



PROCUREMENT JUSTIFICATION FORM (PJF)

This form must accompany all contract requests and sole source requisitions (RQS) over \$5,000 submitted to the Office of State Procurement Services.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please provide the requested information in the white spaces below. All responses (except signatures) must be typed; no hand-written forms will be accepted. See the guidance document posted with this form on the Procurement Services intranet site (Forms page) for additional instructions.

PART I: OVERVIEW				
Department Office/Division/Program:		Maine Arts Commission		
Department Contract Administrator or Grant Coordinator:		Julie Horn		
(If applicable) Department Reference #:		94W		
Amount: (Contract/Amendment/Grant)		\$ 35,000	Advantage CT / RQS #:	20250102000000001671
CONTRACT	Proposed Start Date:		Proposed End Date:	
AMENDMENT	Original Start Date:	1/1/2025	Effective Date:	7/1/2025
	Previous End Date:	6/30/2025	New End Date:	10/31/2025
GRANT	Project Start Date:	1/1/2025	Grant Start Date:	1/1/2025
	Project End Date:	6/30/2025	Grant End Date:	6/30/2025
Vendor/Provider/Grantee Name, City, State:		Side x Side, Portland, ME		
Brief Description of Goods/Services/Grant:		Side x Side, in partnership with the Maine Arts Commission and others, will develop Rural Arts Connect , a statewide teaching artists leadership development training and activation pilot project.		

PART II: JUSTIFICATION FOR VENDOR SELECTION			
Check the box below for the justification(s) that applies to this request. (Check all that apply.)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	A. Competitive Process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	G. Grant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	B. Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>	H. State Statute/Agency Directed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C. Single Source/Unique Vendor	<input type="checkbox"/>	I. Federal Agency Directed
<input type="checkbox"/>	D. Proprietary/Copyright/Patents	<input type="checkbox"/>	J. Willing and Qualified
<input type="checkbox"/>	E. Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	K. Client Choice

<input type="checkbox"/>	F. University Cooperative Project	<input type="checkbox"/>	L. Other Authorization
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Please respond to ALL of the questions in the following sections.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

1. Provide a more detailed description and explain the need for the goods, services or grant to supplement the response in Part I.

As the Maine Arts Commission (MAC) developed their current strategic plan, they traversed the state listening to communities for areas of need that could be supported by the arts. Not surprisingly, the most significant needs are in the most rural parts of Maine. MAC is invested in addressing identified needs with solutions that align with the strategic plan that includes fostering wellbeing, combatting isolation, and creating thriving communities in all, but especially the most rural, parts of the state. In addition, the 2023 [Advisory from the US Surgeon General, Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation](#), found that half of US adults report experiencing loneliness. The nonprofit Aging in Place placed Maine as the # 1 loneliest state in a [recent study](#). The Arts are not often seen as a viable solution to social problems, but teaching artists activate connection through shared creativity in others. Their work can be done in places such as a classroom, senior living facilities, the library and the barber shop.

The Commission has a strong track record of committing resources to the arts learning sector and is required to do so under our contract with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). One focus is to strengthen rural teaching artists, artists, and crafters through professional leadership development and support in connecting with local venues to offer community-centric arts experiences. Intended to reach areas under-served by the arts, rural artists will foster intergenerational social connections, belonging and wellbeing for all ages and abilities through active participation in creativity and art making.

Rural Arts Connect: Teaching Artist Training will be a hybrid 5-session training (final session in person) covering best practices of teaching artistry, including skills to assess and meet a community need through the arts, design and implement a collaborative project proposal, build partnerships, create budgets, and embed marketing and assessment tools in their approach. Each trained participant will create and implement a short, practice project and design a full project proposal ready for future implementation.

Deliverables:

1. Deliver a statewide survey to teaching artists/artists/craftspeople/educators to assess their professional development interests and needs.
2. Lead the identification and recruitment of artists/craftspeople/teaching artists/educators, particularly in rural areas, utilizing Side x Side's Project MAINE network (SxS and MAC).
3. Design and deliver a hybrid Professional Development Series by June 30, 2025.
4. Train the 1st Cohort of rural artists/teaching artists/craftspeople, to develop teaching artistry and community leadership skills.
5. Facilitate partnerships between 1st Cohort and local venues such as: libraries, schools, arboretums, senior centers and veteran's homes.
6. Mentor Cohort 1 in the implementation of the one-day arts-based project to be completed by the last day of training, June 30, 2025. This opportunity provides the teaching artists with mentorship during their practice of program delivery in a community space with participants from their region. Cost of projects fall to both the partnering community organization and the artists/teaching artists/craftspeople.
7. Compile accessible resources for continued rural community investment, including a roster of libraries and local organizations that support arts-based activities (SxS and MAC).

