



City of New Orleans Percent for Art Program Call for Artists - Request for Qualifications (RFQ)



Water Connects Us

Project led by Arts New Orleans

RFQ Release Date: July 30th, 2026

DEADLINE: Wednesday, September 9th at 11:59 pm CST

Budget: \$150,000

Application: [LINK](#)

Artists who are interested in submitting to the Call for Artists- Request for Qualification are encouraged to contact Arts New Orleans with any questions about the project, its scope, or requirements, or how to complete an application after reviewing the Call for Artists- Request for Qualification

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Project Overview

Arts New Orleans and the City of New Orleans, seeks to commission an artist or artist team to design, fabricate, and install 1 permanent, site-specific public artwork at Canal St. and S. Norman C. Francis Parkway in Mid-City.

New Orleans is a city defined by water. The history, culture, and landscape shape our relationship to how we engage with and are surrounded by waterways. Funded by the City of New Orleans, *Water Connects Us* invites artists to explore and celebrate this connection through a new public artwork honoring the people, land, and stories shaped by water across generations. The permanent artwork will be sited on the neutral ground at Canal Street and S. Norman C. Francis Parkway in Mid-City. A historically significant and highly visible intersection, on the former location of a Confederate monument to Jefferson Davis. The selected artist(s) will develop sculptural artwork that reflects the focus of this call, neighborhood's identity, and foster a sense of belonging, visibility, and dialogue in the public realm.

All interested artists are invited to apply for this public art commission. Priority will be given to local artists who live in Orleans Parish or the Greater New Orleans metro area. We also strongly encourage applications from artists who represent the diversity of New Orleans and the local community. **Please note that artists who currently have an active Percent for Art contract with Arts New Orleans will not be considered for this opportunity.**

This opportunity will be conducted as a two-part competition. In Part 1: Request for Qualifications (RFQ), interested artists are invited to submit materials demonstrating their qualifications. From this pool, three finalists will be selected to advance. In Part 2: Request for Proposals (RFP), each selected finalist will receive a \$1,000 stipend to develop a detailed proposal for the *Water Connects Us* Public Art Commission.

Eligibility

To qualify, applicants must:

- Be 18+ and legally authorized to work in the U.S.
- Reside in Orleans Parish or the greater New Orleans metro area
- Meet all contractual obligations and adhere to the timeline provided.

To support a broad range of artists over time, applicants are not eligible to apply if they are currently under contract for another Percent for Art project. However, artists with an active contract dated and signed prior to December 2023 remain eligible to apply for this opportunity.

All interested artists are invited to apply to this public art commission. Arts New Orleans is committed to centering racial equity in the selection of artists and artworks. Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other artists of color are highly encouraged to apply.

Information Sessions

Two information sessions will be held while the RFQ is live. These information sessions are to learn more about the project and the application process. There will be time for Q&A at the end.

Session #1: Tuesday, August 11th, 2026 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm, Zoom

Register to receive the Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/cml79rE6R9OMgVISFIemMA>

Session #2: Thursday, August 20th, 4:00-5:00pm, Arts New Orleans Office at 1474 N. Broad Street

Questions outside these sessions? Contact paris cian: paris@artsneworleans.org by Monday, August 24 at 4pm.

About Arts New Orleans

The mission of [Arts New Orleans](#) is to improve the quality of life in New Orleans by supporting, activating, and investing in our city's greatest natural resource: our artists, cultural producers, and creative community. Arts New Orleans is a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded in 1975, designated by the Mayor and City Council as the city's official community arts agency.

Building on the abundant cultural wealth and creativity of our community, Arts New Orleans envisions a New Orleans in which arts and culture play a pivotal role in all areas of policy, planning, and placemaking. We believe arts and artists should be central to all community and economic development efforts, from public health to public safety, education, and infrastructure.

Arts New Orleans is the largest producer of public art in New Orleans. We offer artist and youth training programs, produce cultural events, and champion new opportunities for artists to develop their crafts. As a local/regional Arts Council, we advocate for expanded arts investment and serve as an intermediary grant-maker.

About Percent for Art

Begun in 1986, the [Percent for Art program](#) is the City of New Orleans' public art collection, managed by Arts New Orleans. Percent for Art places original works by local artists throughout city-operated public spaces, everywhere from branch libraries to City Hall to recreational centers to neutral grounds. There are currently more than 400 Percent for Art artworks enlivening our city's landscape, representing the creativity and strength of the artists who make New Orleans unlike any other city in the world.

