



Request for Proposals

Project Name: ARC Creative Manufacturing Project

Requestor/Point-Person: Jessika Bond, Land of Sky Regional Council, jessika@landofsky.org

1. Overview

Land of Sky Regional Council and partner organizations on the **Upscaling Creative Manufacturing Project** are seeking a qualified firm or team to develop a comprehensive strategy and create assets for project branding, website development, artist storytelling, and public relations (PR). This initiative aims to support the Western North Carolina (WNC) creative manufacturing ecosystem, with a focus on regional makers, craft businesses, and creative manufacturers. This project aims to elevate the visibility and sustainability of the creative economy and aligns with the Appalachian Regional Commission's POWER Initiative to drive economic diversification, create sustainable job opportunities, and strengthen community resilience.

2. Background

The **Upscaling Creative Manufacturing Project** is a collaborative effort led by Land of Sky Regional Council, Arts AVL, Mountain BizWorks, and the Center for Craft to strengthen Western North Carolina's creative manufacturing sector. Building on the 2022 [Creative Manufacturing Sector Development Plan](#) (CMSDP), the project provides technical support, shared resources, storytelling campaigns, training, funding, and regional entrepreneurial networks to help scalable creative businesses grow.

By addressing key challenges such as scaling operations, accessing resources, and competing in national markets, the initiative seeks to elevate creative entrepreneurs and strengthen the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem. With WNC's rich craft heritage and an abundance of unrealized potential, this project fosters a sustainable creative economy that supports high-quality jobs, reduces reliance on tourism, and drives measurable economic and cultural impact.

Recent regional flooding caused by Hurricane Helene has exacerbated economic challenges, disrupting infrastructure, displacing businesses, and straining local resources. The creative manufacturing sector has been particularly affected by the loss of facilities and equipment, supply chain interruptions, market disruptions, and financial strain, making it more difficult for small-scale manufacturers to sustain and reinvest in their operations.

By blending tradition with forward-looking strategies, the Upscaling Creative Manufacturing Project empowers creative businesses to scale, expand market access, and contribute to a thriving regional economy.

See project overview [here](#).



3. Scope of Work

3.1 Research and Strategy Development

- Collaborate with Land of Sky Regional Council (LOSRC), Craft Your Commerce at Mountain BizWorks, the Center for Craft, ArtsAVL and other partners to gather insights and project-specific data.
- Develop a storytelling framework that aligns with the project's branding, objectives, and target audiences.
- Identify key themes, such as innovation, tradition, and the economic impact of craft in WNC.

3.2 Branding

- Develop a cohesive visual identity for the project, including logo, color palette, typography, and brand guidelines.
- Create a project tagline and key messaging framework that resonates with diverse stakeholders (e.g., makers, buyers, funders).

3.3 Content Creation

- Produce compelling digital content, including but not limited to:
 - Video profiles of makers, manufacturers, and creative entrepreneurs.
 - High-quality photography of people, products, and processes.
 - Written stories or articles for blogs, newsletters, and social media.
 - Social media-ready content, including reels, short videos, and graphics.
- Ensure content reflects the region.

3.4 Website Development

- Design and develop a user-friendly, mobile-responsive website showcasing:
 - Project overview
 - Partner profiles
 - Available resources, workshops, and training opportunities
 - Directory of regional makers and their work
 - Storytelling content
 - PR and media highlights
 - Procurement database connecting buyers and suppliers

3.5 Public Relations

- Develop a comprehensive PR strategy to:
 - Elevate the profile of WNC's creative manufacturing sector.
 - Secure regional, national, and industry-specific media coverage.
 - Position the region as a leader in creative manufacturing.
 - Amplify project partnerships and highlight collaborative efforts with key stakeholders.
 - Enhance advertising strategies to increase market presence for regional makers and craft businesses.



- Implement storytelling campaigns aligned with key milestones and events.
- Provide media training and support for featured artists and stakeholders.
- Create opportunities to showcase makers' products and processes through targeted campaigns and regional/national events.

3.6 Training and Handover

- Provide training or guides for project partners to continue storytelling efforts.
- Deliver all project files, including editable formats, to LOSRC and partners.

4. Deliverables

4.1. Project Brand and Website

- Project brand strategy
- Brand assets, including name, logo, narrative, and visual system
- Copy/photo/video for press releases, newsletters, website, and social media
- Print collateral, including informational rack cards and resource toolkit for makers and fabricators
- Fully functional and engaging website

4.2. Storytelling

- Comprehensive digital storytelling strategy document
- The creation of multimedia artist profiles (stories, photos, videos)
- Documentation of significant sites tied to WNC's craft legacy (stories, photos, videos)
- Written narratives that weave together the region's makers, their journey/work, and craft history
- Copy and social media assets for Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other platforms

4.3. PR Support for Regional Makers and Craft Manufacturers

- PR strategy and execution plan (press kits, media placements, and stakeholder outreach)
- Data tracking and reporting tools to measure impact

5. Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested proposers should submit the following:

1. **Cover Letter:** Introduce yourself and/or your team and highlight your experience.
2. **Proposal Narrative:** Describe your approach to the scope of work, including how you will meet project objectives and work with key project partners.
3. **Portfolio:** Provide examples of relevant past work, including video, photography, and written content.
4. **Project Timeline:** Include milestones and a proposed schedule within the 3-year project period.
5. **Budget:** Provide a detailed cost breakdown.
6. **References:** Include at least three references from previous clients.



Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- Relevant experience and quality of portfolio (30%).
- Proposed approach and methodology (30%).
- Cost-effectiveness and value (20%).
- Understanding of WNC's makers, craft businesses, and creative manufacturing (10%).
- References and past client satisfaction (10%).

Submission Instructions

Deadline: Proposals must be submitted by 2/21/25 at 5:00 PM EST.

Submission Format: Email submissions in PDF format to jessika@landofsky.org. Please title the submission email: "Creative Manufacturing RFP Proposal"

Contact Information: For questions or clarifications, please contact Jessika Bond, jessika@landofsky.org.

Timeline

RFP Issued: February 10, 2025

Submission Deadline: February 21, 2025

Selection Notification: February 28, 2025

Project Kickoff: March 2025

Project Completion: Spring 2028

Terms and Conditions

- LOSRC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.
- All materials produced under this project will be the property of LOSRC and its partners.
- The selected vendor must comply with all federal procurement guidelines.
- LOSRC reserves the right to solicit additional consultants during the effective period to meet the needs of the grant.