



# PUBLIC ART

## DENVER ARTS & VENUES

### REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

#### **National Western Center Riverfront Public Art Project**

**Budget: \$400,000.00 USD**

**Eligibility: Artists or artist teams residing in the United States**

**DEADLINE:** Monday, March 30, 2020; 11:59 P.M. MST

#### **Introduction**

The City of Denver's Public Art Program seeks to commission an artist or team of artists to create a signature work of art for the future improved Riverfront Open Space along the South Platte River at the National Western Center Campus in Denver, CO. The improved riverfront site boundaries and locations for artworks are between the future Bettie Cram Bridge to the south and the 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue Bridge to the north (map of project site is at the bottom of this document). The selection panel has recommended a sculptural or architecturally-integrated artwork responsive to the site that will enhance the experience of those that visit the Riverfront Open Space. The commission amount is approximately \$400,000.00 USD.

#### **National Western Center**

The National Western Center (NWC) is a reimagined campus nearly doubling the grounds which have housed the National Western Stock Show for more than 110 years. The new campus will be a vibrant, dynamic and accessible educational and entertainment environment in the heart of Denver that celebrates Colorado's western heritage and solves global issues about food and water through research, innovation, education and collaboration.

<https://nationalwesterncenter.com/about/what-is-the-nwc/>

#### **The NWC Riverfront**

A major element of the NWC development is the half-mile stretch of the South Platte River that defines the western border of the campus. An area that was once considered unsafe, polluted and inaccessible by historical industrial impacts will be restored to an amenity for the surrounding neighborhoods' and region's revitalized engagement through recreation, education, cultural gatherings and celebrations. With anticipated offerings such as pedestrian and bicycle trails, dynamic public art, areas for small performances, picnic areas, educational and play experiences for kids and families to enjoy, the NWC Riverfront will soon be an enriching and treasured community asset as well as a hub of campus activity.

#### **Globeville and Elyria Swansea (GES) Neighborhoods**

The NWC Campus is nestled within Denver's historic Globeville, Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods in close proximity to the South Platte River. Specifically, this Riverfront Open Space will serve as a gathering place and gateway to NWC for neighbors immediately across the river. In addition to the river, nearby neighborhood assets and physical landmarks include the Denver Coliseum, Swansea Elementary School, the new 47<sup>th</sup> and York pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks, the future park over I-70, the Nestle Purina pet food facility, Garden Place Academy Elementary School, Heron

Pond/Heller Open Space and Carpio-Sanguinette Park – all surrounded by a concentration of family homes and neighborhood businesses.

In the mid-19th century, the area was highly valued by industry and commerce because of the flat terrain and proximity to the South Platte River and rail. It was the epicenter of agribusiness in the region for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and after 114 years is still home to the annual National Western Stock Show every January. With industry in the area, especially smelting and meat packing, came settlement and housing. Industry, railroads and housing grew together over the years. Although the smelters are now gone and the meat-packing industry is much-diminished, a strong industrial presence remains today, as does an established residential community with a significant supply of workforce housing. Strong community cohesion and civic pride bolster the neighborhoods even when challenged with quality of life issues. Many significant changes are on the neighborhoods' immediate horizon, including new commuter rail transit stations, changes to I-70 and the new vision for the NWC.

### **Materials & Media**

The art selection panel members have set forth specific goals and parameters for this public art project with the hope of creating unique and inspiring works of art for the diverse communities that border the site, and the many visitors that will enjoy the National Western Center and the Riverfront. Works that demonstrate an authentic connection between people and the river and tell the story of the place - historically, agriculturally, socially and ecologically - are encouraged, as are projects that showcase the South Platte River environment and include direct community involvement. During the master planning phase of the NWC redevelopment, extensive efforts were made to document the history of the place; all this research will be made available to the selected artists or artist teams. The Master Plan also articulates goals to connect the NWC to the South Platte River in intentional ways. The art selection panel is searching for artists who can research and reflect a deep understanding of the site and the vision for its future to create works of art that are relevant to the community, enhance the NWC experience and are timeless and forward-looking.

