Work with Artists:
Find, Select, and Hire an Artist

A Guide for Organizations, Agencies, and Businesses

Springboard for the Arts is a national artist-centered community and economic development organization. Our mission is to support artists with the tools to make a living and a life, and to build just and equitable communities full of meaning, joy, and connection. From our offices in Saint Paul and Fergus Falls, Minnesota, we deliver resources locally and nationally tailored to creative workers and pilot bold ideas rooted in local needs.

Work with Artists: Find, Select, and Hire an Artist was developed by Springboard for the Arts.

www.springboardforthearts.org

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Introduction

Want to hire an artist? Excellent idea! We are here to help.

This guide is for organizations, government agencies, businesses, business associations, and other groups that want to hire an artist. Perhaps you are a café owner who would like to exhibit some artwork to add pizzazz to your business. Or a parks department looking to commission a public art installation to enliven a public space. Or a nonprofit organization that wants to work with a local artist to engage community in creative ways to tackle critical issues.

Whatever your situation, this step-by-step guide will help you think about your project, decide how to find and select an artist, and then hire them.

Who is an artist?

Springboard's definition of artist is broad and includes visual artists, performers, writers, music creators, culture bearers, makers, artisans, storytellers, social conveners, idea purveyors, imaginaries, visionaries, students, teachers, organizers and nurturers – anyone who has an intentional creative practice. We recognize artists for their ability to produce and create, and also for their ability to use creative processes to engage communities, ask hard questions, and to contribute to community challenges.

Artists are everywhere.
Talented artists exist in *every* community and place, from an apartment building or block, to every few acres in rural places. Artists are meaning-makers, storytellers, creative thinkers, and change agents who can bring their skills in creating and reimagining to places they live and love.

Artists are professionals.
Artists are a powerful resource with unique talents and skills honed over years of practice. They can use their skills and work to unite ideas and people, spark conversations, build relationships, and develop solutions. Their time should be valued like that of other creative professionals and contractors, such as designers, accountants, architects, and planners.

What are the impacts of working with artists?

When you work with artists, whether on a tangible project (a performance, a mural) or intangible work (interaction that creates connection between people), whether the project is modest or magnificent, there are a few primary impacts:

1

Artists shape community narrative and identity.

The work of artists shape how communities see themselves and how others see them. Locals understand and celebrate their strengths and stories. Visitors and customers have authentic and unique experiences. Events and activities covered by media outlets elevate overall visibility and narrative of place.

2

Artists build social capital and increase cross-sector networks.

Artists connect community members, businesses and organizations in new, holistic ways—creating new relationships that are the path to social connection, collaboration and care.

3

Artists increase community health and economic vitality.

Artists help build healthier, more vibrant communities. Through their work, they create spaces and experiences that support both mental and physical well-being—for individuals and neighborhoods alike. Artists also play a valuable role in the local economy, not only by attracting activity and interest, but as creative small business owners themselves.

4

Artists cultivate equity.

Working with artists can directly impact your goals around inclusion, welcoming, engagement, and equity—in two ways.

- If you work with artists from underrepresented communities, they will bring new perspectives and new people into connection with each other and with your goals.

- Artists can create projects that address these goals, bring underrepresented voices to the table, help people envision new paths together, and support relationship building.

What's your responsibility?

We encourage you to consider your role in supporting artists in your community.

- **How can you lower barriers to invite more artists in, increase opportunities to build artist capacity, and help build a supportive ecosystem for the creatives in your place?**
- **How do your goals in engaging an artist show up in your selection and hiring process?**

Throughout this guide, we'll provide you with ideas for how to make your hiring process as straightforward and accessible as possible.

Step 1:
Define the project

Step 1: Define the project

Whether you've worked with artists before, or are looking to hire an artist for the first time, clarifying the details of your entire project on the front end will help with all of the next steps.

Before you launch into finding and hiring an artist, take the time to think about your project and what you want to accomplish. Address the questions below to determine the scope of the project, clarify roles and responsibilities, and figure out what you're asking the artist to do.

I. Goals

What do you hope to achieve with this project overall? Some common goals include:

- Enlivening, animating, revitalizing, or bringing attention to a space
- Designing or enhancing a community event
- Highlighting a place or an issue
- Raising awareness of your organization's mission and work
- Bringing people together through creative activity
- Fostering connection and interaction (across generations, cultures, issues, etc.)
- Building participation in a public issue
- Collaborating with new or existing partners or communities
- Dispelling a harmful narrative
- Bringing new art into the world!

II. Type of Project

What type of artwork do you envision? Is it a physical object or is it an experience, activity, or process? What does the completed art look like? Is it a one-time thing, or does it recur? How long do you want it to last?

III. Contexts
What is the background or various contexts of this project? Some contexts to consider:

Physical/Geographical. Where does this project take place? Are you trying to impact or improve a particular area or physical feature (e.g. commercial corridor, public park, building)? Are there physical or geographic assets that you want to highlight or build on?

Social. Who is the audience for the project? How do you hope the community will be impacted by or involved in the project? Who already is connected to this space/place/issue? Are there new people you are hoping to reach? What are the community's social assets that you want to highlight or build on?

Cultural/Historical. What cultures and histories need to be acknowledged by or integrated into your project? What stories should be shared and who tells them? Which stories and people have historically been left out?

Partners and Collaborators.
What communities do you have relationships with? What organizations do you currently work with? What role do you want or need partners to play? Will your collaborators help set the goals for the program?

Tip: It may make sense to partner with a local arts agency, community arts group, or artist support organization. Working cross-sector can help to expand your networks, connections, and impact. Partnerships and collaborations work best when it's an authentic relationship and all parties bring something and gain something.

AI and Artists. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly evolving tool. You may need to consider if you allow its use, and if so, under what parameters.

Organizational Capacity & Systems. Do you have the capacity to manage the project? Who will be the point person interacting with the artist? Do you have systems in place to smoothly find an artist, negotiate a contract, and troubleshoot issues? What role will the artist play in project management?

Timeline. What is the overall timeline for the project? Are there funding parameters, seasonal constraints, etc.?

Finances. Where is the money coming from to pay for the project? Do funders have expectations that need to be included in the project scope? What are the anticipated expenses for the project? What is the overall budget for the project? For more discussion of project finances, see next section, Step 2: Budget for the project.

Documentation. How will you document your project? Do funders or partners have specifications for documentation? Do you want the artist to do the documentation?

