Abridged Call for Artists Guidelines

A Publication of the Public Art Network

2009

Contents

Whether your public art program has been writing calls for artists for years or your organization is just getting started with commissioning public art, the *Call for Artists Resource Guide* contains information that will help you announce opportunities that clearly describe your projects and give artists the information they need to submit applications.

The *Call for Artists Resource Guide* was originally developed by the Public Art Network (PAN), a program of Americans for the Arts in 2003 and is updated herein. PAN provides services to the diverse field of public art develops strategies and tools based on best practices to improve communities through public art. Its key constituents are public art professionals, visual artists, design professionals, as well as communities and organizations planning public art projects and programs.

Copies of this resource guide may be downloaded free of charge on the Public Art Network section of the Americans for the Arts website, www.Americansforthearts.org/PAN.

For more information about PAN or Americans for the Arts, email pan@artsusa.org or visit www.Americansforthearts.org/PAN.

What is a Call for Artists?

Public art programs and organizations commissioning public art projects enlist artists to be considered for their projects in a variety of ways. These include calls for artists, juried slide registries, and direct invitations. On-line calls for artists have grown in use over the past few years and represent a significant cost savings for both artists and organizations using the on-line submittal and review of artists' credentials.

A Call for Artists is an opportunity notice that gives artists the information they need to know in order to apply to be considered for the project. Issuing a Call for Artists is a standard practice of the public art field.

There are currently over (#) public art programs in the United States. They can be rural or urban; government agencies based in municipalities, counties or states; or private nonprofit or for-profit organizations run independently or as part of a local arts agency.

Types of Calls

There are two traditional types of Calls for Artists: Requests for Qualifications (RFQ) and Requests for Proposals (RFP). Current best practices supported by PAN endorse payment to the artist for any creative work related to the development of a concept, so that an RFP specifically and routinely incorporates a fee for the artist in addition to the reimbursement of travel expenses. There has been discussion within the field of public art about the appropriateness of RFPs versus RFQs, including the possibility that a Call for Artists may include a request for brief comment (rather than a full proposal) on the artist's approach to the project.. PAN's issue paper, Methods of Artist Selection: best Practices, discusses this topic online at www.AmericansfortheArts.org/PAN.

All versions of Calls for Artists can take place on-line and can use one method or a combination thereof.   Variations include open or limited competitions, invitationals, or direct purchases. An open competition is broadly promoted to encourage numerous applicants; a limited competition is directed to a specific group of artists, sometimes narrowed by discipline, often by geographic location (only the state of…) On occasion the size of the project budget for art dictates limiting the reach of a call and the selection process to direct purchase.

It is less costly for artists to digitally document their art and respond to on-line calls for artists. The cost of the review process is borne by the agency sponsoring the call for artists.

An RFQ invites artists to send their qualifications to be reviewed by the selection panel but does not require a specific proposal to be submitted. RFQs are used to choose artists based on their past and current art and achievements.

Before an artist or artists begin their research to develop a proposal or proposals – their ideas – they are placed under contract and paid to work on the project.

Organizations use RFPs when they choose to work with a small pool of artists, or a single artist, based on their qualifications, to develop a detailed proposal for the site or project based on limited exposure to the project. An RFP does not guarantee the artist(s) will be selected to implement their ideas or proposed art but PAN advocates that each artist is paid a stipend and travel expenses for proposal development and presentation, beyond a request for a brief comment on the artist's initial thoughts on an approach to the commission. Some governmental regulations require the solicitation of proposals for selection and prior to contracting for implementation of a proposal.

Selection committees using RFPs willingly spend proposal funds upfront to be able to review a few proposals prior to selecting an artist to work on a project from design development through installation and dedication.

Call Elements: Definitions and Descriptions

Below is a list of content typically found in a Call for Artists, with advice on how to clearly convey your information.

Call Summary

A brief project summary.

The Call Summary helps artists quickly decide whether they are interested or eligible for the call and lets organizations posting the call decide how it should be promoted. Include the project name, commissioning organization, application deadline, project timeline, budget, geographic eligibility requirements, and whether it is an RFQ or RFP.

Project Description

An overview of the artist's scope of services

Discuss whether it is a design-team project, a commission of new work, integrated art, functional art replacing functional items, a master plan, an artist residency, a purchase of existing art, or another type of opportunity. Include a description of the organization overseeing the project.

Art goals or criteria

A list of any predetermined objectives for the art established by the commissioning organization, funder, or community.

