

SECTION 1: THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF PUBLIC ART

Public Art Opportunities and Resources

In the United States there are over 400 city, county and state public art programs or agencies. Many of these programs are established by an ordinance allocating a “percent for art” amount from public building construction budgets. Others are funded by grants, foundations or private contributions. Often programs provide a website and/or newsletter listing of public art opportunities. Specific details about each opportunity are described in a prospectus, a document that is usually considered the formal Request for Proposals (RFP) or Request for Qualifications (RFQ). An RFP involves developing a specific idea for a project, whereas an RFQ relies upon examples of an artist’s previous work and typically include an artist’s resume, selected references, and a statement of interest about the project. RFQs require minimal expenditures of time and money from artists. For more information about the differences between an RFP and an RFQ, see the [Public Art Network’s Best Practices document](#).



Cruising San Mateo, Barbara Grygutis
AKA “Chevy on a Stick”
Gibson & San Mateo SE

In New Mexico, there are now six public art programs: Cities of Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Rio Rancho; Counties of Bernalillo and Los Alamos; and the State’s Art in Public Places Program, administered by New Mexico Arts. Each program utilizes various information outlets to announce their projects; links to these programs can be found on our [Public Art Community webpage](#). In addition to various state and local publications, opportunities for national and international projects can be found through program websites and listservs.

In 1999 a national organization was formed to help provide professional development to both public artists and public art administrators. The organization is called the Public Art Network (PAN) and is a program of Americans for the Arts in Washington, DC. PAN publishes the most comprehensive list of public art resources in the United States on their [website](#).

Online registries allow artists to place portfolios on view, providing another method of exposure to public art projects, and sometimes private or corporate art commission opportunities. In addition to images and resumes, artist statements and other forms of written materials may be posted. Images can be referenced by the artist’s name, style, or other categories and many slide registries are open for the public to view. Committee members, developers and gallery owners may view registries. [CaFE](#) is one popular registry.

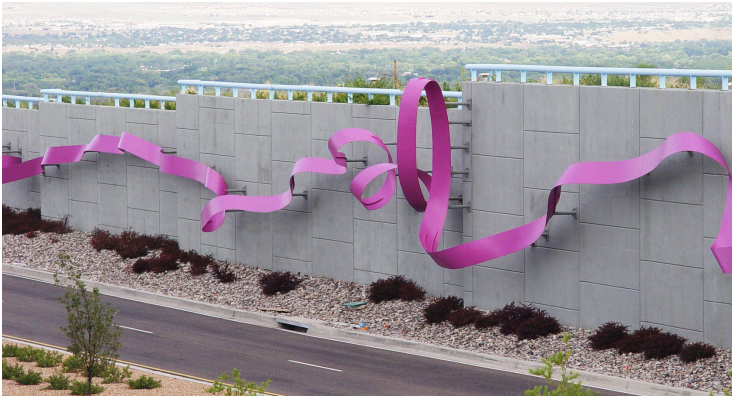
There are several web sites that list opportunities, jobs, residencies, or other public art related information. Online newsletters and magazines have the most comprehensive listings for public art competitions, and frequently list registries and other opportunities.

For more information, please see our [Public Art Resources webpage](#).

Art Selection Committees

Art Selection Committees come in just as many shapes and sizes as public art programs and agencies. Four general types of Art Selection Committees are most often used in the public art process: Local Selection Committees (LSC), Regional Selection Committees (RSC), Arts Boards (both with and without committee structures) and Juried Selection Committees.

Arts Boards or *Commissions* are common among local governments and arts councils. Members are either appointed by elected government officials or are nominated and voted in by the other Arts Board members. They serve staggered terms that can range from 2-5 years, and decide on the project amounts and specific locations for public art sites. Program administrators provide technical and administrative support to these volunteer boards. Some Boards request or utilize LSCs to work at the local neighborhood or community level; the Board then reviews and approves the selection for final recommendation to the elected official or body, such as a mayor or city council. Some Boards participate as a full decision-making body for every project.



La Serpentina, Rogelio Madero
Albuquerque Sunport

Local Selection Committees are closely identified with statewide programs or large municipal agencies. They are usually comprised of 5-7 members and often include one or two members of the community, a department or “user agency” representative, an arts professional (artist, gallery owner or other individual knowledgeable in the arts) and a member of the commissioning board. As a team, they develop the prospectus, review the artist-submitted proposals using criteria they have developed, and select the final artist(s) for the project. Depending on the funding agency, the LSC may or may not have to have their selection approved by an Arts Commission, Arts Board, Mayor, City Council or County Commission.

