

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**Creative Aging Grant and Professional Learning Outcomes
Assessment**

Issued: February 26, 2026

Response Deadline: March 16, 2026

I. About NASAA and State Arts Agencies

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) is the professional association that serves the nation's state and jurisdictional arts agencies. We are a national, not-for-profit, nonpartisan organization that champions public support for the arts in America. NASAA's mission is to strengthen state arts agencies. We provide knowledge, representation and professional development services that help state arts agencies excel in their many public service roles. Although NASAA is an independent 501(c)(3), a majority of our funds originate from government sources and our mission is highly focused on helping the public sector be responsive, equitable and inclusive in meeting community needs.

State arts agencies – the officially designated arts councils of all 56 states and U.S. jurisdictions - comprise NASAA's membership and are our primary stakeholders. They have a public mandate to increase access to the arts and help all communities in America enjoy the civic, economic and educational benefits offered by the arts. State arts agencies accomplish their work through grant making as well as through training programs, convening services, network/partnership cultivation, research and communications. NASAA's members are state government agencies, receiving most of their funding from state legislative appropriations as well as federal grants from the National Endowment for the Arts.

II. Project Background

Extensive research shows that arts participation improves the well-being of older adults, supporting good health, strengthening social bonds, and bringing a heightened sense of purpose and joy to their lives. However, many older adults still face barriers to arts engagement, including social isolation and limited access to high-quality sequential learning opportunities. The prerequisite conditions for successful creative aging programs are not in place in every community: teaching artists may not be trained to work with senior populations, community organizations may not have experience with creative aging programming, and partnerships or other systems of support may be absent. As grant makers, conveners, and partnership brokers, state arts agencies have a unique opportunity to address these gaps.

To realize this opportunity, NASAA has joined forces with E.A. Michelson Philanthropies on a special initiative – Creative Aging, Creative Futures (CACF). This initiative awards twenty-eight grants of \$77,500 to state arts agencies to increase creative aging offerings. It builds on the creative aging experience and interests that many state arts agencies already have in place, as revealed in NASAA's prior creative aging work, including *Leveraging State Investments in Creative Aging (LSICA)* and *States Leading Creative Aging (SLCA)* initiatives, and a 2019 state arts agency [field scan](#). Through a blend of grant investments, professional development

services, and partnership activities, CACF will deepen state arts agencies' current creative aging efforts and expand creative aging activities into new states. Professional learning services include a 10-session virtual professional learning community (PLC) available to all state arts agency and regional arts agency staff, 6 public national webinars, and programming during the 2026 and 2028 NASAA in-person assemblies. All CACF activities begin in winter 2026 and conclude fall 2028.

III. Evaluation Needs

NASAA seeks a consultant to assess, synthesize and report the learning outcomes of the Creative Aging, Creative Futures (CACF) initiative. The evaluation should help NASAA, E.A. Michelson Philanthropy, SAAs, and partners understand the success and challenges of the CACF initiative, particularly:

- how the SAA-supported programming and initiatives expanded high-quality sequential arts learning for older adults,
- key takeaways and best practices resulting from topics explored in the PLC, webinars, and assembly activities, including successes and challenges,
- how SAAs have successfully integrated creative aging into core programming or long-term goals and the challenges they faced,
- the cumulative impact and learning of the LSICA, SLCA, (prior year creative aging initiatives) and CACF initiatives,
- effective creative aging models and strategies revealed through focused case studies of select SAA creative aging work,
- evidence-based lessons to strengthen the broader creative aging sector.

The consultant will collaborate with NASAA to refine lines of inquiry to create an evaluation plan that yields meaningful insight.

To these ends, NASAA seeks a relationship with a consultant who can work collaboratively with NASAA's program and research staff to:

- design an outcomes assessment that can be put to practical use for funders and state arts agency program managers,
- gather and analyze data using appropriate qualitative or quantitative methods, and
- effectively communicate the results.

The data gathered about the PLC, national webinars, and conference-based learning must enable NASAA to synthesize findings across all learning formats to understand the overall professional learning experience.

While NASAA acknowledges the many health benefits associated with creative aging, *CACF is not a health-oriented or therapeutic initiative – it is designed to support lifelong learning programs*. This evaluation therefore does not have a clinical assessment component and should not focus on health factors.