#### **Some important themes for the project:**

- Community/Ethnic history of the GES Neighborhoods, Social Impact and Culture
- The Natural World: The River, The Land, The Ecosystem, The Sky
- A Local, Regional, National and Global Campus focused on Food, Water and Entertainment
- Reflects the Past, Present and Future
- Urban and Rural Connections and Interdependence

The selection panel is open to artwork in **materials that are suitable for permanent outdoor display**. The selected artist or artist team will have access to selected historic artifacts and salvage materials from the site that can be repurposed for art. Artists are asked to be mindful and respectful of the riverfront's functionality, users of all ages and abilities including families and young children, the NWC's initiatives and goals (including environmental goals) and the surrounding neighborhoods and communities. **The selected artist or artist team will also have the opportunity to meet with additional emerging artists who will be selected for future public art opportunities at the riverfront site.**

For more information please visit:

<https://nationalwesterncenter.com/background-documents/year/public-art/>

### **Maintenance & Durability**

All applicants are expected to consider the issues of long-term conservation and maintenance of public art, along with time and budget. These projects are in the public realm and will be exposed to weather

and physical stresses, as well as subject to vandalism. Public art projects should be fabricated of highly durable, low-maintenance and environmentally considered materials. Finalists are encouraged to consult with a professional conservator prior to the submission of a final proposal. The chosen proposal will be reviewed by the City of Denver's Public Art Committee to ensure conformity with city standards of maintenance and durability, as well as American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The selected artist/team is expected to stay on budget and to complete work in an approved time frame.

### **Eligibility**

This project is open to artists who currently live and work in in the United States, regardless of race, color, creed, gender, gender variance, sexual orientation, national origin, age, religion, marital status, political opinion or affiliation or mental or physical disability. **The selection panel is interested in artists who can demonstrate an understanding of the area's history and significance of the South Platte River, surrounding neighborhoods and communities, as well as goals for the future for both the surrounding communities and the NWC. Emerging artists, Colorado-based artists and artists working in media that is suitable for outdoor display are especially encouraged to apply.**

### **Can a team apply?**

Applicants may apply as a single artist or multi-person collaborative group. If applying as a team, please submit one résumé for the team, with one page per team member.

### **Applying for these opportunities**

In response to this RFQ, applicants will be asked to submit six digital images, a résumé and a statement of interest no longer than 2,000 characters via [www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org) (CaFÉ™). From these applications, the selection panel will select up to five finalists who will create site-specific proposals and be brought in for an interview with the panel. Artists will be paid an honorarium for this work. Artists/teams selected as finalists will be required to submit a Diversity & Inclusiveness Form for their proposals to be considered, which will be provided upon notification. As directed by Executive Order 101, this form must be submitted for all city solicitations of proposals. Denver Arts & Venues Public Art Program staff can provide guidance on filling out this form. Finalists will be expected to pay for travel expenses from the honorarium. From the interview and proposal, an artist or artist team will be selected for this commission. The selected artist or artist team for the commission will collaborate with the Public Art Program staff and the NWC design and construction team when finalizing their designs for installation.

### **Diversity and Inclusiveness**

Denver Executive Order No. 101 establishes strategies between the City and private industry to use diversity and inclusiveness to promote economic development in the City and County of Denver and to encourage more businesses to compete for City contracts and procurements. The Executive Order requires, among other things, the collection of certain information regarding the practices of the City's contractors and consultants toward diversity and inclusiveness and encourages/requires City agencies to include diversity and inclusiveness policies in selection criteria where legally permitted in solicitations for City services or goods. Diversity and Inclusiveness means inviting values, perspectives and contributions of people from diverse backgrounds, and integrates diversity into its hiring and retention policies, training opportunities and business development methods to provide an equal opportunity for each person to participate, contribute and succeed within the organization's workplace. "Diversity" encompasses a wide variety of human differences, including differences such as race, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, physical disabilities, appearance, historically underutilized and disadvantaged persons, as well as social identities such as religion, marital status, socio-economic status, lifestyle, education, parental status, geographic background, language ability and veteran status.

