



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Public Art Project: Denver Performing Arts Complex

Budget: Approximately \$900,000 USD

Eligibility: Artists or Artist Teams residing in the United States and internationally

DEADLINE: Monday, April 13, 11:59 PM MST

Introduction

Denver Public Art seeks to commission an artist or artist team to create original public artwork for the Denver Performing Arts Complex at 1400 Curtis Street, Denver, CO. The commission will activate the glass-enclosed galleria, an iconic space designed in 1977 by architects George Hoover and Karl Berg of Muchow Associates and inspired by Milan's 19th-century Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II.

The galleria's glass roof rises approximately 80 feet (24 meters) and extends nearly 1,000 feet (308 meters). The artwork must engage the space both day and night, with sculptural elements and lighting active throughout the galleria; any light-based elements must include multiple activation phases—such as programmed sequences, timed transitions, or shifting states—to create an evolving experience over time. The selection panel hopes the artwork will celebrate the spirit of Denver's performing arts and invites artists to create something unexpected and dynamic for the complex's guests and visitors. **The selected artist or team must complete and install the artwork by the end of 2027.**

Denver Public Art is hosting a virtual pre-application meeting for interested applicants on March 26 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will cover the project background and goals, as well as the application process for this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). Attendees will also receive information on CallForEntry.org, where artists may apply. This event will be hosted on TEAMS. Interested applicants are asked to register to learn how to join the event before it begins. If you cannot attend, a recording will be available on the [Denver Arts & Venues Vimeo channel](#).

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land Denver's Public Art Collection occupies -- land where we stand, live, work, and learn -- is the traditional territory of the Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Peoples. We also recognize the 48 contemporary tribal nations that are historically tied to the lands that make up Colorado. Our nation was founded upon and continues to enact exclusions and erasures of Indigenous Peoples. May this acknowledgement demonstrate a commitment to dismantling ongoing legacies of oppression and inequities as we intentionally honor and celebrate the Indigenous communities in our city and express our gratitude for their ongoing and significant contributions. Let's not forget that this land was theirs long before we made it ours.

Denver Performing Arts Complex

The Denver Performing Arts Complex, or "Arts Complex," is one of the largest performing arts centers in the United States and ranks among the top three nationwide by seat capacity, patronage, and ticket

sales, alongside Lincoln Center (New York City) and the Kennedy Center (Washington, DC). Spanning four blocks and approximately 12 acres, it includes ten performance venues with more than 10,000 seats, along with public open spaces.

The campus is home to Colorado Ballet, Colorado Symphony, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and Opera Colorado, and also hosts a wide range of touring and local programming, including Broadway, opera, dance, comedy, concerts, festivals, conferences, film, and public events. Major venues include the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, the Buell Theatre, the Boettcher Concert Hall, the Helen Bonfils Theatre Complex, the Garner Galleria Theatre, and the Studio Loft. Denver Arts & Venues owns and operates the Ellie Caulkins Opera House, Buell Theatre, Boettcher Concert Hall, and Studio Loft, while the Denver Center for the Performing Arts operates the Helen Bonfils Theatre Complex and Garner Galleria Theatre.

Beyond performance spaces, the campus includes rehearsal and event spaces, an art gallery, restaurants, a parking garage, and offices, and is anchored by Sculpture Park, home to Jonathan Borofsky's iconic *Dancers*.

History of Denver Performing Arts Complex

Conceived by Donald Seawell, the Denver Performing Arts Complex was built around the historic Municipal Auditorium (1908), with the first new venues opening in 1978. Early attention focused on its landmark architecture, including the 80-foot glass galleria, the nation's first in-the-round concert hall, and the Bonfils Theatre Complex's glass façade. Since the 1970s, the complex has undergone multiple renovations and has hosted major productions, including *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Lion King*, *The Laramie Project*, *Black Elk Speaks*, *Frozen*, *The Book of Mormon*, and *Hamilton*, reinforcing its role as a leading cultural hub for Denver, Colorado, and the Rocky Mountain region.