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

- 8. Provide resource materials to support teaching artistry, including: the fundamentals of teaching artistry, and tools on how to build partnerships, design a community project, market and evaluate your work.
 - 9. Invite visiting experts from regional areas, to increase awareness about specialized content areas such as a trauma-informed approach, or creative aging, for example. This is not explicit training on the needs of targeted populations.
 - 10. Work closely with the Maine Arts Commission, the Maine Council on Aging and other possible partners to facilitate the flow of teaching artists to work with specialized populations.
 - 11. Assess impact and refine pilot program for replication in years two and three, utilizing data collection, surveys and interviews.
2. Provide a brief justification for the selected vendor to supplement the response in Part II. Reference the RFP number, if applicable.

Side x Side (SxS), a Portland-based 501c(3) non-profit organization, is the only Maine-based entity with the expertise, reach, commitment and experience to carry out this project. SxS has over ten years of experience designing and delivering high quality, customized professional development for artists, teaching artists, educators and administrators that includes trauma informed, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), accessibility and culturally aware approaches. Their hands-on workshops and virtual webinars have reached over 600 artists and educators across all 16 counties in Maine, bringing practical skills and creative ideas to bring more arts to communities. Their focus on in-school arts integration as a teaching strategy where “the arts become the approach to teaching and the vehicle for learning” (Kennedy Center for the Arts) has reached over 17,000 students. As the name implies, they work to bring people together side-by-side, forming lasting collaborative relationships that increase wellbeing through art.

Side x Side will leverage their knowledge and management expertise for the Rural Arts Connect project. They were awarded two multi-year federal grants from the US Department of Education, bringing well over \$4 million dollars into Maine for arts-based school programming and professional development. SxS was awarded a third federal grant in 2023 through Congressionally Directed Spending and the US Department of Education to design and implement Project M.A.I.N.E., a year-long, statewide professional development program for classroom teachers and teaching artists. Side x Side’s highly qualified staff includes a visionary executive director, an arts integration specialist, a program manager and experienced teaching artists. In addition, consultant Dr. Kelly Hrenko, co-founder of Side x Side and Professor of Art Education and Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at the University of Southern Maine, brings her expertise in curriculum design, evaluation and research to all of Side x Side’s programming and professional development work.

Side x Side has a wealth of experience managing large multi-year projects, maintains internal structures to support implementing professional development and adheres to a prudent utilization of its financial resources including careful cost controls, conservative management of debt, and a sound approach to maintenance of its physical facilities. During the implementation of Rural Arts Connect, Side x Side will provide full assurance that all internal policies, state requirements, and federal regulations will be followed in regard to proper disbursement and accounting procedures. As in the past, Side x Side is poised to expand their training template and deliver this hybrid leadership training program in this pilot year. Side x Side will collaborate with the Maine Arts Commission to recruit rural artists and craftspeople and market opportunities to support future work for teaching artists across Maine.

PART III: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

3. Explain how the negotiated costs or rates are fair and reasonable; or how the funding was allocated to grantee.

\$25,000 represents approximately 270 hours at \$36/hr rate, their professional fee, and around \$350 for travel to arts education-related events throughout the state.

4. Describe the plan for future competition for the goods or services.

In the future, should another organization of equal caliber and reach emerge that could carry out this work, the Maine Arts Commission will assess their qualifications and use the proper State procurement process for a contract.

Click or tap here to enter text.

PART IV: AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) / MAINE JOBS & RECOVERY PLAN (MJRP)

Does this request utilize ARPA/MJRP funds?

☐ Yes, MJRP funds (023) – If Yes, please attach the approved Business Case(s).

☐ Yes, ARPA funds (025) – If Yes, please be aware of the requirements from awarding federal agencies.

☒ No – If No, proceed to Part V.

PART V: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (COI); CONTRACT WITH THE STATE

Maine law contains Conflict of Interest statutes directed to State Departments, State Officers, and Employees Generally under MRS Title 5, §18 and §18-A, in harmony with MRS Title 17, §3104.

☒ The requesting department signatory understands and acknowledges Maine's Conflict of Interest statutes.

PART VI: APPROVALS

The signatures below indicate approval of this procurement request.

Signature of requesting
Department's Commissioner
(or designee):



Typed Name:

Julie Horn

Date: 5/21/2025

Signature of DAFS
Procurement Official:

DocuSigned by:
Thomas Paquette
249502C7B71A49A...

Typed Name:

Thomas Paquette

Date: 5/21/2025