

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Public Art Projects

Wisconsin Center District (WCD) Expansion Project Public Art RFQ

Budgets: 3D Suspended Sculptural Opportunity \$250,00 - \$450,000 / 2D and Low-Relief Wall Mounted Opportunities \$10,000 - \$100,000

Eligibility: Regional, National, and International Artists

DEADLINE: September 16th, 2022

Introduction: The Wisconsin Center District (WCD) seeks to commission artists or artist teams to create original public artworks for the WCD Expansion Project located at 400 W. Wisconsin Ave in Milwaukee, WI. A selection panel of community members, arts professionals, artists, and WCD representatives has been assembled to select and recommend artists or artist teams for each of the opportunities outlined in this RFQ.

WISCONSIN CENTER DISTRICT

The Wisconsin Center District (WCD) is a government body created under Wisconsin State Statute in 1994 to fund, build and operate the Wisconsin Center in downtown Milwaukee, and continue operating the existing venues now called the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena and Miller High Life Theatre.

Not a unit of state, county, or city government, WCD is instead a semi-autonomous municipality called a "district," meaning its Board members are appointed by elected officials, and it can issue bonds and collect taxes within strict limits established by statute.

WISCONSIN CENTER DISTRICT EXPANSION VISION STATEMENT

Delivering over 800,000 attendees and contributing over \$1 billion in annual economic impact, the Wisconsin Center is the economic engine for conventions and business meeting activity in the city and county of Milwaukee, and the state of Wisconsin. As the corporate and residential markets of southeast Wisconsin have grown, so too has the demand for access to the spaces within the convention center.

The Wisconsin Center District's vision is to build a best-in-class facility that will attract meeting planners as a result of the facility's flexible, innovative, technologically supported, and operationally efficient spaces while providing each attendee with a memorable Milwaukee enhanced visitor experience. The expansion must address the latest trends and support the expectations of the convention attendees and meeting planner as well as be adaptable to the market as changes occur.

For building renderings and more information on the WCD Expansion Project visit:
<https://www.buildingmore.com>

MILWAUKEE PAST AND PRESENT

The name "Milwaukee" comes from the Algonquin word millioke, meaning "good", "beautiful", and "pleasant land". Milwaukee is the most populous city in the state of Wisconsin and one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse cities in the U.S.

Milwaukee is the traditional land of the Potawatomi, Ho-Chunk, and Menominee people along the southwest shores of Michigami, North America's largest system of freshwater lakes, where the Milwaukee, Menominee, and Kinnickinnic rivers meet and the people of Wisconsin's sovereign Anishinaabe, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Oneida, and Mohican nations remain present.

The history of Milwaukee is heavily influenced by German immigrants who came in the 19th century bringing with them expert industrial skills, resulting in Milwaukee becoming a center of foundry, machinery, and metal-working industries, as well as brewing and grain trading. Milwaukee continues to be a center for German-American culture and is well known for its brewery industry.

During the 1930s the city was hit especially hard by the national depression: the number of people with jobs fell by 75% and 20% of residents needed direct relief from the government. This led to an increase in strikes between 1933 and 1934. Conditions improved between 1941 and 1945 when World War II demanded large amounts of factory goods.

During the war, many African-Americans from the South came to work in Milwaukee's factories, and most stayed to raise their families after the war. The war also brought an increased need for food and agricultural workers resulting in The Emergency Farm Labor Program of 1943 which allowed for temporary employment migration from foreign countries to the United States. Wisconsin farmers imported laborers from British Honduras, Mexico, Jamaica, and the Bahamas under this Program until 1964.

By the 1960s Milwaukee was 15% African-American, but most black residents were clustered in a near-north neighborhood that suffered from unemployment, poverty, and segregation. Local statutes, real estate agents, and lending institutions conspired to keep African-American communities confined to the inner city, and segregated neighborhoods produced segregated schools. Two decades of struggle by black leaders such as Vel Phillips (1924-2018) and Lloyd Barbee (1925-2003), supported by white allies like Fr. James Groppi (1930-1985), were needed to force city officials to obey federal desegregation laws. When local codes and practices began to change in

1968, white residents moved out, leaving Milwaukee one of the most segregated cities in America today.

