



Request for Proposal
Patron Survey for Washington Performing Arts

Proposal Timeline

- April 15 RFP Issued
- April 18-19 You may submit questions to us by email
- April 22 We will respond to your questions
- April 29 Proposal delivered to us via email
- April 30-May 6 We will evaluate proposals
- May 8-10 Presentations via web conference
- May 10-15 We will evaluate presentations and call references
- May 17 Selection
- May 20-21 Contract negotiations

Project Start Date May 29, 2024

Project Completion August 2024

Responses are due via email to Lauren Beyea LBeyea@washingtonperformingarts.org.

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I. Project Description and Background

a. Overview

Washington Performing Arts seeks to contract with a firm to conduct patron research through a survey, and to evaluate opportunities through a peer market comparison. Patrons are defined as subscribers, donors, and ticket buyers. The overall purpose is to identify patron demographics and purchasing information sources, and to inform opportunities for growth in patron engagement and with core Washington Performing Arts programming.

Washington Performing Arts uses Tessitura for its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and will provide data for survey development and outreach.

This research has the following objectives:

- i. Profile WPA audiences
- ii. Evaluate the Washington Performing Arts experience for subscribers, Friends members, and single-ticket buyers
 1. Interest in historic strengths and core programming:
 - a. Classical (Orchestral, Piano, Vocal, other recitals)
 - b. Gospel music
 - c. Global music
 2. Secondary Programming: Jazz and Dance
 3. Satisfaction level with Washington Performing Arts service/biggest pain points
 4. Satisfaction level with value of Washington Performing Arts tickets
 - a. Including as compared with other local arts venues
 5. Performance Venue Preferences:
 - a. Metro or parking needs
 - b. Accessibility: Large Print and Braille, ASL, Audio-description
- iii. Identify opportunities for brand awareness and growth
 1. Awareness of Washington Performing Arts as presenter
 2. Awareness of Washington Performing Arts education programs
 3. Awareness of Washington Performing Arts gospel music ensembles and programs
 4. Awareness of Washington Performing Arts free community programs through Mars Arts D.C.
 5. Loyalty to Washington Performing Arts
 - a. Motivation segments inquiring why patrons stay with Washington Performing Arts (passionate about the art forms, education, mission, or the org)
 - i. What is/are your most meaningful experience(s) with Washington Performing Arts?
 - ii. How aware are you/how meaningful is Washington Performing Arts's mission as you consider transactions with us?
 - iii. If you are not already a Washington Performing Arts donor, what factors would motivate you to become one?

- iv. What do you hope a future Washington Performing Arts looks like for you and our region?
 - b. Donor Motivation: benefits, passion for our work, civic duty, etc
 - i. What is/are your most meaningful experience(s) with Washington Performing Arts?
 - ii. How aware are you/how meaningful is Washington Performing Arts's mission as you consider philanthropic support?
 - iii. What inspires your giving to Washington Performing Arts?
 - iv. What factors would motivate you to sustain or increase your financial support?
 - v. What do you hope a future Washington Performing Arts looks like for you and our region?
- 6. Where patrons hear about Washington Performing Arts performances
 - a. Print/Digital Media
 - b. Radio
 - c. Social Media
 - i. Recall/value of videos
 - d. Washington Performing Arts Website; Washington Performing Arts Direct Mail
 - e. Personal referral
- 7. In past year, whether purchased tickets from or subscribed to competitors (Kennedy Center, Strathmore, Shakespeare Theatre, others)
 - a. What is it that these organizations are doing well?
- 8. Ancillary Events
 - a. Importance/value of pre- or post-concert discussions and events
- 9. Patron communications preferences
- iv. Clarify post-pandemic buying habits and local information sources
 - 1. Purchasing decision timeline and weekday/weekend preferences
- v. Peer market comparison
 - 1. Patron/Donor Preferences for: Washington Performing Arts v Kennedy Center, Strathmore, Shakespeare Theatre, others.
 - 2. Dollars allocated to performance promotions, subscriptions
 - 3. Staff support allocated to Marketing and Fundraising
 - 4. Corporate, Foundation, Individual Giving opportunities

b. About Washington Performing Arts

Washington Performing Arts champions the arts as a unifying force. Through collaborations with artists, educators, community leaders, and institutional partners, we bring wide-ranging artistic programs to stages, schools, and neighborhoods throughout our nation's capital and, with our virtual platforms, share our work throughout the world.