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Background

Launched in Summer 2026, the *Water Connects Us* Project is a two-year creative placemaking initiative led by Arts New Orleans. Supported by the City of New Orleans Percent for Art funds, the project engages residents, local businesses, community and cultural organizations to envision the neutral

ground area of Norman C. Francis and Canal St. in Mid-City as a thriving public space and cultural corridor.

The project framework, community vision, and recommendations from these efforts will guide the design and placement of permanent public artwork(s), creating works that are historically grounded, culturally resonant, and shaped through meaningful participation.

Project Scope

Arts New Orleans invites artists to submit qualifications for the commission of one permanent (20+ years), site-specific public artwork(s) along the neutral ground of Norman C. Francis and Canal St. in Mid-City.

The project seeks bold, durable, and context-responsive sculptural work that engages the public, encourages gathering and interaction, and reflects New Orleans relationship to water. Artists selected through this RFQ will prepare design proposals that build upon the vision and themes of this call and translate into permanent artwork(s).

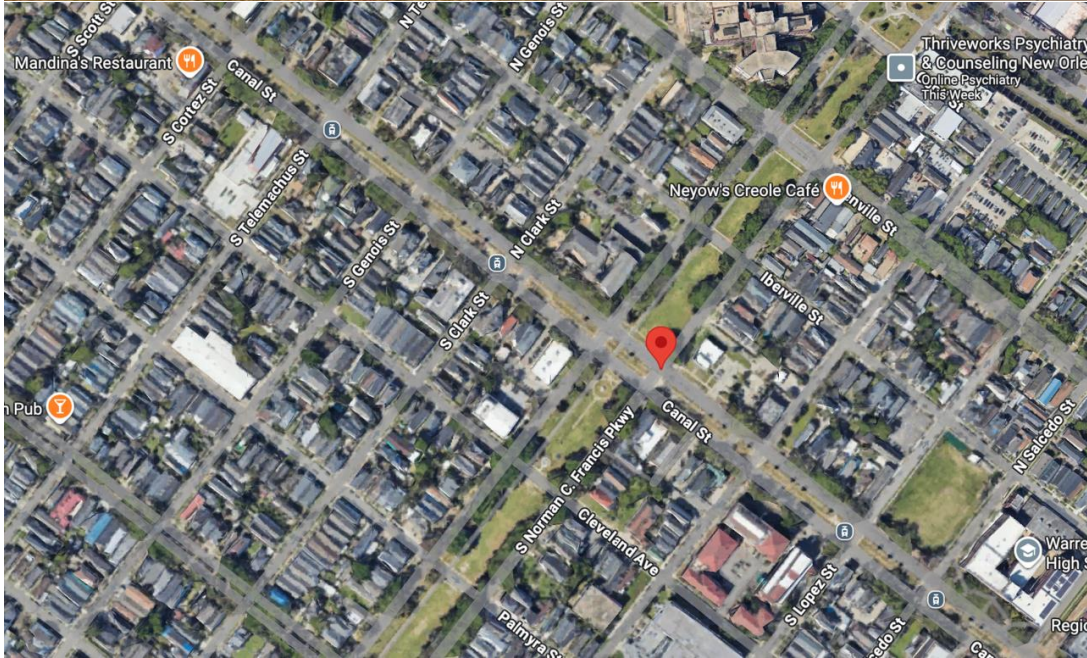
This commission is for permanent public artwork(s) with a lifespan of 20+ years. Artists must propose materials, fabrication, and installation methods suitable for New Orleans' climate and changing weather patterns. For example, including heat, humidity, heavy rainfall, flooding, and storms. Artworks must be durable, structurally sound, long-lasting, and low maintenance. Materials and maintenance plans will be reviewed and approved by Arts New Orleans as part of the design proposal.

Artwork Parameters

One permanent 3-D public artwork(s) that honors the element, landscape, history of New Orleans relationship to water. Artists will be asked to incorporate the community's values, themes, and goals identified by residents and community stakeholders.

Site Details

All Percent for Art-funded projects require artwork to be permanently installed in public spaces. The opportunity for public art is limited to the neutral ground on Norman C. Francis and Canal St. in Mid-City. The site currently has a plinth; however a new foundation may be needed.



