

Request for Qualifications: Integrating Sustainability and the Arts to Catalyze Community Action

**Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County
Public Art Trust**

Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection

Deadline:

November 8, 2019

Eligibility:

Limited to artists living or working in Montgomery County, MD.

Applicants who require a large print or audio recording of this document should email PublicArtRFQ@creativemoco.com

Applicants who have questions about how to prepare an application or any of the required submission materials should email PublicArtRFQ@creativemoco.com

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Summary

Montgomery County Government — through a collaboration between the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) — is calling on artists and community organizations to help facilitate our community's collective reflection about the state of our environment, particularly as it relates to climate change, waste reduction and water quality.

Together, AHCMC and DEP are sponsoring three grants for artists to develop temporary artworks that engage the community around the issue of climate change.

- Artists must live or work in Montgomery County.
- Artists must apply for the grant in collaboration with a non-profit organization or a public entity (such as a school), in order to demonstrate community support and volunteer capacity.
- Grant amounts are \$3,000 and projects must be completed by June 2020.
- Deadline: November 8, 2019

Interested artists and organization representatives are invited to a workshop on October 11, 2019 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at the Silver Spring Civic Center, Spring Room, 1 Veterans Place, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Light refreshments will be served.

The workshop will explore the intersection of climate science, civic art practice, equity, community engagement and sustainable behavior. The workshop will be free but attendance will be limited.

For more information about the RFQ or the workshop, and to RSVP for the workshop, please email: PublicArtRFQ@creativemoco.com

Background

A Call to Action

Today's environmental challenges are unprecedented, and the County recognizes its responsibility to address them earnestly. The County is in the early stages of establishing a new Climate Action Plan to meet its ambitious goal of carbon neutrality by 2035; developing a new strategic plan aiming for zero waste; and implementing one of the most robust storm water management programs in the country.

Technological improvements, financial incentives, and progressive policies will be essential to meeting our goals. But on their own, these interventions will be insufficient. All those who live and work in the County will need to do their part and take dramatic steps to reduce their ecological footprint. As such, there needs to be a heightened sense of responsibility animating our community so that we engage emotionally, internalize an environmental ethic, and truly feel the exigencies of our time.

We call on artists to hold up a mirror, and to courageously challenge our values and actions so that we can each see more vividly the impact of our actions. We hope that public art focused on climate change will spur community members to act with the urgency commensurate with the challenges.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

The mission of DEP is to enhance the quality of life in Montgomery County by protecting its air, water and land in a sustainable way while fostering smart growth, a thriving economy and healthy communities. The Department oversees programs for watershed restoration, greenhouse gas reduction, renewable energy, sustainability, and environmental compliance.

Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHC MC)

AH CM C, in partnership with the community, cultivates and supports excellence in the arts and humanities, expands access to cultural expression, and contributes to economic vitality in the region.

Since 1976, AH CM C has been the County's designated local arts agency. Through its programs and services, AH CM C provides the infrastructure and support necessary to maintain a robust creative community that includes over 500 cultural organizations and 2,000 artists and scholars. AH CM C annually distributes over \$5 million in grants to organizations and individuals to help fund enriching cultural activities in our County. Funding is provided by the Montgomery County Government, the Maryland State Arts Council, corporations, organizations and individuals.

AH CM C manages the Public Art Trust, which consists of the County's existing collection of public artworks, the commissioning of new works in collaboration with County agencies, communities and the private sector, and the advancement of the field of public art through publications and training. The Trust's work is guided by the Public Art Roadmap and the Public Art Trust Guidelines.

About the Project

Goals

We are looking for public art projects that draw attention to today's climate crisis, promote an environmental ethic and spark citizen action:

- Make people aware of and reinforce the County's ambitious goals for greenhouse gas reduction and zero emissions
- Resonate with all who live and work in the County, and be accessible to people of all cultures, races, ethnicities and ideologies
- Spark action on the part of residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint
- Catalyze productive partnerships between artists and community-based organizations
- Lay the foundation for a more ambitious initiative that could evolve with more partners, funding, etc.
- Publicize the Public Art Trust's intentions, build capacity in the field, and educate the community

Mini-Grants

AHCMC, working with DEP, will issue three grants of \$3,000 to artists who will develop small temporary public art projects that engage the community around the issue of climate change. Artists are asked to apply for the grant in collaboration with a non-profit or a public entity (such as a school), in order to demonstrate community support and volunteer capacity.