The specificity of list will vary by commissioning organization and to reflect the characteristics of each project.

The list can be broad – e.g., create a sense of place within the community – or specific – e.g., design streetscape elements that reflect the industrial history of the neighborhood.

Art Location Description

A description of where the art will be within the project site.

Sometimes the location for art is predetermined by the funder, commissioning organization, or community before a *Call for Artists* is distributed. If this applies to your project, provide a highly detailed description of where the art will be located within the site, especially for an RFP. The description should include, but not be limited to:

Engineering and architectural information about the location's structure, materials used at the location, visibility within the site, and lighting information.

If the art location is not predetermined, state whether or not the artist will be free to participate in selecting the art site.

Site or Art Location Plans

Plans, photographs, or other visual information of the site or art location.

Describe the site's function, include what activities will happen there and who uses it. Be sure to include whether or not the site is open to the public, or if the public can see but not enter the site. Include a description or history of the site and community where the art will be and list additional resources for the artist to research.

Budget

The amount of funding allocated to art for the project.

Clearly state the budget for art and what is expected to be covered (not all projects have the same expectations of project costs covered by the art budget).

For instance, in a design-team project, the budget may include only the costs of artists' fees and travel. In the commissioning of art, project costs may include the artist's fee, travel, engineering, materials, fabrication, transportation, documentation, and oversight of installation but not actual installation costs.

Often costs for insurance, taxes, studio overhead, and miscellaneous items are not included in an artist's budget by the artist or commissioning agency. It should be clear from the beginning which costs may legitimately be included in the artist's budget and which are covered by others.

Finally, in some cases an actual art or project budget has not been set at the time an artist is selected. It is important to determine the amount that is secured for the project and art and what has to be raised to realize each.

Artist Eligibility

The qualifications that an artist must meet in order to be eligible for a project.

Questions to consider include:

Must the artist live/work in a certain geographic area or is the call open to artists nationally?

Is the call open to professional artists or are students eligible?

Are artist teams eligible for the project?

Must the artist have completed a project with a similar budget, scale, and scope?

If you are seeking to reach out to certain types of artists, include a sentence encouraging artists that meet those objectives to apply. For example, if the commissioning organization is seeking to reach out to emerging artists, include a statement such as "professional artists who are new to the field of public art are encouraged to apply." Or if the project is one that will involve a high level of community interaction in a specific setting, include a statement such as "artists who have experience interacting with community are encouraged to apply."

This is also the place to include an equal opportunity statement that may be required by the commissioning organization, local municipality, funder, or owner.

Application Requirements

The list of materials artists should send by mail or online with their applications.

Be very specific about the information artists should include with their application since it determines how it is presented to the panel reviewing applicants and selecting artists.

Typical application requirements include:

Number and type of visuals (on-line should include exact dpietc

(Isn't this section redundant with paragraph below starting "Visual support materials…?)

Annotated lists

Statement of interest (often restricted to number of words)

Resume or short biography

Self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) for the return of hardcopy materials

Project proposal (for RFPs)

Visual support materials can include digital images in exact formats, slides, videos, CDs, or prints. If requesting digital images or slides, list the number of images artists may submit and how they should be labeled. If a panel is reviewing digital images, CDs or video, in addition to the number of images be specific about length of time for moving images and the formats the panel will be capable of viewing. If prints are solicited, list the number of prints the artist is to include. (Should power points be mentioned specifically?)

The annotated list allows the artist to describe the visual support material and usually includes: description, material, location, budget, client or commissioning organization, and any other relevant project information.

The statement of interest allows artists to introduce themselves and describe their specific interest in a project, their potential approach to the project or creating public art, and any past relevant experience. If there is a specific question you would like the artist to address in the statement, be sure to include it in the Call for Artists.

If artist teams may apply, clearly state if you require additional visual support materials, resume, and references for each team member.

If you are inviting and paying artists to develop proposals, clearly list the types of materials you would like the artist to submit to best present their work to the review panel. Typical proposal submission materials include: project description, drawings, renderings, model, photographs, materials list, budget, timeline, references, fabrication, installation, and maintenance information.

Deadline

The date when an application must be either received or postmarked.

List the date by which an application must be either received at the mailing or on-line address or postmarked. Be sure to state if overnight or express delivery is NOT permitted.

Submission Address

The address to which application is submitted or mailed.

Include the online address or mailing address. If overnight or express shipping is allowed, be sure that the address is not a post office box or supply an alternate address for this type of delivery. If only on-line submissions are acceptable, clearly state that there will be no mailed submissions accepted.