Artist Responsibilities

- Conduct site visits
- Attend Community Meet & Greet Public Meeting
- Conduct research as necessary to understand the site and the project. The community's history and culture, and other considerations, are necessary to inform the artistic approach.
- Design process: Work with Arts New Orleans and the selection committee for design feedback and make revisions as needed, create and prepare final design(s) for approval
- Compile and manage the artist fee budget
- Create an approved material list, project budget, and work plan
- Work with the Arts New Orleans project management team on the completion of the project

- Identify and secure the services of other professionals as necessary to fulfill the artist's responsibilities in the production of artwork
- Fulfill artist responsibilities within the contracted budget and schedule
- Secure insurance necessary for the completion of the project
- Provide Arts New Orleans with a maintenance manual prior to project closeout

Arts New Orleans Responsibilities

- Lead project management: Draft and execute artist and project partner contractual agreements, set meeting schedules, process invoices
- Obtain necessary permits and approvals from the City of New Orleans or other required parties
- Lead marketing and public engagement for the project
- Coordinate documentation
- Keep project records

Project Schedule

Part 1 – Request for Qualifications (RFQ)	DATES
RFQ Released	Thursday, July 30 th 2026
RFQ Information Session / Q&A (optional)	Tuesday, August 11 th , 2026 – 12:00pm-1:00pm via zoom
RFQ Information Session / Q&A (optional)	Thursday, August 20 th 4:00pm-5:00pm, Arts New Orleans Office at 1474 N. Broad Street
Deadline for RFQ Submission	Wednesday, September 6 th , 2026, at 11:59 PM CST
Arts New Orleans Reviews Applications	September 9 th -September 23 rd
Selection Committee Reviews Applications	September 23-October 14 th
Artist Notification (3 finalists)	Monday, October 19 th 2026
Part 2: Request for Proposals (RFP)	DATES
Pre-Proposal Meeting & Site Visit	Monday, November 2 nd 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Artist Community Engagement #1	TBD
Artist Community Engagement #2	TBD
Proposal Deadline	Monday, January 4 th
Arts New Orleans Reviews Proposals	Wednesday, January 6 th 2027- January 8 th 2027
Selection Committee Reviews Proposals	Monday, January 11 th -January 15 th
Selection Day Presentations	January 18 th , 2027
Winning Artist Notification	January 25 th , 2027
Design Feasibility Review	January 25-March 25 th 2027
Contract Execution	Week of February 1 st
Fabrication	March 2027-August 2027

Installation	Fall 2027
Unveiling	Fall/Winter 2027

Arts New Orleans reserves the right to change the project schedule.

Project Budget & Contract Terms

The selected artists will be awarded a total of **\$170,000.00** for the artwork(s) commission. This amount is inclusive of all costs associated with the artwork, including, but not limited to:

- Artist design fee and labor
- Fabrication and production costs
- Materials and equipment
- Insurance (including general liability, workers' compensation)
- Stamped engineer drawings
- Site preparation and installation costs
- Transportation, delivery, and storage of artwork
- Project-related travel
- Community engagement workshop-related supplies
- Additional project management and coordination
- Contingency to cover unforeseen expenses

Arts New Orleans will cover project expenses related to:

- City of New Orleans permit fees
- Project documentation (photo & video)
- Community engagement
- Unveiling event
- Marketing
- Artwork(s) plaque
- Long-term maintenance

Artist Contract

The selected artist/artist team will be in a contractual agreement with Arts New Orleans. An example of the Percent for Art Standard Agreement can be found [here](#).

Proof of Insurance

Prior to performing any works or services with Arts New Orleans, the selected artist/artist team will be required to hold (at the artist's expense) and show proof of insurance. Insurance requirements can be found [here](#).

ARTIST SELECTION PROCESS

This opportunity will be conducted as a two-part competition. In Part 1: Request for Qualifications (RFQ), interested artists are invited to submit materials via Submittable demonstrating their qualifications (examples of previous work, resume, statement of interest, etc.). From this pool, three finalists will be selected to advance to Part 2: Request for Proposals (RFP). Each selected finalist will receive a \$1,000 stipend to develop a detailed proposal for the *Water Connects Us Project*.

Part 1: Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

The application period will remain open from July 30th, 2026, through September 6th, 2026 at 11:59pm. RFQ submissions will be reviewed by Arts New Orleans, Civic Studio, and a selection committee that includes community representatives, art professionals, city officials, and members of the Percent for Art Committee.

The selection committee will review all RFQ applications using the established selection criteria. Based on this evaluation, the committee will select three finalists to advance to Part 2: Request for Proposals (RFP).

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- 1. Artistic Excellence:** Quality of past work, creativity, and uniqueness of the applicant's concept and design, strength of artistic voice and concept development, visual impact, and craftsmanship.
- 2. Relevant Experience:** Experience with public art or large-scale work, working in similar environments, collaboration with partners, stakeholders, and communities.
- 3. Approach to Community Engagement:** Demonstrated ability to engage meaningfully with community stakeholders and integrate public input into the artist process.
- 4. Project Understanding & Approach:** Demonstrated understanding of the project goals, site, and theme, and the strength and thoughtfulness of the artist's proposed approach to engaging with them.
- 5. Overall Project Fit:** Overall alignment of the artist's practice, experience, and perspective with the project's goals, context, and community.

