



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Public Art Project

Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK) Education Center in Montbello

Budget: Approximately \$22,000.00 USD

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

DEADLINE: Monday, March 13, 2023, 11:59 pm MST

Introduction

The City of Denver's Public Art Program seeks to commission an artist or artist team to create original public artwork(s), for the Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK) Education Center in the Montbello neighborhood of Denver, CO. A 10-member selection panel of community representatives, arts and design 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 an outdoor location for potential artworks for the allocated total budget of approximately USD \$22,000.00.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land Denver's Public Art Collection occupies -- land where we stand, live, work and learn -- is the traditional territory of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Peoples. We also recognize the 48 contemporary tribal nations that are historically tied to the lands that make up the state of Colorado. Our nation was founded upon, and continues to enact, exclusions and erasures of Indigenous Peoples. May this acknowledgement demonstrate a commitment to dismantling ongoing legacies of oppression and inequities, as we intentionally honor and celebrate the Indigenous communities in our city and express our gratitude for their ongoing and significant contributions. Let's not forget that this land was theirs long before we made it ours.

Montbello Neighborhood and Open Space Park

The Montbello neighborhood and Open Space Park are in northeast Denver. The neighborhood's namesake, where the Open Space is located, comes from the Italian word for "beautiful mountain." In the past century, the area has transformed from open prairie to private cattle-grazing land, to mixed-use and affordable housing where middle-class and military families could own their first homes. Today, the neighborhood is one of Denver's largest and most populous and represents a racially diverse and youthful community. The area currently has 15 schools, seven parks, and one off-leash dog park. As of 2017, the population was estimated to be 36,176.

In 2012, a partnership formed between the Trust for Public Land, the City and County of Denver, and Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK). This partnership saw the creation of the first open-space park in the neighborhood. Today, this park provides needed green space for neighborhood residents and supports native prairie grasses, green infrastructure, and outdoor learning spaces. The site is also home to the Education Center, administered by ELK.

Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK)

The vision of the ELK organization is to imagine a world where all people are caretakers of themselves, each other and the natural world. ELK values direct experience in the outdoors, diversity and inclusion, and life-long learning. ELK brings these visions and values to life through its programming serving culturally and racially diverse youth, many of whom are experiencing the outdoors for the first time. Each year, ELK reaches young people through school-based programs and service-learning projects. These programs are tailored to each age group and invoke interest in land stewardship, improve motivation at school, develop job skills for career aspirations, and strengthen family bonds. The organization supports more than 5,000 young people yearly, with alumni who continue to be passionate about the environment long into adulthood.

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 interact with the ELK Education Center.

Goals:

The panel is very invested in cultural diversity and local history and aspires to create gathering spaces that are inclusive, accessible and welcoming to all nearby residents and Learning Center visitors. The panel hopes to see artwork(s) that acknowledge the land and reflect the rich cultures of the area. The artwork(s) should be interactive and educational, and celebrate coming together in open spaces. Artworks should also speak to the relationships between insects, plant life, animals and humans. Artists applying should have a strong background in community engagement, particularly with youth.

Site:

The panel has identified a potential site for public art at the ELK building entrance, above the front door. This location is visible from multiple vantage points, including the street and ELK parking lot. Selected finalists will have the opportunity for site visits and to meet with the art selection panel as well as Denver Public Art staff, ELK staff, community members, and Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) representatives to ask specific questions about potential sites.

Media & Materials:

Artworks could be created using diverse media, including, but not limited to, reliefs, sound elements and sculpture applications. Materials should be harmonious with the materials found and used within the Open Space Park. Durability and ease of maintenance are important at these locations. Works that are engaging and help to tell the stories of the neighborhood are encouraged. The selection panel is open to artwork in **all media and materials that are suitable for outdoor display.**

Maintenance & Durability

This artwork will become a permanent addition to the Denver Public Art collection. 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 will be exposed to physical stresses, as well as being subject to potential 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 and

County 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. Denver Arts & Venues is committed to building a public art collection that represents a broad diversity of artists and encourages applicants from historically marginalized and underrepresented communities including artists who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latino/x, People of Color (BILPOC), people with disabilities, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersexual, asexual, Two-Spirit+ (LGBTQIA2S+) communities. Denver Arts & Venues also encourages applicants at various stages in their career and applicants practicing a variety of artistic disciplines.

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 to five finalists who will create site-specific proposals and be interviewed in person or virtually. 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 guide you in 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 Denver Public Art program staff, Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR), and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) 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 in solicitations for City services or goods when legally permitted. Diversity and Inclusiveness means inviting values, perspectives and contributions of people from diverse backgrounds, and integrating 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, and 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 USD \$22,000.00 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 the construction of the ELK Education Center. 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, 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 performed on city property, prevailing wage requirements will be applied.

Timeline

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

Monday, March 13, 2023, 11:59 pm MST	Deadline for entry (via CaFÉ™ system)
April 2023	Finalist Selection
May 2023	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 commission and acquisition of public art for Denver. The ELK Education Center art selection panel is comprised of 10 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 to five artists/artist teams will be selected as finalists. Those selected will receive more specific information regarding the sites and have the opportunity to meet with community members from the art selection panel, Denver Public Art program staff, and Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR) and Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) representatives. The finalists will receive an honorarium to prepare a proposal and present it in person or virtually.
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 720-865-5576 to make arrangements to use a computer at Denver Arts & Venues.

To request this RFQ in an alternate format (such as Braille, large print or accessible electronic format) please contact DisabilityAccess@denvergov.org. To request this RFQ in a different language, please contact meg.pursell@denvergov.org.

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

- Your interest in the ELK Education Center project
- Your design approach and 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 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:

Meg Pursell, Public Art Program Administrator, meg.pursell@denvergov.org, 720-865-5576.



Image of the Montbello Outdoor Learning Center administered by ELK in Montbello