Publicity & Celebration. How will you publicize your project? Will you issue a press release? Spread the word via social media? Pitch a story in the newspaper or on the radio? How will you celebrate? What is the role of the artist in publicity and celebration?

Tip: Take advantage of the buzz around new artwork to throw a party and get the word out about your organization or business.

Step 2:
Budget for the project

Step 2: Budget for the project

If you already know how to do project budgeting and have a defined budget for your project, skip ahead to Step 3: Fund the project.

If you are less experienced with project budgeting, or want some additional guidance with your project budget, see below. Of course, not all projects will have each of these expense items.

Expense item	Questions and considerations	Typical cost
Management	Who is managing the project for your organization? Can the artist do some parts of the project management? It might be necessary or desirable to hire a project manager on contract, or hire the artist to do some or all of this work.	20+ hours at your staff rate or contractor/artist rate
Artist Compensation (sometimes called a **Commission**)	Artist compensation is typically an "all inclusive" contract fee that includes labor, material costs, and overhead costs. • **Labor** cost includes planning, design, fabrication, installation, and might include maintenance. See the next section for additional guidance on artist wages. • **Material** costs include all materials and supplies. (Managed by artist.) • **Overhead** costs include work space, healthcare, taxes—including self-employment tax, business insurance, equipment, etc. • **Travel** costs if the artist lives outside of your region. Make sure to discuss how many in-person trips they need for the project to be successful.	$1,000-$150,000
Contingency Budget	A contingency budget can be important in case of unexpected costs, particularly in large projects that include built artwork or highly technical aspects. You might hold this until the project completion and if the funds remain unused, either give them to the artist or use for other purposes.	10-20% of artist commission amount

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Expense item	Questions and considerations	Typical cost
Proposal Stipend	Budget to pay finalists a stipend to complete a detailed project proposal if you are planning to use a Request for Qualifications to find an artist.	$500-1,500 per artist
Selection Panel Honoraria	If you are planning to use a selection panel, it is common to pay an honorarium to readers or panelists to recognize their time and effort.	$100-500 per person
Partner & Collaborator Compensation	Compensation for partners or collaborators who contribute to project design, outreach, and/or other activities.	$500 and up
Insurance	Your existing insurance will likely cover the project, but in some instances, additional insurance may be required. Talk with your insurance provider(s). **! Organizations sometimes unnecessarily require artists to carry general liability insurance for a project. This is an inequitable practice; providing such insurance is expensive for an individual artist and relatively inexpensive for an organization.**	$1,000 and up
Hospitality	Food and beverages for meetings, space rental, celebrations, and other gatherings related to the project.	$300 and up
Maintenance	For a project that includes an installation that is intended to last a long time, build maintenance costs into the project budget.	$1,000 and up
Documentation	Photographer, videographer or other documentation needs.	$250 and up

Calculating an artist's wages

For more complex or larger projects, the artist compensation (often called a commission) usually includes the artist's labor ***and*** the other costs associated with carrying out the project that the artist manages. There is no singular formula that will work for every context and place, so you will have to calculate artist compensation based on your specific project and location. Your calculation should be based on an hourly rate and an estimation of the amount of time it will take to complete the project.

Calculating an hourly rate

To calculate an hourly rate for an artist, consider the following:

- Experience level of the artist
- The cost of living in your area
- Comparative rates for this type of work
  - Look at the calculation tools on the next page
  - Ask artists or organizations that have hired artists recently
  - Look at other local calls for artists
  - Think about what rates you pay for comparable contractors (engagement consultants, researchers, event producers, etc.)
- Overhead expenses that the artist has as a contractor (e.g. work space, healthcare, taxes—including self-employment tax, business insurance, equipment, etc.)
- Scale of the artwork or project to be completed

Estimating the number of hours

The artist you hire will spend time on project tasks in addition to creating the artwork itself. To properly estimate the amount of time it will take an artist to complete a project, consider the following:

- Planning and preparation time
- Coordination, communications, and meetings
- Preliminary design, design reviews, and final design
- Implementation, installation, and troubleshooting
- Subcontractor management
- Administrative tasks (e.g. any required documentation or reporting)
- Travel time

Tools for Calculating Artist Compensation

Wage for Work: https://wageforwork.com/fee-calculator

A calculator, based on size of organization, for arts commissions and projects, including an hourly performer rate.

Living Wage Calculator: https://livingwage.mit.edu

Use to calculate the living wage in your place.

US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics:

https://www.bls.gov/oes

Search for your state, and then scroll down to 27-0000/Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media Occupations. This will link to more refined job roles with average hourly wage and other information.

Teaching artists rate calculator: https://teachingartists.com/pay-rate-calculator

Freelance rate considerations:

https://www.aiga.org/resources/calculating-a-freelance-rate

Mural square foot pricing guide (free download):

https://www.pandrdesignco.com/digital-resources/free-mural-pricing-guide

Step 3:
Fund the project

Step 3: Fund the project

You may have already identified sources of funds for this project, but if you are still looking for ways to pay for the project or supplement existing funds, having clear project goals will help you think broadly about potential additional funding sources.

Grants. Whatever type of grants you typically apply for might not be the only type that your project could fit into. Your project might fit multiple criteria for foundations or government programs that fund the arts, community engagement, economic development, cultural districts, education, commercial corridor or storefront revitalization, or any number of other issues. If you usually apply for art grants, look at grants that support healthy, connected and engaged communities. If you usually apply for community and economic development grants, look at art grants. If the project addresses a topic or theme (mental health, youth, climate, etc.), look at who funds those projects.

Public Engagement, Communications, or Marketing Budget. If a goal of your project is to raise awareness, inform or engage people, there could be funds from a communications, marketing, or public engagement/civic participation allocation of a larger project that could contribute to your budget. Most commonly, this would be part of an infrastructure or construction project, or a business district/tourism board marketing campaign.

Construction Budget. Many budgets for municipal construction or improvement projects (e.g. for roads, parks, bridges, etc.) include or could include funds that can be used for art and public engagement. If your project is in tandem with a construction project— for example, a commercial corridor revitalization project in conjunction with a street repair project—there may be funds to engage the public in planning or commission artwork. It can also be more cost effective to install art during a construction process rather than waiting until afterwards.

Donations. Individual donors and local businesses may be interested in supporting your project. For instance, a local bank might be interested in a project that draws people to main street, or an individual might be interested in a project that represents their community and gives them an opportunity to leave a legacy. Donations can be solicited through fundraising events, letters, or 1:1 calls or meetings.