One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts has engaged for more than half a century with artists,

audiences, students, and civic life. The city is truly our stage: for decades, in venues ranging from concert halls and clubs to public parks, we have presented a tremendous range of artists and art forms, from the most distinguished symphony orchestras to both renowned and emerging artists in classical music, gospel music, jazz, international genres, and more.

Washington Performing Arts deeply values its partnerships with local organizations and other arts institutions. Through events online and in myriad performance venues and neighborhoods, we engage international visiting artists in community programs and introduce local artists to wider audiences. We place a premium on establishing artists as a continuing presence in the lives of both young people and adults through residencies and education programs.

Our achievements have been recognized with a National Medal of Arts and with three Mayor's Arts Awards from the D.C. Government. We have now embarked upon our second half-century, ever inspired by the motto of our founder, Patrick Hayes: "Everybody in, nobody out."

c. **Vision**

Our community is unified and enriched through vibrant performing arts experiences.

d. **Guiding Principles**

- i. **Cultivate Artists and Arts Patrons:** Be the organization that artists want to partner with and that arts patrons trust for lifelong enjoyment and learning.
- ii. **Pursue Inclusion:** Seek, represent, and welcome a multiplicity of voices in everything we do.
- iii. **Collaborate with Communities:** Build strong partnerships with local, national, and international organizations to make the performing arts accessible to communities in the nation's capital.
- iv. **Build a Lasting Legacy:** Balance risk-taking with fiscal rigor, sustaining a healthy organization that will last for generations.

e. **Organizational Diversity**

Washington Performing Arts is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in all aspects of our work. In keeping with our mission and guiding principles, we seek, represent, and welcome a multiplicity of voices in everything we do from programmatic content to the composition of our board and staff. Accordingly, we seek to build a team that reflects — and meets the needs of — the community we are part of and serve. While we have made important progress, we continue to pursue that goal through intentional, focused learning and action. Hiring a diverse workforce is but one component — we strive to make Washington Performing Arts ever more inclusive, and true to our founder's guiding ethos of "everybody in, nobody out." To gain the maximum benefit from our increasingly diverse team, we wish to make all employees feel welcome and motivated to do their best work. We know that we work better because of our differences, not despite them.

f. **Diversity Statement**

Washington Performing Arts subscribes to a policy of Equal Employment Opportunity and will not discriminate against any employee or applicant because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, protected veteran status, religion, ancestry or national origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, and gender identity or expression. In addition, the District of Columbia adds protection for marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, matriculation, or political affiliation. Washington Performing Arts's employment decisions are made based on the needs of the organization and qualifications of the applicants and employees.

g. Our Audiences

- i. Arts attendees (single ticket buyers, subscribers, group sales)
- ii. Gospel Choir members (Men and Women of the Gospel Choir; Children of the Gospel Choir)
- iii. Donors and Friends (individual, corporate, major gifts, planned giving)

(nb: for this research we will not be polling education audiences who are not ticket buyers)

II. Our Challenges

Washington Performing Arts core audience contains patrons wishing to attend high-quality arts performances. Our programming mix changes annually and takes place in venues across the region, encompassing music, multi-disciplinary work, special productions and collaborations. Debuts and commissioned work, launching new talent, are integral in our history and future. During any given season, we traditionally present 65%-75% classical programming with another 5%-10% each in global, gospel, jazz, and multi-disciplinary/dance.

Our patrons reside largely in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Interest in our performances and programs are the primary drivers of donations. We have 480 subscription households since 2022, with 80 households loyal for 10 years or more. Additionally, there are approximately 10,000 new-to-file buyers since 2020, many who purchase tickets within two weeks, or less, of an event. Nearly 75% of all ticket sales are processed online.

