

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Submission deadline: Friday, September 23, 2019

IN BRIEF

The Visual Arts Alliance is seeking a consultant to work with its members to develop a concerted strategic plan to focus its advocacy goals and messaging, design a coordinated work plan and calendar, identify funding sources and prepare relevant funding applications.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Members of the Visual Arts Alliance are seeking proposals from independent strategists and consultants, to produce a strategic plan to focus and fund the Alliance's advocacy work over the next five years, along with a coordinated work plan to encourage the participation of its members.

BACKGROUND : THE VISUAL ARTS ALLIANCE

[The Visual Arts Alliance](#) / [L'Alliance pour les arts visuels](#) is a consortium of national visual art, media art, and craft arts service organizations comprised of artists, curators, art museums, artist-run centres and art dealers. Its mission is to ensure the sustainability of Canadian artists, art professionals and their institutions.

Since its [creation](#) in November 2007, the group has acted as a think-tank, sharing resources, exchanging information, and encouraging development to benefit the visual arts sector at large.

The Alliance is not a formal organization or institution, but operates as a stakeholder network of associations representing the interests of the visual arts milieu. Its core group of member organizations is eager to work on a collective purpose and vision to advance the visual arts in Canada.

Research goals established by members of the Alliance in 2008 have been partially completed, but knowledge gaps and blind spots identified by Guy Bellavance in his [Synthesis and Critical Analysis \(2011\)](#) persist. A recent literature review on the Canadian art market ([Blais, 2019](#)) identifies the same persistent challenges in our understanding of the sector, in an increasingly diverse and globalized field.

CONTEXT: THE CANADIAN VISUAL ARTS SECTOR

Alliance members acknowledge the recent doubling of the Canada Council for the Arts will relieve the strain put on artists and their organizations by years of austerity budgets. Alliance members also commend efforts to review the Copyright Act by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage ([Shifting Paradigms, 2019](#)) and by the Standing Committee on Industry ([Statutory Review of the Copyright Act, 2019](#)). A brief submitted by Alliance members in 2018 as part of DCH's Arts policy branch grouped program evaluation argued that the current suite of arts programs and policies are geared heavily towards the performing arts, leaving visual arts organizations seeking similar support with fewer options. Such programs and policies that do foreground the visual arts sector (the National Museum Policy for example) are in dire need of updating and reinvestment. There is currently no federal program to support art dealers as they represent Canadian artists in brick and mortar galleries, online and in local and international art fairs and markets, nor is there a publishing program specific to the visual arts.

The visual arts are not a homogeneous sector. Visual arts exist in many forms, take place in a variety of locations, and cater to different audiences, though our interests often overlap. Designing a strategic and work plan, set of common messages, and shared research agenda which encompasses and synthesizes the sometimes diverging needs of our Alliance's broad membership will represent a challenge to the execution of this project. The successful bidder will propose an approach that recognizes these complexities and overcomes this potential obstacle by focusing on areas of common concern.

PROJECT GOALS

To enhance its effectiveness, the Alliance urgently requires a joint advocacy strategy, positioning statement and key messages. The purpose of this exercise is to establish well-defined advocacy objectives, design a coordinated strategy, and recommend methods for collecting evidence needed to support the plan's objectives. The strategy will promote a collegial approach that reflects the nature and composition of the Alliance and ensures buy-in from all its members.

PROJECT SCOPE

The successful candidate will:

- Facilitate a planning process with Visual Arts Alliance members to establish priorities;
- Audit the Alliance's current capacity and potential, looking to its network to single out and target potential champions and influencers in the public and private sector;
- Produce a multi-faceted strategy with coordinated action plans for members;
- Produce advocacy messaging that allows the Alliance to respond to a variety of evolving priorities;
- Identify sources of funding; and
- Prepare and submit funding applications.

DELIVERABLES

- A. Audit report of Alliance's current capacity and potential;
- B. Strategy and member-specific action plan;
- C. Positioning messages;
- D. Funding applications.

TIMELINE

3 September 2019	Dissemination of Request for Proposals (RFP)
23 September 2019	Deadline to receive proposals from bidders
30 September 2019	Analysis of proposals and selection of successful bidder
2 November 2019	Member Audit & planning begins
11 December 2019	Audit report & and draft strategy delivered at in-person meeting
17 January 2020	Final audit report and strategic & action plan
End of February 2020	Messaging delivery to members
Feb-April 2020	Preparation and submission of funding applications

BUDGET

The total cost of the project includes honoraria and travel costs to Ottawa to meet with Alliance members is not to exceed \$10,500, taxes included.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The successful bidder will:

- Demonstrate experience and expertise in strategic planning, including a capacity to facilitate coalition building;
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of the Canadian cultural sector, both anglophone and francophone;
- Describe the approach proposed to fulfil the mandate;
- Propose a detailed work process and schedule;
- Include in annex the curriculum vitae of the applicant and their team (as applicable) including a list of past projects;
- Provide a detailed project budget with a step-by-step breakdown of costs detailing professional fees and other expenses;
- Indicate any expectations for the client, as applicable.

CONTACT INFORMATION & TO APPLY

For additional information about this Request for Proposals, or to submit your proposal, write to info@visualartsvisuels.ca

Deadline for submissions is Friday, September 23, 2019.