Selection Process

A description of how the applications will be reviewed and an artist selected.

Include the types of people who are on the selection panel, e.g., art professionals, community representatives, agency representatives, and funders. Include the number, or range, of finalists that will be selected and what will be required of the finalists, including interviews, proposals, dates for presentations, and travel.

If finalists are subject to interview, state if a fee and travel expenses are covered as well as timeline for interviews and who will participate in the interview process and make the final artist selection.

If proposals are required, provide artists with information about what is included in a proposal, timeline, budget, etc., and fee for proposal, travel, and presentation, and decision-making schedule.

Selection Criteria

A list of the criteria established by the commissioning agency or artist selection panel that will guide the evaluation of applications.

Listing the selection criteria establishes the priorities of the artist selection panel. The list also assist artists when considering whether they should apply for a project. For example, if the criteria for the RFQ includes artistic excellence, evidence of working in the field of public art for more than five years, and experience working in community settings, artists new to public art will be informed that their qualifications are not a good fit for the project.

Project Timeline

The timeline the project will follow from artist selection to project completion

The timeline includes dates for the following milestones, as they apply:

Submission deadline, panel review, finalist notification, interview schedule, proposal presentations, final artist selection, contract, design review phases, fabrication and installation schedule for art coordinated with project construction, and completion date.

Sources for Additional Information

A list of resources the artist may consult for additional project information on the project, site, commissioning organization, community, area history, etc.

Providing artists a list of resources they can consult about different aspects of the project can help them decide if they want to apply and if their work is a good fit with the project parameters. In the case of an RFP, the list can be a launching point for research. Include website addresses, publications, contact information for organizations, and other information that would be helpful and relevant to artists as they research the project.

Resources for Questions

The contact information for the person or organization to be called if the artist has questions or needs additional information.

Be clear about whether telephone calls or email inquiries are accepted or if questions may only be submitted by fax or email. Also state if there is a deadline by which questions must be submitted.

Getting the Word Out:

Where to Promote Your Call for Artists

The Public Art Network suggests the following resources for posting artists opportunities:

Public Art Network Listserv

Available to Americans for the Arts/PAN members, this networking tool connects colleagues andacts as a research engine, newsletter, and stage for critical dialogue. Artists opportunities are frequently posted on the listserv as well as in the PAN e-mail broadcast. To join, visit: www.Americansforthearts/PAN or e-mail membership@artsusa.org. E-mail pan@artsusa.org to submit opportunities.

Public Art Review

Sculpture Magazine

NYFA Source/NYFA Current

ArtistsRegister.com

ArtsOpportunities.org

(this list needs updating, checking….)

Sample Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

We need to select a recent (excellent) sample Call for Artists

One hardcopy and one electronic (CAFÉ?)

Suggestions?

Sample Request for Paid Proposals (RFP)

A Request for Proposals should include the following elements:

• Project Summary
An overview of the history, site, commissioning agency or institution, and goals of the project

• Profile of commissioning institution
A more detailed overview of the history, character, and mission of the agency that is sponsoring the commission

• Site Description
As detailed as possible summary of the site proposed, including size and layout, proposed placement of work or integration of work into the site, access, use of the site by the public or audience now and after the projected commission, any related planning activities, and the relevant surrounding context for the site and the work

• Design Criteria
All physical and conceptual elements expected in the design program, including the character and experience of the work, lighting, maintenance, sight lines, and required design practices (such as sustainability).

• Budget
Including total budget, breakdown of what the budget does and does not include (artist fees, landscaping and/or engineering consultants, site preparation, installation, maintenance, etc.)

• Proposal Development Fee
Honorarium or fee for the artists' development and preparation of the proposal, as well as compensation for travel expenses incurred in any site visits agreed upon

• Project Timeline
Including dates for site visits, presentation to committee and/or public, committee decision, design development, construction drawings, permitting, fabrication, installation, and dedication

• Proposal Requirements
Formats for digital and hard-copy materials, delineation of proposal documents (artist statement of intent, description of project, concept and approach, proposed schedule or timeline for design and fabrication, budget), site plan or analysis, schematic drawings or sketches, models or CAD presentations, video formats, material and maintenance proposals

• Presentation
Date, time, and location of presentation to committee or agency

•Contacts
Names and contact information for project consultant, commissioning agency or institution, and as appropriate, engineers, managers and consultant involved in the project

• Lists of documentation and appendices related to the site and the project (included in RFP package or available through the commissioning institution and/or the project website or other sources