Washington Performing Arts does not operate its own venue and regularly partners with area venues for ticket consignment in parallel with our own box office. Patron lists are shared post-event and imported into the Washington Performing Arts Tessitura system—therefore, some of our new-to-file patrons have attended our events but have purchased from the venues and may not know they have attended a Washington Performing Arts event.

Washington Performing Arts has a small staff with a wide scope of responsibilities. We will need your help prioritizing our time as we integrate this process into our already ongoing and evolving spring renewal and subscription campaign timeline.

- III. Budget: The budget for this project is not to exceed \$18,000.** Respondents may make note of any items identified in this document that exceed the budget and provide a cost estimate.

IV. Timeline: We will review submitted proposals and hear presentations in April-May and anticipate a contracted project kick-off following Memorial Day 2024.

- i. May-June: Contract with firm and establish research questionnaire
- ii. July: Execute research questionnaire
- iii. August: Evaluate survey responses and present findings

V. RFP Response Guidelines

The closing date and hour for receipt of the proposal is April 29, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. All vendors must submit the following information via email. Fax and mail submissions will not be considered.

- a. Letter of interest. As noted above in the statement on Organizational Diversity, Washington Performing Arts values and prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels. Please include information on your company's diversity, equity, and inclusion policies as well as examples of this work in action.
- b. Description of work required, including how the project will be phased and managed
- c. A schedule of deliverables and reports, and your recommended approval process for deliverables/tasks
- d. Company background including how long the company has been in business, brief description of the company's size and organization
- e. Participation of key support and technical staff, including estimates of time and cost breakdown by task for each key participant in the project.
- f. List of at least four (4) relevant client references including contact name, organization name, phone, and email. These references should be able to verify the recent experience of each person involved in the proposal for this project.
- g. Share examples of at least four (4) projects developed by the Vendor that are similar in scope
- h. Certification of applicable insurance, licensing
- i. Please share non-profit discounted pricing and break pricing down by project phases if appropriate.
- j. Additional optional cost estimate(s) of any items identified in this RFP that exceed the project budget.

VI. Q&A Process

Washington Performing Arts will accept questions about the RFP and redesign through 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 29, 2024. Questions must be directed via email to Lauren Beyea at LBeyea@washingtonperformingarts.org and must be labeled "Washington Performing Arts Website Patron Survey." Telephone calls will not be accepted. Each inquiry must include the inquirer's name, firm, telephone number and email address. Each inquiry should reference the RFP page number and section to which it relates. All questions received before the deadline will be compiled for response.

VII. Evaluation Criteria

The following elements will be considered on a weighted basis in evaluating proposals for selecting the consultant for this project:

- Quality of proposed approach to project
- Successful non-profit experience, including input from clients
- Competency of firm or individual, including reputation and integrity
- Professional background and success of key personnel assigned
- Ability to work within deadlines and to develop mutually agreed dates for deliverables
- Values alignment with equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility
- The contract will be awarded to the responsible, responsive firm whose proposal, conforming to this solicitation, will be most advantageous to Washington Performing Arts, price and other factors considered

VIII. Presentations

We will schedule web-based interviews with the top four companies based on satisfying the evaluation above criteria. Lauren Beyea will reach out to the main contact at each of the selected companies not later than May 6, 2024, to schedule a mutually beneficial time during May 8-10, 2024, for presentations with the Washington Performing Arts team.

IX. Selection Process

Vendor will be chosen based on the outcome of the interview process. Washington Performing Arts will contact references from May 10 to 15, 2024. Washington Performing Arts reserves the right to make an award, not to make an award, or to cancel this RFP either before or after the date of the RFP response deadline. All vendors submitting a response to this RFP will be notified in writing of the award of a contract if and when an award is made. If no award is made, all vendors will be notified accordingly. For the purposes of this RFP, an award shall be deemed to have been made upon the completion of contract negotiations.

Contact Information:

For questions or clarifications about this RFP, please direct communications to Lauren Beyea at LBeyea@washingtonperformingarts.org.