Step 4:

Choose a strategy to find an artist

Step 4: Choose a strategy to find an artist

Now it's time to figure out the best strategy to find an artist. Springboard recommends these four strategies:

Recommended Strategies

Directly hire an artist known to you

Call for Entries

Call for Artists/Projects

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
(Great replacement for an RFP!)

Look at the chart on the following two pages for a summary of these strategies. See Step 5: Write the call for examples of each type of call.

Other commonly used strategies that Springboard does not recommend include Request for Proposals (RFP) and contests. Both require artists to spend significant time upfront with a low likelihood of winning the job. Instead of an RFP, we recommend using a Request for Qualifications (for larger-scale or more complex projects) or a Call for Artists/Projects (for smaller-scale projects). Instead of a Contest, we recommend using a Call for Entries or directly hiring an artist you know, since these strategies don't require artists to create new work upfront.

Not Recommended Strategies

Request for Proposals (RFP)
(Use an RFQ instead!)

Contest

Strategies for finding an artist

	Directly hire an artist known to you	Call for Entries	Call for Artists/Projects	
	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES			
Description	Ask an artist whom you know or has been recommended to you because their work fits your goals. This can be a good strategy if the project is modest or if you have a tight deadline or tight budget. This strategy does not overburden artists with applying for an opportunity they have a small chance of winning.	A call for artists' **existing artwork** that addresses your goals, most often used by groups looking for artwork to display (e.g. galleries, cafés, and restaurants).	A call for an artist to create **new work** that addresses your goals. Most often used for relatively modest projects and to find artists with interest and experience relevant to the goals.	
Application Process	None. You (or a partner organization) already know the artist and their work. You still should have a scoping process as you would with any contractor.	Applications typically include work samples, an artist statement, and a resume. Note: Occasionally, the artist pay will be $0. This is typically when providing emerging artists with experience showing their work and/or offering it for sale.	Applications typically include work samples, a resume, and an artist statement. Often, there are narrative questions asking the artist to briefly describe what they will do, but not a detailed technical plan.	
Considerations	This is an opportunity to support artists who might not apply or be selected from underrepresented groups in your community. Use this method if you are confident you are not asking the artist who always gets awarded this type of work (or is your best friend).	It is relatively simple for artists to respond to a Call for Entries, so this is a good way to find a diversity of artists. Share the call broadly, particularly in places/groups that are underrepresented.	If you keep the submission process simple and share it widely, this process can be inclusive and result in a diversity of artists applying.	
Typical Artist Pay Range	$1,000-10,000	$0-5,000	$1,000-20,000	

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	Request for Qualifications (RFQ)	NOT RECOMMENDED	
		Request for Proposals (RFP)	Contest
	A two-step process to find an artist to create **new work** that addresses your goals, most often used by organizations that are looking for an artist to do a relatively larger and more complex project with budgets of $5,000 or more. Note: Using an RFQ often can lead to a more collaborative experience for all parties, leading to a more successful project.	A one-step process to find an artist to create **new work** that addresses your goals, most often used by organizations that are looking for an experienced artist to do a larger project with budgets of $5,000 or more. ! Consider using an RFQ instead of an RFP.	A contest is most often used to solicit designs or imagery for logos, banners, t-shirts, etc. ! Contests are NOT a good way to solicit quality custom work from artists. Artists tend to avoid contests because they can spend a significant amount of time creating artwork that may have only a small chance of being selected.
	Applications typically include work samples, a resume, and an artist statement. Often there are brief narrative questions about why the artist is connected to and interested in this project. From the applicant pool, 3-6 artists are invited and paid a stipend to submit a formal proposal that might include: a more developed narrative, a project concept, a detailed budget, letters of reference, and a presentation.	A Request for Proposals is like an RFQ, except that all application materials—written proposal, visual representation of proposed work, samples of past work, proposed budget, resume, and letters of reference—are all submitted at one time by every applicant. Typically the proposal requires significant time for the artist to generate.	The application process is typically simple—often just the submission of an image that meets the technical and thematic guidelines.
	An RFQ process respects artists' time and experience and asks only finalists to expend time developing a detailed project. Finalists should be paid for their work to develop a full proposal (typically $200-$1,000).	Compared to RFQs, RFPs require artists to spend a significant amount of uncompensated time developing a project and submitting an application when they have a low chance of being selected.	Contests almost always extract a good deal of labor from artists without any compensation unless their submission is selected.
	$5,000-150,000	$5,000-150,000	$100-500

Step 5:
Write the call

Step 5: Write the call

If you are directly hiring an artist you already know, skip to Step 8: Contract with an artist.

If you are planning to issue a Call for Entries, a Call for Artists/Projects, or a Request for Qualifications (or even a Request for Proposals) read this section!

Below are some of the basic sections you should include in your call, and the information you should include in each section. Make sure your call is clear, from the project details to the application to the selection timeline. Keep the application process simple and jargon-free, and use your responses to the questions in Step 1 to inform your writing. **We have included examples of each type of call at the end of this section.**

> **Tip:** If this process is new to you, ask artists and partner organizations to review a draft before you send out your call.
>
> Find additional examples of calls on these websites:
>
> **Art Deadlines List (*artdeadlineslist.com*)**
>
> **PublicArtist (*publicartist.org*)**
>
> **The Art List (*the-art-list.com*)**
>
> **CaFÉ (*callforentry.org*)**

Your call should include:

1 ## Summary
Brief description of who you are, what you are looking for, and the application deadline.

2 ## Project Description
Describe goals for the project. Provide the following:

- Information about the group commissioning the work and any other collaborators
- Background/context of the project
- Any site or community information
- Goals for the project
- Type of artwork or project

3 Compensation

Amount and what the artist compensation includes (such as materials, installation, etc.). If you are using a Request for Qualifications, you should share the amount that semi-finalists will receive to create a full proposal.

4 Eligibility

Specify any eligibility restrictions. If you are looking for specific skills, art forms, experiences, or backgrounds (e.g. if you only want local artists to apply), mention them here.

5 Selection Criteria & Process

Outline the selection criteria and process. See Step 7: Select an artist for thoughts about designing a selection process, including how to choose a selection panel.

6 Timeline

Provide a list of relevant dates, including submission deadline, notification dates, any required meeting/activity dates, project start and completion date.

> **Tip:** It is beneficial for all parties if a call is open for at least 6 weeks and the project begins at least a month after the artist is chosen.

7 Application Process

Detail how to apply, including materials to be submitted, any formatting requirements, any narrative questions, and how to submit materials.

