



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Public Art Project

Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library

Budget: \$20,000.00 USD

Eligibility: Open to artists or artist teams residing in the state of Colorado

DEADLINE: Monday, August 30, 2021, 11:59 pm MST

Introduction

The City of Denver's Public Art Program seeks to commission an artist or team of artists to create an original public artwork, or series of artworks, for the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library located at 2401 Welton St., in the Five Points neighborhood of Denver, CO. A 12-member selection panel of community representatives, arts and culture professionals, and civic leaders has been assembled to identify art opportunities, and to select and recommend an artist or artist team for this project. The selection panel has identified several interior locations on Level One of the library for potential art opportunities and will select one artist or artist team for the allocated total budget of approximately \$20,000 USD.

Five Points Neighborhood

The historic Five Points Neighborhood is one of Denver's oldest and most diverse neighborhoods. The district was known as the "Harlem of the West" because it was the primary neighborhood for Denver's African American residents and a frequent stop for jazz greats including Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis, who played clubs like the Rossonian and the Rainbow Room. The neighborhood was also mentioned repeatedly in Jack Kerouac's "On the Road."

"Five Points" refers to the five-way intersection of Welton Street, Washington Street, Twenty-Seventh Street and East Twenty-Sixth Avenue. The name originated in 1881, when streetcar signs could not fit all the street names for the line's terminus.

Today, historic Five Points' creativity and vibrancy live on in a variety of ways. The neighborhood contains innovative coffeehouses and craft breweries, museums telling stories from the past, live music from all genres at independent music venues, and beloved soul food and barbecue establishments.

Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library

The Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library is the gateway to Five Points and the Welton Street Historic District. The building merges with Sonny Lawson Park via a plaza connecting the two. The library has three spacious levels, each with its own unique purpose.

Level One is an inviting experience awash in natural light and features a 5,800 square-foot gallery. A conference room with seating for 100 people and a smaller meeting room which seats 20 are also located on this level. The library features individual areas for children, teens and adults, public

computers with internet access, and a circulating collection with books, magazines, CDs and DVDs in English and Spanish.

Level Two contains the Collection Archives and Research Library. The Archives provide a wide range of primary sources including photographs, manuscript collections, letters and diaries. It also features audio and video oral histories, including the Trailblazers series: a collection of oral histories from a cross-section of Coloradans.

Level Three houses the Western Legacies Museum and Charles R. Cousins Gallery where visitors can follow the footsteps of African Americans who settled in the West, from early pioneers to present-day heroes. An exhibition space spans more than 7,000 square feet and includes an African American Legacy corridor, a leadership hall and a replica of the Office of Former Denver Mayor Wellington E. Webb, the first African American mayor of Denver, Colorado, serving from 1991 to 2003. The changing gallery highlights local Denver artists and exhibits.

Goals, Site, Media & Materials

The 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 live in Denver and frequent the library.

Goals:

The panel is very invested in cultural diversity, local history and community representation, and desires to create a space that is inclusive, accessible and welcoming to all. The panel hopes to see artwork(s) that reflect the rich cultures of the area. The panel would also like to see artwork(s) that celebrate the history, present and future of the area. This library is one of very few of its kind in the country and works should connect to the mission and goals of the institution. Artists should also consider the existing artworks in the library and are encouraged to utilize the vast collections housed within the library for source material for the new work(s).

Site:

The panel has identified three main areas as potential sites for public art, all on Level One of the library. Selected finalists will create proposals corresponding with one or more of these areas.

Media & Materials:

Artworks could be created using diverse media including, but not limited to, paint, sculpture, and mosaic applications. Works that are engaging and help to tell the story of the library, neighborhood and surrounding communities are encouraged. The selection panel is open to artwork in **all media and materials that are suitable for indoor display.**

Maintenance & Durability

All applicants must 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 may therefore be exposed to physical stresses, as well as be subject to vandalism. Public art projects should be fabricated of highly durable, low-maintenance materials. Finalists are encouraged to consult with a professional conservator prior to the submission of a final proposal. Artist proposals awarded contracts 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 ADA standards. All finalists are expected to stay on budget and to complete work in an approved time frame.

Who May Apply

This project is open to artists that reside in the state of Colorado. We are committed to building a public art collection that represents a broad diversity of artists based on race, color, creed, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, religion, marital status, political opinion or affiliation, or mental or physical disability. The selection panel is especially interested in artists who can demonstrate a deep understanding of the library's mission, the neighborhood, and the area's history and urban landscape, as well as creating work(s) in context with current social and cultural events.

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 no more than one page per team member.

Applying for these opportunities

In response to this RFQ, applicants will be asked to submit the following items via www.callforentry.org (CaFÉ™).

1. Six digital images of past work
2. Résumé
3. Statement of interest no longer than 2,000 characters

From these applications, the selection panel will choose three finalists who will create site-specific proposals and be interviewed in-person. 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.

Based on the interview and proposal, an artist or artist team will be selected for this commission. The selected artist or artist team will work with the Public Art Program staff, Library staff and the Denver Department of Transportation and Infrastructure design and planning 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 approximately \$20,000.00 USD which will be allocated to the artist/team selected. These funds come from the City of Denver's 1% Percent for Public Art Ordinance resulting from improvements made to the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library. This contract amount is inclusive of all costs associated with the project including, but not limited to: the artist's design fee, other consultation 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, August 30, 2021 11:59 P.M. MST	Deadline for entry (via CaFÉ™ system)
September 2021	Finalist Selection
January 2022	Selected Artist or Artist Team Notification

Project Selection Panel

According to Denver's Public Art policy, the project selection panel plays an active role in the acquisition of public art for Denver. The Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library art selection panel is comprised of 12 voting members and additional non-voting advisors. The selection panel is responsible for reviewing the site, establishing criteria for a request for qualifications, reviewing applications, selecting and interviewing finalists, and finally for selecting an artist or artist team for the commission.

Selection Process

1. Three 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 community members from the art selection panel, Denver Transportation and Infrastructure representatives, library staff, the design team and Public Art Program staff. The finalists will receive an honorarium to prepare the proposal and present it in person.
2. The selection panel will review the proposals, interview the finalists and recommend an artist/artist team for the commission.
3. 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). 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 online 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 one video file.

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, s/he/they may call 720-865-5563 to make arrangements to use a computer at Denver Arts & Venues.

Statement of Interest—Please submit a brief statement (2,000-character maximum) outlining the following:

- Your interest in the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library public art project
- Your design approach
- Experience working on projects of this kind
- Please also include information on your experience working with diverse communities and stakeholders

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 no more than 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, 720-865-5563.