Regional Selection Committees are formed to represent an area that may have multiple funding amounts. At a minimum, a representative from each of the various departments to receive art funding is included on the RSC. Artists or arts professionals serve as consultants in the process. As a group they usually purchase existing artworks for their respective locations. LSCs and RSCs are usually a one-time committee that meet only to complete a specific project.

Juried Selection Committees are also used by larger local and municipal agencies, as well as federal agencies. Their membership consists primarily of artists and arts professionals. They make the first and usually second cuts of selected finalists and recommend a short list of finalists for a project. The short list is reviewed and selected by a commission or arts board. Some percent for art ordinances also allow boards and commissions to directly select an individual artist for a commission. While this method of selection is seldom used, it allows boards and commissions to include a specific artist’s work for the public art collection.

Deciphering a Prospectus

Once you have found the resources for public art opportunities, it is time to determine if the scope of a project is right for you, and if so, what you need to do to apply. A prospectus can sometimes be lengthy and confusing, but the purpose of the document is to detail the project intent and requirements. Artists must make sure their proposals are in compliance with the project requirements. A prospectus also serves as an official procurement document that a government is required to follow. When a prospectus is released, it will include a list of requirements for submission, which allows a selection committee to make an informed and fair decision. The following is a checklist of things to keep in mind when reading the prospectus. Details on some of these issues will be addressed further in this document.

Project Information

- Who is the issuing or funding agency? Is it a public art program, a public works department, an arts council, a foundation or private corporation? Is there more than one funding source? Different agencies can have different expectations for artworks.
- How much is the project amount? Can the project amount vary using “up to” or “dependent upon” language?
- Who is responsible for all related taxes on the project?
- Is this project strictly for design services or does it include construction and installation? Does the project amount include the design fee?
- Is a budget required? Is a budget worksheet included?
- Who is the contact person, address, both physical and mailing, phone numbers, fax number or e-mails?



Bosque de los Suenos, Ed Haddaway
Tingley Beach
1800 Tingley Drive



9th Inning Heroes, Rome & Gold
Isotopes Stadium
University & Avenida Cesar Chavez SE

- What is the deadline for submissions? Know the date and time by which the proposal must be submitted and meet that deadline.
- What is the site location? Can you go to see it? Are there maps, photographs, or site plans included? For more information about site evaluation see Section 2: Developing Your Proposal.
- Is there a project theme, project history or description? Does the history of the site, neighborhood or community relate to the theme? Are any additional reference materials cited?
- Does the prospectus list a timeline of events? Is there a deadline listed for completion of the project and does this fit into your projected work schedule?
- Is the artist required to work with the project architects, engineers or designers? Will the artist need to produce certified reports from engineers, architects and/or welders for this project?
- Are you eligible? Some projects are only open to artists from a particular area, region or utilizing certain styles or types of artwork.

Deciphering a Prospectus, continued

Proposal Submissions

What do you have to submit? Depending on the digital capabilities of an agency, you may be asked to submit your qualifications or proposal electronically or in hard-copy format. Be sure to review and test electronic/digital file formats for compatibility with the commissioning agency.

*Please be aware that governmental agencies often lag behind in technology! You may have to convert or downgrade your files to older versions of programs. This is particularly important when submitting images of previous artworks, or digital proposals.

If agencies ask for information to be submitted in hard copy, do so in loose leaf or in a three ring binder, usually on 8" x 11" white paper. Copies of your proposal will usually need to be made therefore try not to use sheets of paper that are irregular sizes, dark colors, bound together, or difficult to make copies from. Don't assume that every committee member will be able to see your "original". Look for specific instructions about the format your materials should be presented in.

Drawings or sketches should be in color and to scale, if possible. The more professional your proposal looks, the more likely it is the committee will assume your artwork is of a professional caliber. Give the committee exactly what they ask for in the prospectus; don't submit more than they request. Spending too much time on a proposal that isn't awarded can leave you feeling frustrated.

The submission deadline is critical. If your proposal is late, the committee will have little reason to believe you can meet their project deadline, and may have reason to disqualify your proposal altogether. Plan ahead for whatever it takes to get your proposal to the right location at the right time.



Aluminum Yucca, Gordon Huether
I-40 in Tijeras Canyon