8 Contact Information

Include who the artist should contact if they have questions about their application.

Make it easy!

There's no reason to make applications overly complex or formal—that drives potential applicants away who might be a great fit for your project.

Think about:

- **Language.** Application language should be simple and clear, without a large number of questions.

- **Response Options.** Offer an option of video responses to narrative questions. For some applicants, responding verbally to questions will be more comfortable than providing written responses.

- **Instruction Formats.** If you are using an e-form for submissions, publish the application questions as a pdf or on a webpage so applicants can see the details without having to make an account and can more easily prepare what they need before filling out a form.

- **Information Sessions.** Provide information sessions and record them to post online. Consider attaching a mini-workshop to the info session on how to write a compelling artist statement or selecting strong work samples.

- **Assistance.** Offer to assist artists in completing the application, if needed. Assistance could include holding office hours or study halls, providing direct support, or connecting applicants to resources such as a local artist professional development program.

Tools for Managing the Application Submission & Selection Process

Common tools to manage the application process:

CaFÉ: callforentry.org

A fee-based platform for organizations to post their calls and manage the application and selection process. CaFÉ also lists open calls by category, so it is a good place to find example calls.

Dropbox: dropbox.com

A fee-based cloud storage service that can be used as a simple way for artists to submit their response to a call. Often work samples are too large to email, but artists can send a link to their Dropbox folder with the required application materials.

Google Workspace: If your organization uses Google Workspace, you can use Google Forms to gather data and input it directly to Google Sheets. You can also use Google Drive to organize artist submissions and share submissions with panelists. Free and paid versions are available.

Slideroom: slideroom.com

A fee-based application management tool. Easy to use for both applicants and reviewers.

Submittable: submittable.com

A fee-based application management tool. The cost is generally higher than some of the other options, and may not be cost-effective for smaller organizations, or groups that don't often issue calls for artists.

SurveyMonkey Apply: apply.surveymonkey.com

A fee-based application management tool. Has a relatively intuitive user interface. If you already use SurveyMonkey, or need easy integration with popular platforms like Raisers' Edge, this may be a good choice.

Call for Entries
NorthArt2024 Exhibition at the The Artwork Factory: June - October 2024
Deadline for Applications: February 10, 2024

The Artwork Factory is a gallery in Winnipeg, Manitoba, committed to showing contemporary art. We hold an annual juried exhibition of 50 artworks every year, June through October.

Eligibility
NorthArt2024 is open to artists who live or work in Manitoba. The submitted artwork must have been created in the last two years.

Selection of Artists
The jury – made up of curators, artists, an art historian, and Artwork Factory board members – will select artists by April 1, 2024. Invited artists will be informed via email and asked to confirm their participation. Artists whose work was not accepted will also be notified.

Application Process
Go to www.northart.org and follow the instructions. You will need to complete an online form with your name and contact information, and upload a resume. You may upload up to 10 images of artwork that you would like to be considered (permissible formats for uploaded images are JPG, GIF, PNG, and PDF; maximum file size per image is 1 MB).
A confirmation of entry will be sent to your email address.

Additional Information
Artworks selected by the jury must be delivered or dropped off at the Artwork Factory in Winnipeg. Any shipping costs must be covered by the artist. All delivered works will be insured from the time of delivery to the time of collection. There is no registration fee. Installation will be made by the team at The Artwork Factory. Artwork will remain on display until the end of the exhibition. Exhibited works can be offered for sale. The Artwork Factory is a non-profit organization and does not charge any commission for artwork sold.

Timeline
Submission Deadline	11:59pm, February 10, 2024
Artist Selection and Notification	by April 1, 2024
Artwork Delivery Period	April 15-30, 2024
Exhibition Period	June 1-October 31, 2024
Artwork Collection Period	November 1-10, 2024

Call for Artists
The City of Blue Lake, Minnesota is seeking artists to create new work for
10' x 10' vinyl banners to be displayed outdoors at City Park

Artist Stipend: $1,000 (3 stipends available)
Deadline for Submissions is 11:59m, June 1, 2024

The City of Blue Lake seeks visual artists to create new work to be reproduced on 10'x10' vinyl banners and displayed in City Park. Up to three artists will be selected. Each selected artist will be paid a $1,000 stipend.

Project Description
The City of Blue Lake seeks visual artists to produce new artwork that reflects one or more of the following themes: a connection to water and nature; local flora, fauna, and habitat; people at play in the outdoors. Artists may work in any visual medium. Selected artists will create new work in collaboration with the panel, utilizing the above themes.

Images will be reproduced on 10'x10' vinyl banners and displayed in City Park on a rotating basis throughout the year. The City of Blue Lake will cover all costs associated with the production and installation of the banners.

Artist Eligibility & Selection
This call is open to all artists, but priority consideration will be given to artists who have a connection to Blue Lake, Minnesota.

A panel of community members including local artists, a naturalist, and members of the City Park Booster Club will select up to 3 artworks to be reproduced on the banners. Only one work per artist will be chosen. Each selected artist will receive a $1,000 stipend.

How to Apply
Email up to 5 images of existing work representative of your style and an artist statement to cityparkart@cityofbluelake.gov with "Banner Art Submission" in the subject line of your message. You may also include links to your portfolio and/or resume, but this is not required.

Timeline
Deadline for Submission   June 1, 2024
Selection of Artwork   by June 15, 2024
Notification of Artists   by June 30, 2024

SPRINGBOARD
for the arts

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
Visual Elements for Stormwater Runoff System Education
RFQ Response Deadline: July 31, 2024 11:59pm

Information Session:
June 16, 2024 7-8:30pm

Project Summary
Springboard for the Arts seeks an artist (or artist team) who lives, works, or has a connection to Minnesota to create visual elements for a new stormwater runoff system at Springboard's building at 262 University Avenue West in Saint Paul. The visual elements will help educate the public about the stormwater system (rooftop collection system, storage tank, and rain garden) and its connection to the local watershed. The artwork must be designed and constructed to last a minimum of 20 years.

This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will consist of a two-part process, with an initial response to this RFQ due on July 31, 2024. Finalists will receive a $1,000 stipend to prepare a full proposal by September 10, 2024. Artists/artist teams are not required to have previously completed a public art project, but successful applicants need to demonstrate their ability to lead and complete a project.

The selected artist/team will receive $20,000 to cover all expenses related to the project, including artist time, materials, fabrication, installation, and other expenses.