Surrounding Area

The Arts Complex is in Downtown Denver in the Central Business District. Near the complex are major landmarks such as the Auraria Campus – which includes the University of Colorado Denver (CU Denver), Community College of Denver (CCD), and Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) — as well as the Colorado Convention Center, 16th Street, Denver Union Station, and Civic Center Park. The new artwork will be visible from 14th Street, a major thoroughfare that connects the Arts Complex and Convention Center to Civic Center Park and the Denver Art Museum.

Goals and Site

The selection panel seeks suspended sculptural artworks that are active both day and night and that span and activate the steel-and-glass-enclosed Galleria at the Denver Performing Arts Complex. The artwork should celebrate Denver's performing arts and introduce an unexpected presence that is dynamic and compelling both day and night.

- **Welcome and inclusion:** The artwork should feel inviting and accessible to a broad range of audiences and communities.

- **Enhance the Arts Complex experience:** The work should enrich the arrival, circulation, and gathering experience for both ticketed patrons and daily users, extending the energy of performances into shared public space through light, motion, and/or atmosphere.
- **Strong day and night presence:** The artwork should read as a sculptural work in daylight and shift after dark through illumination, remaining legible and engaging throughout the day and evening.
- **Rooted in Denver:** Artists are encouraged to respond to Denver’s character and the downtown arts ecosystem, considering how the Arts Complex connects to the city’s cultural life and the surrounding public realm.
- **Completion deadline:** The artwork must be fully installed and operational by the end of 2027.

Media & Materials

The selection panel is open to artwork in **all media and materials suitable for outdoor display**. Durability and ease of maintenance are important for the site.

Maintenance & Durability

This artwork will become a permanent addition to the Denver Public Art collection. All applicants must consider the long-term conservation and maintenance of public art, given time and budget constraints. These projects are in the public realm and will be exposed to physical stresses and subject to vandalism. Public art projects should be fabricated of highly durable, low-maintenance materials. Finalists are encouraged to consult with a professional conservator before submitting a final proposal. Artist proposals that are awarded contracts will be reviewed by the City of Denver's Public Art Committee to ensure compliance with city standards for maintenance and durability, as well as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. All finalists are expected to stay on budget and to complete work in an approved timeframe.

Who May Apply

This project is open to artists residing in the United States and internationally. Denver Arts & Venues is committed to building a public art collection that represents a broad diversity of artists and encourages applicants from historically marginalized and underrepresented communities, including artists who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latino/x, People of Color (BILPOC), people with disabilities, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersexual, asexual, Two-Spirit+ (LGBTQIA2S+) communities. Denver Arts & Venues also encourages applicants at various stages in their careers and applicants to practice a variety of artistic disciplines.

Can a team apply?

Applicants may apply as a single artist or a multi-person collaborative group. If applying as a team, please submit one résumé for the team, with no more than one page per team member.

Applying for these opportunities

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

1. Six digital images of past work, which can include video.
2. Résumé

3. Statement of interest no longer than 2,000 characters without spaces.

From these applications, the selection panel will choose three to five finalists who will create site-specific proposals and be interviewed in person or virtually. Artists will be paid an honorarium for this work. Artists/teams selected as finalists will be required to submit a Diversity & Inclusiveness Form with their proposals for consideration; the form will be provided upon notification. As directed by Executive Order 101, this form must be submitted for all city solicitations of proposals. Denver Public Art staff can guide you in filling out this form.

Based on the interview and proposal, an artist or artist team will be selected for this commission. The selected artist or artist team will work with the Denver Public Art Program and Denver Arts & Venues staff to finalize their installation designs.

Diversity and Inclusiveness

Denver Executive Order No. 101 promotes strategies between the City and private industry to advance diversity and inclusiveness as part of economic development and to expand participation in City contracting and procurement opportunities. The order requires the City to collect information about contractors' and consultants' diversity and inclusiveness practices and, when legally permitted, encourages City agencies to consider those policies in solicitation and selection criteria.