Topics

The artist can address any topic related to climate change (e.g., sea level rise, species loss, impact on society's most vulnerable, responsibility to future generations, resilience, etc.) so long as the project is designed to spark individual and/or collective community action. Projects that offer culturally diverse perspectives, integrate equity, and/or are uniquely place-based are encouraged.

Medium and Location

The grant must result in a project, presented in a publicly-accessible space, in a temporary installation or activation. The project could be in any media, from a traditional mural or sculpture to a video or projection, though if a video, projection or performance, it would have to be presented more than once. Projects should generate minimal or no waste, demonstrate low or no carbon impact and utilize salvaged and non-toxic materials.

For the purposes of this project, temporary means an artwork that is meant to be on view from one to six months, or performative / event-based artworks that can be staged multiple times over that period, preferably in multiple locations.

A public space could include any place that is generally accessible to the public and specifically open for the presentation of the artwork, such as a park, a public urban space, a privately-owned urban space, a street or a County facility. The location should provide for universal access.

Budget

AHCMC is committed to treating artists equitably from a financial standpoint. While the overall budget is \$3,000 for each of the three projects, artists will be expected to retain a significant portion of that budget to compensate themselves for their work. AHCMC will require the artists who are selected to submit a project budget, demonstrating the breakdown between artist fee and expense budget.

The Role of Community Organizations

For the pilot project, artists are asked to apply collaboratively with a community organization. We expect the organization will be an active collaborator in the project, particularly through outreach to its constituents and community. Organizations are not required to make a cash contribution to the project, but will hopefully be able to recruit volunteers and potentially provide locations for project activities and, potentially, the artwork itself.

Examples of potential community organizations are arts organizations, civic betterment organizations, environmental organizations, community-development corporations, religious organizations, youth organizations and school organizations (such as a PTA). School art classes would be eligible. Organizations need not be incorporated as a legal entity.

Workshop

Audience

The workshop is intended for:

- Artists currently in public practice, civic practice or community practice, or hoping to build such practices.
- People from non-profit community groups and/or County agencies seeking to collaborate with artists on environmental projects.

Workshop Learning Objectives

The workshop will focus on the following learning outcomes:

- Understanding of civic practice in public art, including models for organizing projects.
- Understanding of community engagement and collaboration, including models for working with collaborating organizations and communities.
- Review of environmental art practice precedents, with particular focus on recent learning from research by the NEA and Artplace America.
- Connection with professional development resources in environmental public art practice, from information clearinghouses to information about publications, exhibitions, residencies, etc.
- Understanding of County greenhouse gas reduction goals and efforts.
- Understanding of the basic climate change science, trends and impacts, including equity implications.
- Understanding of prospective solutions, with a particular focus on behavior change insights and strategies.

Artist Selection

Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for a grant, artists:

- Must live or work in Montgomery County
- Must be a professional artist, dedicated to producing artwork on a regular basis
- Must be 18 years or older

Artist Selection Process

Artists will be recruited through an open call limited to artists living and/or working in Montgomery County. Artists will be required to identify a community organization to be a partner, and would apply jointly with that organization.

Artists and community organizations would be asked to provide a brief letter of interest describing the project they would like to do. The letter should describe a concept, potential location(s), potential audiences and a public art outcome. This would be a non-binding letter and selected artists would be able to evolve their projects in the project development process. The letter should describe the role the community organization would play in the project.

Artists would also be asked to provide samples of their work and references.

Community organizations would be required to submit a mission statement, a list of board members, and a statement of interest in the project.

AHCMC and DEP will convene a panel to review submissions and identify finalists. AHCMC and DEP reserve the right to request further information and/or conduct a round of interviews before a final selection is made.