The influence of African-American, Latin, and Caribbean cultures can be experienced today in Milwaukee's Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District, Walker's Point, the Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM) which holds the largest collection of Haitian Art outside of Haiti, and in many other aspects of the City's culture.

In recent years Milwaukee has been experiencing its largest construction boom since the 1960s. Major additions to the city since the turn of the 21st century include the Wisconsin Center, The Hop (streetcar system), an expansion to the Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee Repertory Theater, the Bradley Symphony Center, Fiserv Forum, Northwestern Mutual, BMO tower, the 3rd St Market Hall, as well as many other major renovations.

[Sources: Wisconsin Historical Society Collections, Wisconsin Department of Health and Services, Wikipedia, City of Milwaukee, Experience Wisconsin Magazine]

3 Words Exercise:

As part of the development of this RFQ, we connected with WCD user groups, staff, and local members of the Milwaukee arts community and asked them to provide three words or phrases that they emphasize when communicating about the spirit of Milwaukee. Below is a sampling of the responses received:

- Generous, Warm, Hardworking
- Community, Fertile, Practical
- DIY, Breezy, Rising
- Grounded, Supportive, Reaching
- Kith, Labor, Verdure
- Audacious, Restorative, Converging
- Activate, Amplify, Represent
- Beer City, Blue-collar, A big small town
- Music, Friendly, Lake-front

Some participants included the thinking behind their selected words. Here's a selection:

Labor (with emphasis on the city's labor history but also the community's dedication to work, and to working together towards change). So, other cognates here would be progress, endeavor. This word also made me go and re-read Carl Sandburg's poem, "Chicago" (1914), which is all about really the brashness of that city as linked to its working-class history. I think Milwaukee has some of the sort of physical qualities that

Sandburg is going after, like the idea of being "city with the broad shoulders," except without the brashness. With humility, instead.

Public Art Goals:

The goals for public art at the WCD expansion are to develop an art collection that:

- Presents a bold vision that the Convention Center staff, visitors, customers, and residents of Milwaukee and Wisconsin can take pride in by creating unique engagements with the art.
- Will enhance the visitor's experience when the space is occupied and when unoccupied fills the space with the artistic vision.
- Curates a sense of place that reflects the characteristics and culture of Milwaukee and the surrounding region.
- Artworks that reference ideas of the past, present, or future of this region are of interest to the selection panel.
- Engages visitors of all backgrounds.
- Represents a diverse collection of artists with a focus on work from regional artists.
- Integrates with the architecture of the new North Building and the existing South Building and its Art Collection.

Maintenance & Durability:

All applicants are expected to consider the issues of long-term conservation and maintenance of public art, along with time and budget. Public art projects should be fabricated of highly durable, low-maintenance materials. Finalists are encouraged to consult with a professional fabricator and/or conservator prior to the submission of a final proposal. Artist proposals awarded contracts will be reviewed to ensure conformity with the WCD's 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.

Eligibility:

This opportunity is open to regional, national, and international artists over the age of 18. The WCD is committed to building an art collection that represents artists from a broad diversity of race, color, creed, gender, gender variance, sexual orientation, national origin, age, religion, marital status, political opinion or affiliation, and mental or physical disability. The selection panel is especially interested in artists who can demonstrate a deep understanding of the building's function and Milwaukee, as well as the area's history and urban landscape. Artists from the Milwaukee area, BIPOC,

LGBTQ+, emerging artists, and artists with experience in creating artwork for public spaces are encouraged to apply.

Site Opportunities and Budget Descriptions:

The anticipated budget amount for all artwork opportunities at the WCD Expansion is \$1.5 million. Final budget amounts will be determined during the commissioning phase with the selected artists / artist teams based on the proposed projects. The budget ranges listed below are approximate and may adjust slightly.