For this purpose, diversity and inclusiveness means valuing and incorporating the perspectives and contributions of people from varied backgrounds, and embedding equity into organizational practices such as hiring and retention, training and advancement, and business development to ensure equal opportunity to participate, contribute, and succeed.

Diversity includes differences such as race, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, and historically underutilized or disadvantaged status, as well as identities and experiences including religion, marital status, socio-economic status, education, parental status, geographic background, language ability, lifestyle, and veteran status.

Budget

The budget for this commission is \$900,000 USD, which will be allocated to the artist/team selected. This contract amount is 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 (including Colorado Workers Compensation), 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. For all work on city property, prevailing wage requirements will apply.

Timeline

(Except for the online application deadline, the timeline is subject to adjustments)

Monday, April 13, 11:59 PM MST

Deadline for entry (via CaFÉ™ system)

May 2026
July 2026

Finalist Selection
Artist Selection and Notification

Project Selection Panel

According to Denver's Public Art policy, the project selection panel plays an active role in acquiring public art for the City and County of Denver. The Denver Performing Arts Complex selection panel comprises 13 voting members and additional non-voting advisors. The selection panel is responsible for reviewing the site, establishing criteria for a request for qualifications, reviewing applications, selecting and interviewing finalists, and finally selecting an artist or artist team for the commission.

Selection Process

1. Three to five artists/artist teams will be selected as finalists. Those selected will receive more specific information regarding the sites and have the opportunity to meet with community members from the selection panel, Denver Public Art, and Arts Complex staff. The finalists will receive an honorarium to prepare and present a proposal, either in person or virtually.
2. The selection panel will review the proposals, interview the finalists, and recommend an artist/artist team for the commission.
3. The final recommendation of the selection panel will be presented to the Public Art Committee, the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs, and the Director of Arts & Venues for final approval.

*All decisions of the City and County of Denver are final.

Materials to be Submitted

Please read this section carefully. Incomplete applications will NOT be considered. The applicant's name must appear on all materials submitted.

All materials must be submitted online, via the CaFÉ™ website (www.CallForEntry.org). There is no application fee to apply or to use the CaFÉ™ online application system.

Digital Images—To be considered for this project, the applicant must electronically submit six digital images of **previously completed** artworks through the online CaFÉ™ system. Artists who wish to submit kinetic, sound or media works must submit a complete CaFÉ™ application and will have the opportunity to upload one video file.

IMPORTANT: if submitting audio or video files, do not use them as your very first image. They must be submitted last in your image sequence.

Instructions for formatting images to CaFÉ™ specifications are available at <https://www.callforenry.org/uploading-images-audio-and-video-files/>. Assistance in using the CaFÉ™ system is available here: <https://www.callforenry.org/artist-help-cafe/>.

If an artist does not have access to a computer, s/he/they may call (720) 515-5768 to make arrangements to use a computer at Denver Arts & Venues.

To request this RFQ in an alternate format (such as Braille, large print, or accessible electronic format) please contact DisabilityAccess@denvergov.org.

Statement of Interest—Please submit a statement (2,000 characters maximum) outlining the following:

- Why the Denver Performing Arts Complex public art project is of special interest to you.
- Your relationship to or interest in the City of Denver, the Denver Performing Arts Complex, and the downtown area.
- Your interest in themes of amplifying the performing arts, inclusivity, and accessibility to all audiences.
- Your design approach and experience working on public art projects.
- Please also include information on your experience working with diverse communities and stakeholders.

Résumé—Submit a one to two-page current résumé via CaFÉ™ that highlights your professional accomplishments as an artist. Please name your résumé file with your last *name*. *First initial* (i.e., *Smith.J.pdf*). Résumés longer than two pages will not be downloaded. If applying as a team, please submit one résumé with no more than one page per team member.

Survey – Applicants will also be required to complete a short demographic survey as part of the CaFÉ™ application.