All RFQ applicants will be notified by Monday, October 19th, of the committee's decision, and finalists will receive instructions for submitting detailed proposals, including paperwork to issue the \$1,000 stipend provided to develop their proposals.

Part 2: Request for Proposals (RFP)

The three finalists will be invited to create and present a proposal for the *Water Connects Us Public Art Opportunity*. Each finalist will receive a \$1,000 stipend to support the development of a proposal, which may include written descriptions, images, models, renderings or other visual materials, and must show an understanding of how their artistic practice aligns with the goals of the commission and the core values and placemaking principles of the project. These proposals must be submitted by the deadline indicated in the timeline below. The selection committee will review the three finalist proposals and recommend one winning artist or artist team.

Pre-Proposal meeting & Site Visit

Monday, November 2nd 10am- 12pm in person

After three finalists are selected, a mandatory Pre-Proposal Meeting and Site Visit will be held to give finalists detailed information on the project, the site, and the requirements for submitting a proposal.

Artist Community Engagement #1 TBD

Artist Community Engagement #2 TBD

Proposal Development

Finalists will have the opportunity to receive project development guidance and technical support from Arts New Orleans public art consultant in the areas materials selection, budgeting, fabrication feasibility

Submission of Proposals

Monday, January 4th 2027 proposal submission accepted only through Submittable

The finalist will submit original proposals that include visual renderings and drawings of the proposed artwork, along with written narratives that describe the concept, material choices, community engagement, schedule, budget, and maintenance plan.

Committee Selection

Week of January 18th, in-person, time to be determined

The three finalist will give a presentation about their proposal to the Selection Committee and answer any questions about their designs.

Winning Artist Notification (email)

Monday, January 25th, 2027

Design Feasibility Review / Letter of Understanding

January 25th-March 25th 2027

The winning proposal will go through a formal structural engineer evaluation prior to commissioning the selected artist for final fabrication and installation. This ensures the selected proposal is structurally sound, code-compliant, and feasible based on the proposed design, scale, materials, and budget. Artist will be asked to sign a Letter of Understanding in order to undergo the Design Feasibility Review.

Contract Execution

March 2027

Once the winning artist receives approval from the Design Feasibility Review, the artist will enter into a Standard Public Art Agreement with Arts New Orleans for the fabrication and installation of the artwork. Once a contract with Arts New Orleans is in place, the artist may begin receiving payment and start fabrication of the artwork.

APPLICATION

Artists interested in applying will be asked to complete the application through [Arts New Orleans' online Submittable system](#). A Submittable account setup is required to apply. Artists should prepare the following information and materials prior to submitting them online.

1. **Artist/Studio Name**
2. **Email**
3. **Phone Number**
4. **Address** (if your address is outside Orleans Parish, please provide a short statement explaining your connection to New Orleans and why you would like to be considered for this project)

5. **Website** (if applicable)
6. **Social Media Handles** (if applicable)
7. **Personal Identification:** Which category/categories best describe your race/ethnicity? Check all that apply or self-describe (Optional)
8. **Availability:** Are you available for the duration of the outlined project schedule? Yes or no
9. **Artist/Studio Statement:** A short-written response that addresses (3000-character max):
 - a. Your artistic practice
 - b. Relevant experience with community-engaged projects
 - c. What motivates you / interests you most about this project?
 - d. Your community/stakeholder engagement approach during the design phase of the project
 - e. Your general availability during the project period. Please indicate other professional obligations and any other constraints on your availability
10. **Resume/CV:** Acceptable file types: .pdf, .doc, .docx. (up to 2 pages)
Please label your file: "**First Name_Last Name_Resume**" or "**Studio Name_Resume**"
11. **Work Samples:** Submit a minimum of 5 and up to 10 photos of past completed work that you consider relevant to this project. Acceptable file types: .jpg, .png, .mov, .mp4 and must be no more than 300dpi
Label each file: "**ArtistLastName_WorkSampleName**" or "**StudioName_WorkSampleName**"
12. **Work Sample Description List:** For each work sample submitted, list the following (1 page max).
Acceptable file types: .pdf, .doc, .docx.
Artwork title, Artist name
Location, Date of completion, Budget
Medium, Dimensions
Brief description
Label your file: "**ArtistLastName_WorkSample DescriptionList**"
or "**StudioName_WorkSampleDescriptionList**"
13. [APPLY HERE](#)

Proposals will only be accepted using Arts New Orleans' online Submittable system. If you need assistance, please make sure to attend an information session or reach out with any questions (paris@artsneworleans.org)