IV. Scope of Work and Deliverables

Outlined below are the anticipated scope of work (subject to refinement in collaboration with the selected consultant) and salient deliverables. Final deliverable includes a final report:

A. Project Start-Up

1. Review background documentation
2. Review information from SLCA and LISCA initiatives
3. Review CACF grantee information (including project detail sheets, narratives and budget forms) and professional learning offerings.
4. Facilitate a project kick-off meeting with NASAA (to explore evaluation needs, methods and possible lines of inquiry)

B. Inquiry/Evaluation Design

1. Prepare an evaluation plan for collecting information during the 10 PLC sessions, 6 webinars, and 2026 and 2028 NASAA assembly creative aging programming (to include evaluation methods, process details and a project timetable)
2. Select five or more SAAs to conduct case-studies for final report/s and plan for the execution of these case studies.
3. Develop reporting requirements for online events and follow-up (defining information and data points for the evaluation)
4. Facilitate an evaluation plan review meeting with NASAA (to discuss the evaluation plan and proposed reporting requirement drafts)
5. Prepare evaluation instruments (e.g., interview protocols, focus group protocols, case study protocols, survey questionnaires)

C. Information Collection & Analysis

1. Consolidate and analyze interim grantee reports
2. Consolidate and analyze final grantee reports
3. Conduct interviews, focus groups, case studies, or surveys as stipulated in the evaluation plan

Note: NASAA will collect final and interim report forms from grantees and supply them to the consultant. Other outreach or information discovery to fulfill the evaluation plan will be the responsibility of the consultant, at NASAA's direction.

D. Reporting

1. Produce consolidated data tables of information from grantees' interim reports, as well as interim data from CACF professional learning activities (e.g. PLC participation, webinar engagement, conference-based learning).
2. Prepare a short interim report summarizing information available at the project midpoint
3. Produce consolidated data tables of information from grantees' final CACF reports and data from professional learning offerings.
4. Synthesize data and findings across all three funding rounds (LSICA, SLCA, and CACF) to tell the cumulative story of funding investments.
5. Synthesize five deep-dive case studies that highlight specific SAA strategies, challenges overcome, and successful models for expanding creative aging.
6. Draft an outline of the final project evaluation report
7. Prepare a full final report summarizing the ultimate results of the evaluation effort (This report should include an executive summary noting topline findings; a well-developed narrative; charts, tables, case studies, and maps as appropriate; and photographs, which NASAA can supply.).
8. Participate in a project debrief meeting to help NASAA and E.A. Michelson Philanthropies reflect on the evaluation results and share recommendations for the future

All written deliverables in sections B and D will be submitted to NASAA in draft form. Consultants should expect up to three rounds of NASAA staff review before these deliverables are approved and accepted.

The evaluator shall report to NASAA Arts Learning Projects Director and will work consultatively with NASAA's Chief Program and Planning Officer, Senior Director of Research and Research Fellow.

V. Timetable

Evaluation Calendar

RFP proposal deadline:	March 16, 2026
Consultant selection:	by March 31, 2026
Conduct kickoff meeting:	Week of April 6, 2026
Submit draft evaluation plan:	by April 20, 2026
Submit midterm report check-in:	by June 30, 2027
Final report complete:	October 31, 2028

Additional deadlines will be determined in conjunction with the development and acceptance of the evaluation plan deliverable.

VI. Project Budget

A range of \$50,000 - \$70,000 in consulting fees is available for this project. NASAA welcomes proposals that include a range of cost options. No travel is expected (proposals should include data that can be collected virtually/remotely).

VII. Consultant Capabilities

Competitive responses to this RFP will originate from individuals/firms with the following knowledge and skills:

- Subject-matter expertise in the arts, aging and lifelong learning (prior work with state arts agencies is desirable)
- Experience in evaluating grant programs
- Expertise in relevant research methods, especially portfolio evaluation and qualitative research (including structured interviews, focus groups and text analysis)
- The ability to combine evaluation methods with creativity and flexibility
- Excellent writing skills
- Excellent facilitation skills for virtual meetings
- Ability to deliver excellent work on time at a competitive price point

NASAA strongly encourages proposals from people of color, older adults, women, veterans and individuals with disabilities.

VIII. Proposal Submission Requirements

Proposals must include:

1. A brief overview of your consulting and evaluation work
2. Discussion of how your expertise aligns with this specific RFP's objectives and NASAA's desired consultant capabilities.
3. A description of how you will approach this project: What special challenges do you anticipate with this kind of evaluation? How might you address those challenges? What would you want to discuss with NASAA to inform your development of the evaluation plan?
4. A detailed cost proposal addressing all components described in this scope of work
5. Three work samples showcasing relevant experience
6. Bios or CVs of all individuals who will work on the project

Each proposal should be packaged as a single Adobe PDF file and sent via e-mail to creativeaging@nasaa-arts.org. No hard-copy submissions will be accepted. **The deadline for submissions is midnight Eastern time on March 16, 2026.**

After receiving proposals, NASAA may request additional information, such as references, interviews, or further work samples. Prompt responses to these requests will facilitate NASAA's consideration of your proposal.

IX. Selection and Terms

A request for supplemental information shall not constitute acceptance of a proposal.

NASAA staff will review proposals and select the evaluator based on consultant capabilities, relevance of the consultant's prior work and fulfillment of the proposal requirements.

NASAA will negotiate contract terms upon selection.

NASAA's procurement standards are guided by 2 CFR 200: Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) published by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The contractor selected may not be actively excluded from receiving federal funds, as determined by the System for Award Management. NASAA is not obligated to award this RFP.