Organizational Background
Founded in 1991, Springboard for the Arts works at the intersection of arts and economic and community development, helping local artists and communities thrive together. Springboard's mission is to support artists with the tools to make a living and a life, and to build just and equitable communities full of meaning, joy, and connection.

Eligibility
Artists of any discipline who live, work or have a connection to Minnesota are eligible to apply. Artists will need to demonstrate their ability to complete a large project. Artists who work in mediums other than visual art are encouraged to apply if they are interested in creating permanent public art.

Note on artist teams: A team may be composed of up to 3 artists who all meet the eligibility criteria, working together on the artistic aspects of the commission. If you are planning to hire or include a technical consultant or fabricator, they would not be considered part of the artist team. Teams should pick a lead artist to create a SlideRoom account and submit a team application (see below).

Selection Process & Criteria

A panel of artists, representatives from the community, and representatives of Springboard will select 3-5 finalists who will receive a stipend of $1,000 to create a full proposal to be presented to the panel. The same panel will select the artist/team to receive the commission.

Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Quality of artist's past work as demonstrated in the submitted materials.
- Indication that an artist has the ability to complete a large project, or can demonstrate a plan for accessing outside expertise to successfully complete the project.
- Artist's experience or demonstrated ability to create art that responds to the specific demands of the project.

Application Process

The online application can be found at: www.springboardforthearts.org/rfq. Your application will require a SlideRoom account (artist teams should pick one lead artist to create an account). The following information will be required to complete your application:

A. Applicant Information. Name, email, phone number, address, and information about your connection to Minnesota. If applicable, SlideRoom will prompt you to submit this information for all team members. All team members must meet the eligibility requirement.

B. Narrative. You may provide written responses or video responses. Response limits are 5,000 characters total (for all questions) or 8 minutes total for video responses. Record videos using a laptop, tablet, phone or camera and upload them to YouTube or Vimeo. Your narrative should address the following:

1. **Approach.** Describe your medium(s), and general approach to art making.
2. **Experience.** Describe your previous experience creating public art and your ability to manage projects.
3. **Interest.** Tell us why you are interested in this opportunity and commission. Add any other info you feel is relevant for the panel to know.

C. Resume. Upload a resume in PDF format (maximum 2 pages) for each team member.

D. Work Samples. Individual artist applicants can upload up to 8 work samples. Teams of 2 artists can upload up to 10 work samples. Teams of 3 artists can upload up to 12 work samples.

- For visual work, please submit .jpeg images under 5 MB. (Note: You can upload images with any dimensions; SlideRoom will automatically resize images larger than 1280 x 1280 x 72 ppi.)
- For text work, please submit in .pdf format.
- For audio/video work, provide full URL links to YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud, etc.

Application Assistance

Applicants who need technical assistance with uploading or formatting files, or who would like the submission reviewed can schedule a half-hour phone call or video conferencing session by emailing: resources@springboardforthearts.org.

Springboard is committed to improving access to our programs and services for persons with Limited English Proficiency: https://www.lep.gov/. If you need language assistance with this application, contact: resources@springboardforthearts.org

Questions via email will be answered on a best effort basis: rfq@springboardforthearts.org

Timeline

Information Session (Zoom meeting)
Sign up at: http://www.springboardforthearts.org/rfq
June 16 , 2024, 7-8:30pm

RFQ deadline
July 31, 2024, 11:59pm

Finalists notification (invitation to submit full proposals)
by August 10, 2024

Finalist full proposals due
September 10, 2024

Finalist presentations/interviews
September 15-20, 2024

Selected Artist/Team Notified
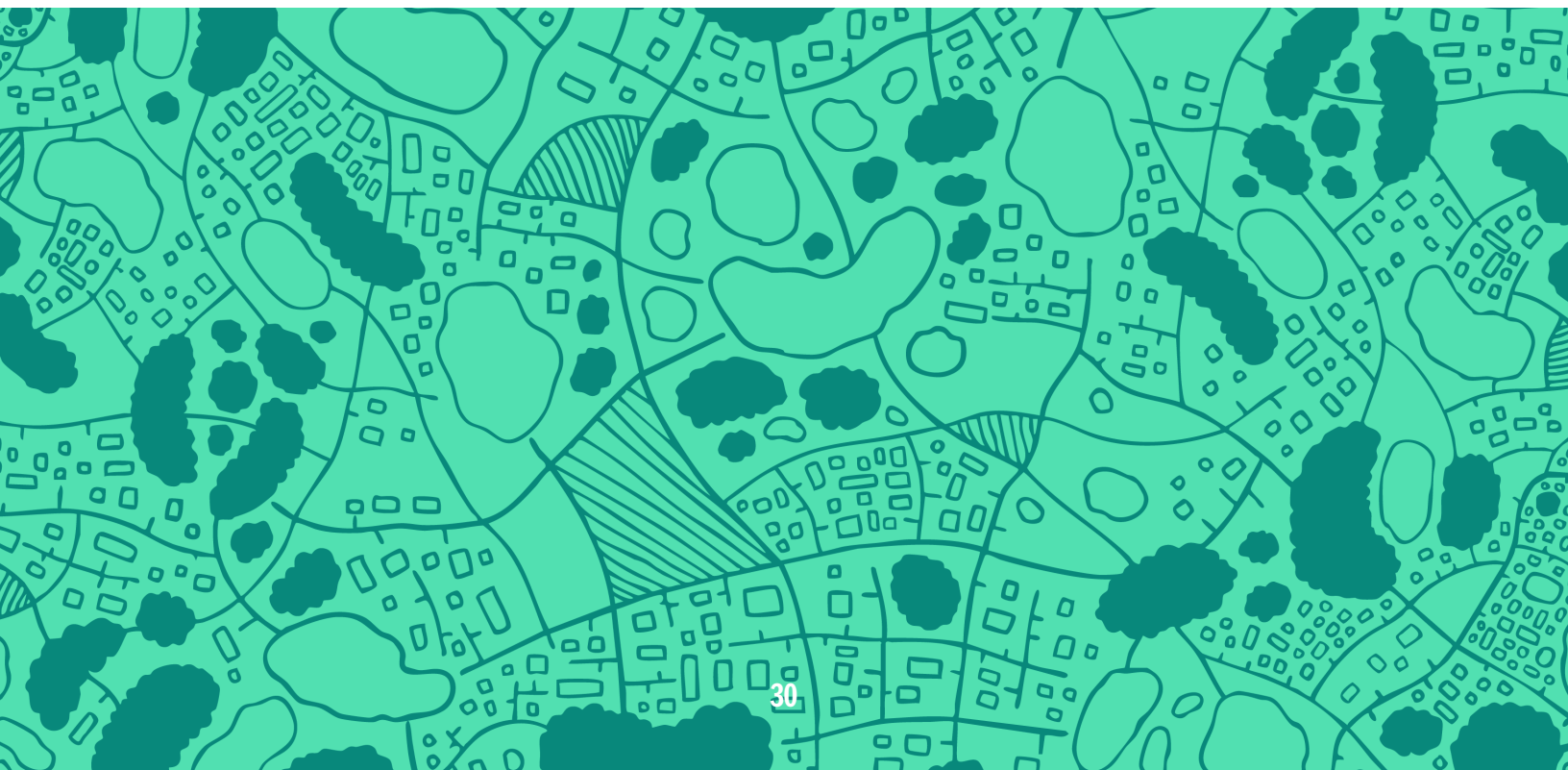by October 1, 2024

