Advisor, who serves as a contractor for Creative Forces with Americans for the Arts.

SECTION B

STATEMENT OF WORK

B. PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

The contractor shall perform the following duties:

B.1. Collaborate with researchers and coordinate management of clinical creative arts therapies-specific research portfolio at NFSGVHS and across Creative Forces VA (CF VA) sites to achieve goals and objectives as stated in the [Creative Forces Research Strategic Framework and 5-Year Agenda \(2018-2022\)](#).

B.1.1. Facilitate research efforts across CF VA sites, with particular focus on telehealth, rehabilitation, and clinic-to-community research.

B.1.2. Provide clinical research subject matter expertise to support community engagement research.

B.1.3. Collaborate with researchers across the NFSGVHS and RVTRI network to integrate research questions in alignment with the Creative Forces research goals/objectives into current and proposed NFSGVHS or RVTRI research studies, including the protocol, *A Study on Barriers and Facilitators for Veterans' Arts Engagement Post-Clinical Creative Arts Therapy*.

B.1.4. Enhance research protocols by ensuring a sound neuroscience/rehabilitation foundation.

B.1.5. Act as liaison between creative arts therapists and the NFSGVHS Research Department providing creative arts therapists with guidance on scientific principles and research procedures, and attend NFSGVHS research meetings.

B.1.6 Support the preparation of materials needed for the pursuit of future extramural funding opportunities specific to clinical creative arts therapies-related research.

B.2.. Be able to independently, or with minimal assistance, write background documents and project summaries that could be included as documentation in future responses to extramural funding opportunities and/or responses to RFPs issued by academic or scientific institutions interested in support of clinical research

B.2.1. Compile preliminary data from current and past research protocols at the NFSGVHS that would provide evidence of past performance metrics for use in future research RFP submissions.

B.2.2. Engage in review process for the Creative Forces Conceptual Model Phase 2 final deliverables

B.3. Generate new research projects across Creative Forces VA sites to further the Creative Forces research goals/priority questions.

B.3.1. Develop original research projects including protocol development and execution, data analysis and manuscript preparation.

B.3.2. Assess, prepare, complete, coordinate and submit protocol related documents to Institutional Review Boards (IRB). Assure compliance of general and study specific regulatory related processes. Maintain record of IRB approvals, amendments, and safety events, process

data queries and ensure resolution. Assist in preparation of amendments to protocols and/or modifications to study design as appropriate.

B.3.3. Develop data collection tools, questionnaires, databases and the application of research techniques. Assist in writing procedures manuals for data collection and coding.

B.3.4. Review journals, abstracts and scientific literature to keep abreast of new developments and to obtain information regarding previous studies to aid in the planning of new studies.

B.3.5. Prepare an oral presentations or written report with analysis setting forth progress, trends and appropriate recommendations or conclusions.

B.3.6. Draft and/or review written submissions, from the Creative Forces VA sites, for publication and or professional presentations.

B.4. Collaborate with the Creative Forces Informatics Specialist: Review extracted data from the Creative Forces Informatics database for research and quality improvement projects. Using Microsoft Office, create Word documents, spreadsheets using Excel Program, presentations using PowerPoint and maintain local database using Access and/or Excel programs.

B.5. Review current scientific literature in the creative arts therapies and neuroscience fields and present a written and/or oral summary to Creative Forces and NFSGVHS staff.

SECTION C

DELIVERABLES

C. Delivery Schedule (Service Summary)

Contract Initiation	Schedule/Deliverables
Planning Meeting with Creative Forces, NFSGVHS, and AFTA contract management Staff	Within 5 days of contract initiation (August 2020)
Preliminary/Preparation Phase	
Orientation/training with site team	Within 2 weeks of contract initiation
Performance Objective: Organizational Capacity	
Meet with NFSGVHS and the Veterans Rural Health Resource Center-Gainesville, Creative Forces Senior Military Medical Advisor and Clinical Research Advisor	Monthly
Collaborate with researchers across the NFSGVHS and CF VA sites, with particular focus on telehealth, rehabilitation, and clinic-to-community research, to generate proposals and integrate clinical creative arts therapies-related research questions into current and proposed studies	Monthly status report
Preparation of background data summaries and other project documentation for use in response to future extramural opportunities for clinical research	Monthly status report
Attend and report out on pertinent NFSGVHS research meetings	Monthly status report
Prepare list of open RFPs for support of future clinical research objectives.	November 2020
Participate in discussions and review of the Standardization of Clinical Operations Documentation and Procedures and Measurement/Program Evaluation plans. Provide input, through meeting participation and discussions, on improvements to surveys, instruments, and documentation	Ongoing throughout PoP
Performance Objective: Research Process	
Engage in review process for the Creative Forces Conceptual Model Phase 2 final deliverables	October 31, 2020
Review current scientific literature in the creative arts therapies and neuroscience fields and present a written summary to Creative Forces and NFSGVHS staff	December 2020
Support completion of NFSG study: <i>A Study on Barriers and Facilitators for Veterans' Arts Engagement Post-Clinical Creative Arts Therapy</i> , including manuscript development for that study	Ongoing, through December 31, 2020