Selection Criteria

Artist evaluation will include the following criteria:

- Interest and demonstrated track record in civic practice
- Interest and demonstrated track record in community engagement
- Artistic quality as exhibited in past work, with emphasis on temporary public installations
- Performative based work must be located in multiple locations throughout the county ^[L]_[SEP]
- Familiarity with materials, supplies and processes typical in creating installations with similar budgets
- Ability to organize schedules and processes to stay on track with minimal assistance

Community organizations will be evaluated on a variety of characteristics, including:

- Capacity to provide volunteer support for the artist
- Ability to generate an audience and/or participants for the project
- Interest in environmental issues as evidence by mission statements, previous projects and/or programs, and/or background of staff or board

- Inclusivity and diversity in the composition of their membership
- Strategies for minimizing the ecological impact of the project

Preference will be given to artists who attend the October 11 workshop.

Preference will be given to grassroots, citizen-led organizations, rather than professional associations.

Schedule

September 19	Release Artist RFQ
October 11	Workshop/Presentations
November 8	RFQ Deadline
November 22	Panel to Select Artists
November 25-27	Announce Selected Artists, Execute Artist Agreements
DATE TBD	DEP/AHCMC Host Planning Meeting with Artists
March-April 2020	Project(s) Consultation Review
May-June 2020	Project Activations/Installs, Closing of projects

For More Information

Applicants who have questions about how to prepare an application or any of the required submission materials should email: PublicArtRFQ@creativemoco.com

Accessibility

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How to Put Together an Application

Application Materials

Interested artists should submit:

- An application checklist including the artist name, contact information and an inventory of material that is being submitted
- A CV or resume (up to 2 pages), formatted as a Word document or a .pdf
- A current artist statement, formatted as a Word document or a .pdf
- A current mission statement of the partnering organization
- From the artist, short narrative response to each of these following questions:
 - What aspects of this topic interest you?
 - What is your interest in civic practice and public participation in your projects?
 - What organization would you like to work with, and why?
 - What role would this organization play in your project?
- From the partnering organization, a short narrative response that explains its interest in environmental issues and in working with artists.
- References of two or more recent clients (preferably other public art clients).
- Up to 14 images of past completed work that you consider relevant to this project - See guidelines below).
- A list of images

Guidelines for Submitting Images and Image Lists

- There should be a maximum of ten images from the artist, and the rest from the partnering organization.
- Artist images should show completed work indicative of the artist's practice, illustrating the artist's conceptual interests and the media in which the artist works. Projects may have been created for a gallery, private collection or public space, and can be temporary, but overall should give an indication of the artist's conceptual strengths and ability to successfully create work in the media that will likely be used in this project.
- Organization images should show aspects of the organization's programming and operations that indicate its ability to collaborate productively with an artist. Examples include images of process and outputs of past collaborations with artists, working studio spaces, events and programs, covers or sample pages of publications, and press clips.
- Please submit images as individual .jpg files. **Do not include them in a Word or Acrobat document.** The images must be no more than 300 dpi and no larger than 1024 x 768 pixel resolution. Each image must be unlocked and downloadable for viewing. Each JPEG file must be titled with the artist's name and number that corresponds to the annotated image list. File name example: JonesJane001, JonesJane002. Please submit the image list as a .doc file, not an Acrobat document. Please include the following information: image name, Artist's

name; title of artwork, Location, Date of Completion, Dimensions, Medium / Materials / Paint Type, Budget, Brief Description

How to Submit an Application

Submissions will be accepted electronically by email, Drop Box or WeTransfer, sent to the following address. Email: PublicArtRFQ@creativemoco.com. AHCMC will reply with an acknowledgement of all submissions it receives.

For Assistance in Applying

Artists who have questions about how to prepare an application or any of the required submission materials should email PublicArtRFQ@creativemoco.com.

Application Checklist

Please complete this checklist and submit as the cover sheet of your application.

- Name and contact information for artist

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____ Web: _____

- Name and contact information for collaborating organization

Name: _____

Contact: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____ Web: _____

- A CV or resume for each artist (up to 2 pages)
- A current artist statement
- A current mission statement for organization
- Artist written response to questions
- Organization written response to questions
- Up to 10 images of past completed work that you consider relevant to this project
- Image list
- References
- Other: _____