Work Installed
By June 1, 2025

Public Celebration
Date to be determined

Step 6:
Get the word out

Step 6: Get the word out

Once you have written your call, it's time to get the word out.

Post

First, post the call on your website so that others can easily link to the call and share it.

- Post flyers at art supply stores, coffee shops, bookstores, community centers, the art departments of local colleges and universities, and other places where local artists might see it.
- Do a search for local arts organizations that post calls and artist opportunities (if you don't know where to start, try googling "artist opportunities + CITY or STATE").
- If your search is national in scope, here are some well-known nationwide websites where you can post your call for a fee:
  - Art Deadlines List (artdeadlineslist.com)
  - PublicArtist (publicartist.org)
  - The Art List (the-art-list.com)
  - CaFÉ (callforentry.org)

Share

Share your call widely. Use your usual platforms—website, social media, mailing lists.

Also share your call with:

- Partner organizations—as well as organizations and agencies you haven't worked with who also serve your priority groups. (Sharing a call is a great reason to make new organizational friends!)
- Local arts organizations and community groups. These local groups might have connections to communities, issues, and places that you want your project to address.
- Local media.
- Artists you know, especially those with connections to communities you want to reach.

Provide info sessions

It is a good idea to hold information sessions—both in-person and virtual—about the project, how to apply, and to answer questions. Record an information session and provide it on your website for anyone unable to make it to a scheduled session. Give applicants plenty of time between info sessions and the application deadline. If you have the capacity, offer to assist artists with their application, either as part of an information session or at a later time.

Continue to promote

It sometimes takes a few times for people to see an opportunity before they act on it. Make sure to keep the buzz going by varying promo photos, language and audiences.

Now wait for those applications to roll in!

Don't panic if you don't have many submissions the first weeks you have your call open. Most artists will submit in the final days and hours before the deadline.

Step 7:
Select an artist

Step 7: Select an artist

For major commissions using an RFQ (or RFP), selecting the artist is often a formal process involving a selection panel. On the other hand, a business owner selecting an artist to exhibit work in their establishment might just ask a couple of trusted peers to pick the artist(s). No matter your selection process, we believe it is important to keep it simple, especially for reviewers.

Here are a few things to think about regarding the selection process:

I. Choosing Reviewers (readers, judges, panelists)

Roles. You may decide to have multiple roles in the selection process, particularly if there are many applications to review. Different groups or individuals might participate in different parts of the selection process. Some might act only as readers—reading and scoring all the submitted applications, but not participating in the discussion and final decision-making. Others might read, score, and discuss applications and make a final selection. In some cases, your panel might make final recommendations but a board makes the final approval. Be clear about whether a panel is actually selecting the artist or recommending an artist.

Tip: Having a separate group of readers is a good strategy when:

- You'd like to involve many people and perspectives
- You'd like the review process to be a learning opportunity (for staff, artists, community members)
- There are too many applications for any one person to read and digest, so you need to narrow the number of applications that go to a review panel

Perspectives and Backgrounds. Do the people evaluating and choosing the artist have relevant knowledge and experience as a whole group? In addition to art expertise, you might be looking for experience working in/with community, long-term community planning, knowledge about a geographic area or particular community, or something else.

Representation. What groups or constituencies should be represented on your panel? Are there groups that could or should play a role in selecting the artist? Keep in mind:

- A diverse panel will bring different perspectives and experiences to the process, which can lead to more comprehensive and fair decision-making.

- Panelist selection can be a tool to bring communities into the process and help with buy-in and engagement.

- Consider inviting local artists to be on the selection panel. It is a great learning experience for artists to be on the other side of the selection process!

- The board or a committee of a business association or neighborhood group might be utilized as a selection panel.

- If the work is in the public right of way, a local government may have an existing arts commission that is required to or could play a role in the selection process.

- You do not have to publicize the reviewers in advance or at all. In some cases, sharing who the panelists are may elevate prestige, but may create unintended consequences if applicants seek out the panelists.

Tip: If your organization is better served remaining neutral during the selection process (e.g. because you want to maintain a good working relationship with artists who might apply and might be turned down), your organization does not need to be represented on the selection panel. Instead, you can position your organization as a neutral facilitator of the process, providing information and technical assistance.

II. Preparing Reviewers

Preparation and Training. Provide guidelines and training to reviewers on how to conduct the evaluation process fairly and objectively. This can help ensure that all candidates are evaluated consistently and based on a set of shared, predetermined criteria.

Tip: Review for quality of concept or content, not ability to write a perfect Oxford English application. This will be more inclusive and give reviewers more strong applications from a greater diversity of artists and perspectives to consider.

Conflicts of Interest. It is important that any member of a decision making group avoid any conflicts of interest when selecting an artist. Sometimes reviewers may know some of the applicants—this does not automatically constitute a conflict, but they should be able to bow out of reviewing applicants about whom they feel they cannot be impartial.

III. Selection Process Design Factors

Scoring System. Scoring or rating processes can vary greatly in their complexity. You don't need a complex rubric or matrix of criteria. If you have a panel with multiple perspectives and experiences, trust their collective judgment. However, you DO want a process to narrow down your choices, especially if you anticipate a large number of applications. A scoring system can be a way to start a conversation with the selection panel about what the group is looking for in an artist. Use a scoring system with a simple scale. For example: a 3 point scale (whole numbers only) where 3 = strong fit/ should move forward to next stage, 2 = has potential/maybe move forward, 1 = poor fit/ don't move forward. Suggest to reviewers that they use the entire range and only assign the high score to a small number of applicants.