## Budget

The budget for this commission is \$400,000.00 USD which will be allocated to the artist/team selected. This contract amount is inclusive of all costs associated with the project including, but not limited to: the artist's design fee, other consultation and subcontractor fees such as structural engineering consultation, insurance (including Colorado Workers Compensation), tools, materials, fabrication, transportation, installation, any building or site modification required, travel to and from the site, per diem expenses, project documentation, contingency to cover unexpected expenses, and any other costs. For all work done on city property, prevailing wage requirements will be applied.

## Timeline

(Except for online application deadline, timeline is subject to adjustments)

Monday, March 30, 2020; 11:59 P.M. MST	Deadline for entry (via CaFÉ™ system)
April, 2020	Finalist Selection
July, 2020	Artist Selection and Notification

## Project Selection Panel

According to Denver's Public Art policy, the art selection panel plays an active role in the acquisition of public art for Denver. The NWC Riverfront art selection panel is comprised of 16 voting members and additional non-voting advisors. The selection panel is responsible for reviewing the site, establishing criteria, writing a request for qualifications, reviewing applications, selecting and interviewing finalists and identifying an artist or artist team for the commission.

## Selection Process

Up to five artists/artist teams will be selected as finalists. Those selected will receive more specific information regarding the site and have the opportunity to meet with site representatives, the design team and public art staff. The finalists will receive an honorarium to prepare and present the proposal in person. The selection panel will review the proposals, interview the finalists and recommend an artist for the commission. The final recommendation of the selection panel will be presented to the Public Art Committee, the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs and the Mayor of Denver for final approval. All decisions of the City and County of Denver are final.

## Materials to be Submitted

*Please read this section carefully. Incomplete applications will NOT be considered. The applicant's name must appear on all materials submitted.*

All materials must be submitted online, via the CaFÉ™ website ([www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org)). There is no application fee to apply or to use the CaFÉ™ online application system.

**Digital Images**—In order to be considered for this project, the applicant must electronically submit six digital images of **previously completed** artworks through the CaFÉ™ system. Artists who wish to submit kinetic, sound or media works must submit a complete CaFÉ™ application and will have the opportunity to upload up to two video files.

**IMPORTANT:** if submitting audio or video files, do not use them as your very first image. They must be submitted last in your image sequence.

Instructions on how to format images to CaFÉ™ specifications can be found at <https://www.callforentry.org/uploading-images-audio-and-video-files/>. Assistance in using the CaFÉ™

system is available here: <https://www.callforentry.org/artist-help-cafe/>. If an artist does not have access to a computer, he/she may call 720-865-5563 to use a computer at Denver Arts & Venues offices.

**Statement of Interest**—Please submit a statement outlining your interest in the National Western Center Riverfront public art project and why it is of special interest to you (2,000 character maximum) via CaFÉ™.

**Résumé**—Submit a one to two-page current résumé via CaFÉ™ that highlights your professional accomplishments as an artist. Please name your résumé file accordingly: *Last name.First initial* (i.e. *Smith.J.PDF*). Résumés that are more than two pages will not be downloaded. If applying as a team, please submit one résumé with one page per team member.

**Survey** – Applicants will also be required to fill out a short demographic survey that will be sent via the Survey Monkey website to the email on file from the CaFÉ™ application.

**References** – Applicants who are selected to be finalists will be required to provide three professional references.

**Please direct all questions about the project to:**

Brendan Picker, Public Art Program Administrator, [brendan.picker@denvergov.org](mailto:brendan.picker@denvergov.org), 720-865-5563



Rendering of the future NWC Riverfront and the National Western Center



Site Plan of the NWC Riverfront:

1. Pad Site: Potential for plaza, restaurant and play area (18,000 sq. ft.)
2. Natural Amphitheater: Small concerts, events and lectures (6,400 sq. ft.)
3. Small gathering area: Potential play space or other activities (1,600 sq. ft.)

4. Multi-Use Trails: Running, biking and walking trails
5. Sheep Bridge Plaza: Historic sheep bridge and adjacent plaza.
6. Meadow: Medium-sized level open space (18,000 sq. ft.)
7. National Western Drive Plaza: Community gathering space (4,800 sq. ft.)
8. 51st Avenue Entry: Plaza or active uses connected to northern bridge (8,400 sq. ft.)

**For more information about this project, please visit this website:**

<https://nationalwesterncenter.com/about/what-is-the-nwc/master-plan/>