Prepare one oral presentation or a written report and analysis setting forth progress, trends and appropriate recommendations or conclusions from CF VA Network sites	December 2020
Draft and/or review one written submission for publication and/or professional presentation specific to the NFSG study	December 2020
Draft proposal for one study that aligns with Creative Forces Conceptual Framework Priority Research Questions for possible funding in 2021	December 15, 2020
Assess, prepare, complete, coordinate and submit materials for one protocol to the Institutional Review Board (IRB).	December 2020

SECTION D

AWARD AMOUNT AND EVALUATION FACTORS FOR AWARD

The cost for support services and deliverables of this project shall not exceed \$50,000. Work to be executed from date of contract award through December 31, 2020

The award is inclusive of all expenses associated with the project, including but not limited to travel to and from Gainesville (travel to other Creative Forces sites outside of the Gainesville under direction of the AFTA Creative Forces Project Director will constitute a reimbursable expense).

D.1. Base Support. The contractor shall be provided a desk, computer and office equipment (including PC) and office supplies as needed. All software and hardware, passwords/access to VA Internet/Email and applicable database will be available within the scope of the contract.

D.2. General Information

D.2.1. The period of performance for this task order is from o/a August 1 through December 31, 2020.

D.2.2. The place of performance is the North Florida South Georgia Veterans Health System, Gainesville Florida.

D.3. Travel and other direct costs. The contractor may travel to participate in meetings, conferences, field evaluation visits, etc., to fulfill respective mission goals. Specific dates and/or travel details are not available at this time. If/when travel is needed in support of this contract the specific travel dates, duration, number of trips, etc. may be adjusted upon direction of the Clinical Research Advisor. Travel outside of Gainesville, Florida will be funded by AFTA and all travel must comply with AFTA policies.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Understanding of the Project 40%

The contractor demonstrates a thorough understanding of the role, importance of research to the Creative Forces mission and the role of the NFSGVHS Clinical Research Investigator to advance Creative Forces research within the NFSGVHS and across Creative Forces VA sites in accomplishing that mission.

Qualifications and Experience (Past Performance) 50%

The contractor provides a copy of their Curriculum Vitae and if invited, participates in a video-conference interview to further evaluate qualifications, experience and fit for the proposed scope of work.

Price 10%

The contractor submits a quote broken down by an hourly rate based on contracts for similar work or a flat fee for clearly described work by deliverable. The proposed quote is appropriate to the

administration of the project. Americans for the Arts will evaluate the Contractor's proposed prices to decide that the costs are fair and reasonable in relation to the services provided. The quote shall clearly identify the breakdown between labor costs and other direct costs

Qualified contractors will meet the following criteria:

The candidate should have a healthcare and clinical research background with knowledge of patient care and medical records. Minimum education is doctoral degree (MD, DO, PhD) . Ten years of research with a publication record in peer-reviewed journals and health care experience in the VA system is highly desired.

The contractor selected for this position shall be able to work independently, have strong attention to detail, good organizational skills, initiative in performing assigned tasks and the ability to follow-up complex projects with influence. The contractor shall be able to interact professionally with all levels of personnel in and outside of the organization. The contractor shall provide professional and technical qualified individual to perform the tasks outlined in the following paragraphs.

The contractor shall have experience and training in clinical research including human subjects' protections, regulatory affairs, and data collection. Training in neuroscience, basic science research, data management, principles of epidemiology, emergency health services, and statistics is required.

References

The contractor provides names of three individuals who may be contacted for references.

SECTION E

START DATE AND APPLICATION DETAILS

Proposal includes:

1. Cover letter addressing qualifications and ability to execute duties, activities and deliverables as outlined in Scope of Work.
2. Curriculum vitae.
3. Budget
4. List of three references of individuals who may be contacted for references.

Submit cover letter, curriculum vitae, writing sample and three References by July 20, 2020 to:
By email: creativeforces@artsusa.org

Start Date: o/a August 1, 2020
Contract End Date: December 31, 2020

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION:

By email: Received no later than **5:00 pm EDT, July 20th, 2020**

Submitting Questions:

All questions pertaining to this solicitation may be directed to creativeforces@artsusa.org. All responses to applicant questions will be posted to the RFP public site at <https://www.americansforthearts.org/about-americans-for-the-arts/careers-at-americans-for-the-arts/join-our-team>

All questions must be submitted no later than noon EDT on Friday, July 10, 2020 in order to guarantee posting to the public site. All responses will be publicly posted to the website on an ongoing basis.

This Independent Contractor position is supported through the Creative Forces: The NEA Military Healing Arts Network (the Network, or “Creative Forces”) project. Americans for the Arts serves as a Cooperator for the Creative Forces project, which includes the administration, planning and implementation of the nationwide expansion of programmatic activities and community engagement work to additional military treatment facilities, Veterans Health Administration medical facilities, and community settings, as well as the implementation of standardized Creative Arts Therapies programs for service members, veterans and families in clinical settings across the country. In its role as a Cooperator for the Creative Forces project, Americans for the Arts is serving as the contracting agency.

Funding for Creative Forces is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to Americans for the Arts as a Cooperative Agreement.

The National Endowment for the Arts provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, please notify the servicing civilian personnel unit. Requests for reasonable accommodation are made on a case-by-case basis.

Failure to provide all the required information as stated in Request for Proposal may result in an ineligible rating or may affect the overall rating.