Transparency. What, if any, transparency requirements is your selection process subject to? In addition to your own values around transparency, other partners involved in the project—local government, funders, etc.—may have their own rules. For example, meetings of a selection panel for a project with government funding might be subject to open meeting laws.

Public Vote. Having a public vote as part of your selection process can create buzz about your project, and potentially provide valuable information to a selection panel or other decision-making group, but also may garner unnecessary opinions or a result that doesn't entirely fit your goals. If you choose to do a public vote, make sure you clarify what the vote is for (actual decision, advise, etc.) and use caution; the artist who gathers the most votes may simply have the largest network!

Notification to Applicants. Make certain that your process includes timely and gracious notification to those who were not selected.

IV. Selection Panel Deliberations

If you have a selection panel meet, your goal is to help the group have a discussion about the applications and reach final recommendations or decisions. If you are using a Request for Qualifications process, you will have (at least) two steps: inviting a small number of applicants to create a full proposal, and then selecting the final artist(s). In larger projects, it is also common to interview the finalists.

1 Go over the project and the application, including the criteria for the panelists to consider as they review applications. Also be clear with the panel about their role: Are they recommending or making the final selection?

2 Ask reviewers to score all of the applications, using a simple scale such as below.

Tip: If you have a panelist who abstained from voting on a particular applicant due to a conflict of interest, and therefore not every applicant has the same number of reviewers, divide each total score by the number of reviewers for each applicant.

Sample Score Sheet

Applicant Name	Other info (demographics, location, etc.)	Reviewer 1 Score	Reviewer 2 Score	Total Score	Number of Reviews	Average Score	Notes

3 Once you have all the scores, sort the list based on the average scores. Provide the review panel with a summary sheet listing all the applicants, any pertinent information about applicants, and average scores.

4 There will likely be clusters of scores, and you can decide on a useful cutoff point where everyone above that score is considered a "finalist" and is discussed by the panel.

5 Invite reviewers to advocate for anyone under the cutoff point that they would like to see discussed by the panel. They do not have to share their reasons, since you will all be discussing the batch together. If you have a lot of applications, you might limit the number of applicants that can be moved into the finalist pool.

6 Discuss each applicant and note any pertinent information that is relevant to your selection (identity, an applicant's connection to a place, etc.).

> **Tip:** Get the reviewers talking! Have reviewers take turns starting the first comment so that everyone gets a chance to speak first.
>
> Common prompts to start reviewers:
>
> • What are reasons you think this is a strong application?
>
> • What questions, concerns or reservations do you have?

7 After discussing all finalists, you can ask the panel to rescore and look at average scores again to make a final decision. It is not uncommon for scores to change following discussion.

8 When you get to the final deliberations between a few artists, you may need to develop a final list that is contingent on an artist's response (clarity on availability, a question about a response, etc.) and you may want to have a waiting list in case the first choice artist(s) decline.

> **Tip:** If you receive a submission that you like, but want to adjust it, you can always ask the artist if they would consider a change. In most large projects there is often a collaborative aspect to creating the final artwork.

9 Don't forget to remind/discuss with panelists the timing and process of artist notification and public notification, so they know how long to keep the results confidential.

Step 8:
Contract with an artist

Step 8: Contract with an artist

A well-written contract will provide both parties with an understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regards to the project, and also offer protections for both parties.

See the contract template at the end of this section. *Please note that Springboard for the Arts does not provide legal counsel, and nothing in this guide should be understood as legal advice. Contract templates are provided for illustrative purposes only. Springboard for the Arts highly recommends that organizations retain legal advice regarding all contract matters.*

Tip: Many contract templates available online contain clauses that are inequitable or exploitative towards artists, creative workers, and contractors. If you use a template or someone else's example, read it thoroughly and make sure that it aligns with your values!

Your contract should include a description of the project and language that addresses the following:

- **Roles and responsibilities** of each party (also called scope of work or services)
- **Timelines,** including project milestones and the payment schedule
- **Copyright**
- **Insurance,** including any insurance requirements expected, if any. (Make sure you mention this in your call, so artists are not surprised at this stage!)
- **Documentation** and use of documentation materials (e.g. photos, videos, etc.)
- **Credits and acknowledgements** (provide concise language)
- **Payment details and process**

Tip: When an artist has created a work, they automatically own the copyright to it. Even if the physical work is sold, the artist still owns copyright unless they specifically transfer that copyright in writing. It is exceedingly rare for an artist to give up their copyright.

Tip: Always pay a portion of the contract upfront for a project. For projects with significant material costs or other expenses, pay the artist a good portion in advance.

You may also want language in the contract that addresses these issues, if applicable to your situation:

- **Warranty requirements**
- **Permissions/permits**
- **Maintenance and decommissioning**
- **Maintenance/operating manual.** If you would like the artist to develop a maintenance or operating manual for the artwork, include this in the contract and budget for it.

> **Tip:** If a physical artwork is made, in addition to the contract, you may want to sign a Transfer of Title. A Transfer of Title formalizes that the artwork is now owned by whomever commissioned it. This does not extend to copyright, but simply refers to the actual physical artwork. This is proof of ownership, similar to a car title. **A title template is provided at the end of this section.**

Please note that Springboard for the Arts does not provide legal counsel, and nothing in this toolkit should be understood as legal advice. This template is provided for illustrative purposes only. Springboard for the Arts highly recommends that organizations retain legal advice regarding all contract matters.

ARTIST PROJECT AGREEMENT

This agreement ("Agreement") has been entered into on **[DATE]** by and between **[Name of Commissioning Organization]** (hereafter referred to as **"[Organization short form name]"**) and **[Artist legal name or business name]** (hereafter referred to as "Artist") for purposes of implementing **[TITLE OF PROJECT]** (hereafter referred to as the "Project").

Section 1. Scope of Services

Roles and Responsibilities of Artist

[Outline the roles and responsibilities of the artist]

Sample language:

Artist is responsible for the following:

- Implement Project as detailed below or in attached proposal, in conjunction with project team and collaborators, and under the direction of **[Organization]**.
- Provide project updates on a regular basis to **[Organization]**.
- Any significant changes or alterations to Project and/or timeline must be approved by **[Organization]**.
- Complete the Project no later than **[Specify Date]**.
- Upkeep and maintenance of any physical portions of the Project until **[Specify Date]**.

Roles and Responsibilities of **[Organization]**

Sample language:

[Organization] is responsible for the following:

- Assistance, in supporting implementation of Project on a best-effort basis.
- Promotion of Project through standard outreach methods.
- Coordination and hosting of Project unveiling celebration.