3D Suspended Sculpture Opportunity: The WCD has identified a range of \$250,00 - \$450,000 to commission a 3D suspended sculptural artwork for the interior of the convention center. This work will be visible as visitors make their way through the North Building entrance and up the social staircase to the exhibit level escalators, as well as visitors coming down the escalators from the ballroom level to the exhibit level.

2D / Low-Relief Wall Mounted Opportunities: The WCD has identified a range of \$10,000 - \$100,000 to commission an array of 2D and low-relief wall mounted artworks for the interior of the convention center. There are a variety of spaces throughout the building that will accommodate 2D and low-relief artwork. Artists applying for this opportunity will not be applying for a particular location in the building at this time, the exact locations will be identified once semi-finalists are selected.

The contract amounts outlined above are inclusive of all costs associated with the project including, but not limited to, the artist's design fee, other consultation fees such as structural engineering consultation, insurance, tools, materials, fabrication, transportation, installation, any building or site modification required, travel to and from the site, per diem expenses, project documentation, a contingency to cover unexpected expenses, and any other costs.

Semi-Finalists will be invited to develop and present artwork concept proposals to the Artist Selection Committee in person or via an online platform. Semi-finalists will be offered a stipend for their time and travel.

Timeline:

(This timeline is subject to adjustments)

RFQ Released - August 22nd, 2022

Public Art 101 - August 31st, 2022 (event details below).

RFQ Response Deadline - September 16th, 2022 (no late submissions will be accepted)

Shortlisted Artists / Artist Teams Notified - Early October

Zoom Meeting with Shortlisted Artists / Artist Teams - Mid October

Shortlisted Artists / Artist Teams Proposal Presentations - Early December
Selected Artists / Artist Teams Notified - Mid December
Contracts Executed - January 2023
Artwork Installation - Quarter 1 2024

Public Art 101:

Public Art Services will be offering a free Public Art 101 course for artists in the Milwaukee area as part of this RFQ. This event will take place Wednesday, August 31st at 6:00 pm at MARN ART + CULTURE HUB, 191 N Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202. This event is geared toward emerging and established artists working in a variety of mediums who are new to the world of Public Art and aims to demystify the public art process, encouraging local and regional artists to apply for these opportunities. This one-hour-long talk will cover what goes into the creation of a successful RFQ response, including preparing a compelling statement of interest, selecting photos that best convey your artistic practice, and other helpful tips to allow your submission to stand out. Whether you've applied to RFQs in the past or this will be your first time applying, this is the event for you. There will be time reserved at the end of the presentation for Q&A. To RSVP for this free event email your first and last name to trey@publicartservices.com

For more info on this event and for access to the live stream visit: <https://marnarts.org/events/#!event/2022/8/31/public-art-101>

How to Apply and Materials to be Submitted:

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

1. Ten digital images of previously completed works (no renderings or concept proposals will be accepted at this time).
2. Resume showing your experience as an artist as it pertains to this opportunity. If applying as a team please limit the resume to one page per team member. The file should be no larger than 2mb, and pdf format only.
3. Statement of interest no longer than 2,000 characters outlining your interest in this project and the specific opportunity location (3D Suspended Sculpture or 2D Low-Relief Wall Mounted Artwork) you're interested in being considered for, along with your previous experience creating artwork for public spaces and how this experience would inform your approach to this project. We are not looking for concepts or proposals at this time. While having completed previous public artworks is not required please be sure to include any experience you've had creating temporary or permanent artworks for public spaces.

Link to RFQ on CaFÉ: https://artist.callforentry.org/festivals_unique_info.php?ID=10549

Selection Process:

From these applications, the selection panel will choose up to three finalists for each opportunity location who will create site-specific proposals and be interviewed in person or in a virtual format, to be determined at a later date. Finalists will be paid a stipend for this work. Based on the interview and proposal, an artist or artist team will be selected for each opportunity location. The selected artist or artist team will work with Public Art Services and WCD when finalizing their designs for installation.