References – Applicants selected as finalists must provide three professional references.

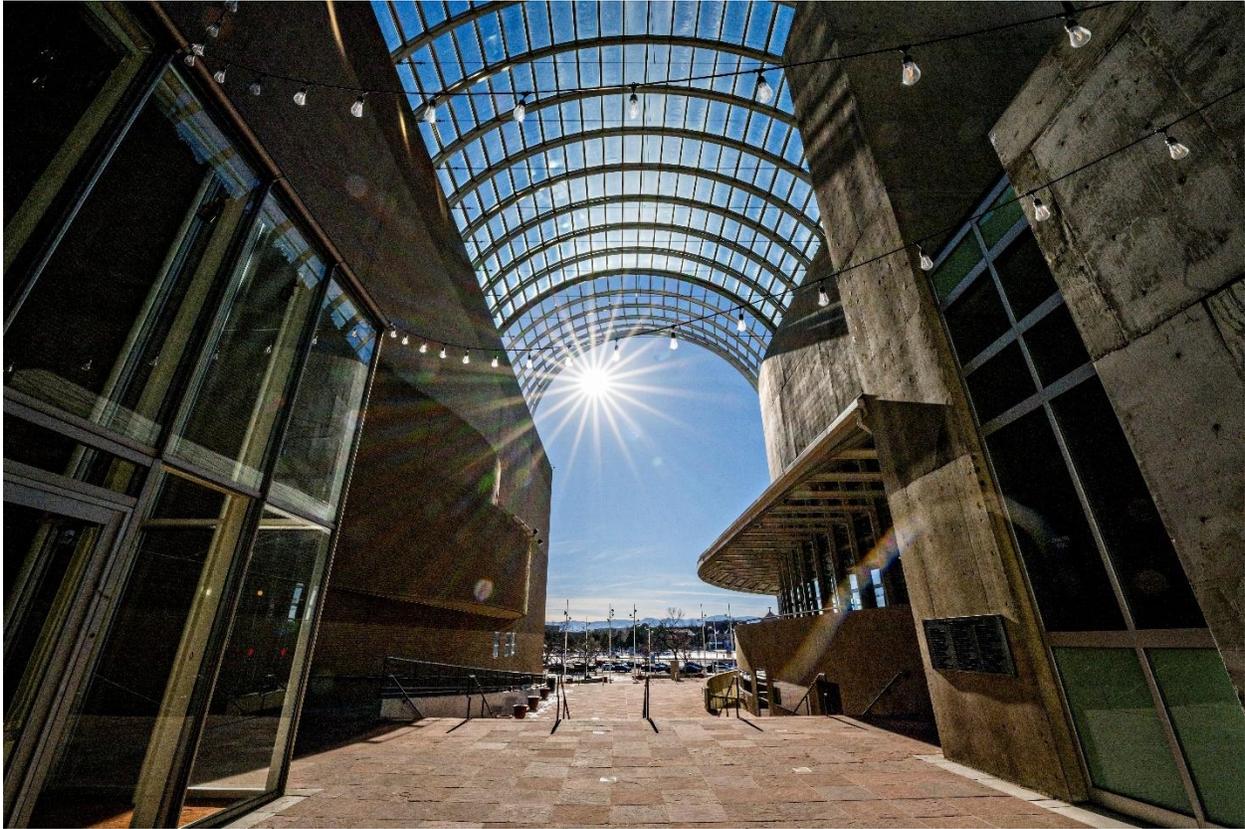
Please direct all questions about the project to:

Rudi Cerri, Public Art Manager – rudi.cerri@denvergov.org

Figure 1. Arts Complex



Figure 2. Arts Complex



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Denver Arts & Venues complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, gender, or language. It is your right to request oral or written language assistance services in your primary language, sign language interpretation, real-time captioning via CART, or disability-related accommodations if needed. Please contact Denver Arts & Venues at DAVLanguageAccess@denvergov.org, and these services will be provided to you free of charge.