Section 2. Term. This Agreement shall govern work done starting on **[START DATE]**, and this contract shall be effective through **[END DATE]**.

Section 3. Payment. Artist shall be paid **[TOTAL FEE]** for services. One-half **[HALF TOTAL FEE]** of the contract value shall be paid when this contract is executed, and the remainder **[HALF TOTAL FEE]** shall be paid upon completion of Project and receipt of a final invoice.

Or **[INSERT PAYMENT SCHEDULE FOR PROJECT]**

Contractor shall provide **[Organization]** a signed W-9 form before any payment is made under this Agreement.

Section 4. Independent Contractor. It is agreed by the parties that, at all times and for all purposes within the scope of this Agreement, the relationship between the Artist and **[Organization]** is that of independent contractor and not that of employee. No statement contained in this agreement shall be construed so as to define this temporary position as an employee of **[Organization]**. No taxes will be withheld from the compensation paid. All taxes are the responsibility of the Artist. The Artist is entitled to none of the rights, privileges or benefits of an employee of **[Organization]**.

Section 5. Intellectual Property. Artist retains ownership of all intellectual property, including the copyright thereto, created under this contract. Artist grants **[Organization]** a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, license to use, reproduce, edit, transform, sublicense, publish, and allow others to publish such intellectual property for educational, promotional, and other noncommercial purposes.

Section 6. Insurance. **[Organization]**'s insurance shall not cover any activities of the Artist. It is Artist's discretion and responsibility to carry general liability insurance for activities performed under this Agreement. If Artist chooses to purchase general liability insurance for itself, Artist shall provide **[Organization]** a Certificate of Insurance upon execution of this Agreement. **[Organization]** does not require Artist to procure general liability insurance for this Activity unless directed by **[Organization]**.

Section 7. Documentation. **[Organization]** and its designated personnel may photograph, video and document projects and work arising from the Project, and use resulting materials without restrictions or royalties paid to the Artist or **[Organization]** for archival, promotional, marketing, website, educational and such other purposes. All intellectual property, including the copyright ownership of any photographs, video, or other documentation created by **[Organization]** pursuant to this paragraph belongs exclusively to **[Organization]**, and **[Organization]** shall have the right to register the exclusive copyright ownership in the same.

Section 8. Hold Harmless. Artist agrees to indemnify, save, and hold **[Organization]**, their employees, and representatives harmless from any and all claims or causes of action, including attorneys' fees, arising from the performance of this Agreement or the breach thereof by the Artist or the Artist's agents or employees.

Section 9. Termination.

(a) Either party may terminate this Agreement with thirty (30) days' written notice of intent to terminate ("Notice") for any reason. In the event of termination under this subparagraph (a), Artist will be entitled to payment from **[Organization]** for all services actually, timely, and faithfully rendered up to the receipt of the Notice and thereafter until the date of termination.

(b) **[Organization]** may terminate this Agreement with immediate effect by delivering Notice of the termination to the Artist if:

> i. The Artist exhibits any form of behavior that does not align with the values and beliefs of **[Organization]**. Such behavior includes but is not limited to actions that are unethical, discriminatory, disrespectful, illegal, or detrimental to the reputation and mission of **[Organization]**.

> ii. Artist fails to complete an assignment or work as specified by **[Organization].**

If **[Organization]** terminates this Agreement under this subparagraph (b), the Artist shall forfeit any further compensation owed to the Artist as of the date notice of termination is delivered to the Artist.

Section 10. Amendment or Changes to Agreement. This Agreement may not be amended by either party except by written agreement of Artist and **[Organization]**.

Section 11. Entire Agreement. This represents the full understanding between the parties and may only be modified in writing, signed by both parties. The Agreement shall be construed according to the laws of the State of **[State]**.

Section 12: Notices. Any notice required or permitted to be given under this Agreement will be sufficient if in writing and if hand delivered or mailed by certified mail or express courier to the party at the address of the party as it appears under the party's signature below. All notices that are hand delivered will be deemed to be given upon delivery. Notices that are mailed shall be deemed to be delivered upon written confirmation or receipt of delivery by the carrier.

Signed:

_____ _____
Artist **Date**
[Address]

_____ _____
[Organization] **Date**
[Address]

FOR VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, the undersigned Artist located at the address noted below does hereby sell, transfer and convey to **[Commissioning organization/business]**, located in **[City, State]**, its assigns and successors, all right, title and interest in the ownership of the Artwork commissioned by **[Commissioning organization/business]** as described in the agreement between the parties.

Title: _____.

Location: _____.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Artist has executed this written transfer of title on this _____ day of _____, 20____.

_____
Artist Signature

_____
Artist Address

_____ WITNESS

Sworn to and subscribed before me this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

_____ NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires:

(NOTARY SEAL)

Step 9:

Evaluate, celebrate, and envision

Step 9: Evaluate, celebrate, and envision

As the artist's work proceeds, make plans to evaluate its impact—and celebrate what you've accomplished together! This is the time to think about what went well, what challenges you encountered, and how you want to continue working with artists in the future.

I. Evaluate

Evaluation may be as simple as a conversation with the artist and any collaborators or participants about what they have learned and what they value about the project. Listen for ways to improve, expand, and build upon the work—even if you do not have immediate plans to do so. More complex projects may require you to define success and set specific measurement methods.

Beyond evaluating the finished project or product, think about what other meaningful outcomes you gained from working with an artist. Did the process generate new ideas, connections, or relationships? Did you learn new insights about your community and its values? Artists bring not only their ability to make and produce, but also to use creative processes to help people connect, re-imagine, and create shared meaning.

II. Celebrate

Give yourself, the artist, and your community the opportunity to celebrate the project, its outcomes, and the new relationships it created. Don't be surprised if as you're celebrating, the artist and your community ask you what's coming up next.

III. Envision what comes next

You may be in a position to expand or continue working with artists. Some possibilities include:

- Continue to work with the same artist. The artist could do work that happens more times, with different participants, in more places, over a longer timeframe, etc.
- Offer the same type of opportunity to more/other artists.
- Work with artists to tackle different opportunities and issues.

Keep in touch

We are happy you are considering working with artists at your organization, business, or agency!

Please let us know if this toolkit has helped, what you've learned about working with artists, and what we can do to make it more useful. We are always available for questions or to help you brainstorm ideas, and look forward to hearing about your work. Keep it up!

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