



Request for Proposals

Signature Project: Community

RFP issued: June 10, 2024

Deadline for initial submissions: July 22, 2024

Interviews with select artists: July 29-August 2, 2024

Project proposals submitted by select artists: August 26, 2024

Final Notification: September 6, 2024

Project Timeline: September 6, 2024 to June 30, 2025

For questions or concerns, please contact:

Paige Phillips

Porch Light Curator / Project Manager

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Introduction

The Porch Light Department at Mural Arts Philadelphia is seeking an artist or artist collective to lead a 9-month art project that builds **community** between individuals with an intellectual disability and/or who are on the autism spectrum disorder. We are looking for projects that have strong programmatic components that culminate in a permanent public artwork. This project is in collaboration with the City of Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS), and their ID department focuses on "offering quality support and services so individuals will have choices in their lives, meaningful relationships, and the opportunity to participate in their community as valued citizens."

The work will unfold within a series of "signature" projects inspired by DBHIDS's [TEC Comprehensive Plan](#). TEC stands for addressing **trauma**, achieving **equity**, and engaging **community**. Currently, there is an active project at Mural Arts focused on equity, and a project that addressed trauma was already completed. DBHIDS' goal to engage communities prioritizes "shift(ing) services to become increasingly community-based which will ensure long-term and sustained impacts of programs." Proposals for this Employment for All themed project of connecting talent to opportunities will be considered favorably.

Background

The Mural Arts Porch Light program is a joint collaboration with the City of Philadelphia's DBHIDS. It focuses on achieving universal health and wellness among Philadelphians, especially those dealing with mental health issues or trauma. We do this by providing opportunities to contribute to meaningful works of public art.

Porch Light projects are driven by issues that have tangible effects on local communities, such as mental health, substance use, spirituality, housing insecurity, trauma, immigration, war, and neighborhood safety. The targeted outcomes of any Porch Light project include:

- Improvements to the physical environment
- New opportunities for social connections
- Positive changes within a community, such as enhanced unity and empathy among neighbors

[Our Land, Our Movement](#), led by Marguerite Hemmings, was the "trauma signature project," which focused on healing our bodies and lands. This expansive series engaged with communities living in West Philly, Olney and Chinatown who felt disconnected/unsafe/restricted from their bodies and neighborhoods. Community members participated in free workshops by urban

farmers and artist organizers, witnessed performances by teens in public spaces, and attended a dedication revealing new public artwork. We are in the midst of executing *A Better World is Possible*, the “equity signature project,” which addresses gun violence across Philadelphia. Artists Jacob C. Hammes and Shane Claiborne of RAWtools led gun buyback programs every Saturday during April, where folks could drop off their firearms in exchange for grocery gift certificates. All of the firearms were decommissioned, and will be incorporated into a sculpture/gathering spot in a park. The site will act as a place for mourning, contemplation, and remembrance.

Scope of Work, Budget and Schedule

Scope:

The project should include significant community engagement with individuals who have an intellectual disability or are on the autism spectrum disorder, and it must conclude with a permanent, public art component. The artist or collective selected for the project will work in tandem with staff from Mural Arts and support from DBHIDS to create a community engagement plan, which can include programmatic elements such as workshops, community dialogues, and participatory events (these are only examples, and artists should not feel discouraged to envision unique engagement opportunities). Together, we will create a clear framework with benchmarks to ensure the project is completed within the required timeline. They will then be tasked with creating a design for a public art piece that is informed by the engagement. Before fabrication begins, the artist or collective will go through a rigorous design approval that includes feedback from the broader public, DBHIDS and Mural Arts. Staff from Mural Arts will support logistical aspects of the project, such as securing site authorizations, purchasing materials, marketing, and documentation. The artist or collective will be responsible for developing and executing the engagement and artistic components of the project, but may rely on contractors and third-party vendors to support fabrication and pedagogical components that would benefit from a specialist working in another field.

Schedule:

The artist or collective will be selected during September 2024. They will then spend the following three to four months developing the project and setting achievable milestones to support proper execution of engagement and fabrication. The final artwork must be completed no later than June 30, 2025.

Artist Fee and Budget:

The total project budget is \$80,000. \$15,000 will be reserved as a stipend for the lead artist/s. The artist or collective will work with staff from Mural Arts to allocate the rest of the funding, some of which may go to collaborative artists, assistant artists or third-party vendors to help fabricate the final artwork. In addition, Mural Arts provides administrative support in key areas such as project management, communications, and photographic documentation.

Artist Selection Process

Eligibility / Qualification and Review Criteria

We are looking for artists that have experience with community engagement and public art, or artists with a strong exhibition and teaching background, or other relevant experience, who demonstrate a deep interest and potential for completing a participatory/community-driven public art project. While we are interested in applicants working in all mediums, we may prioritize proposals that culminate as a mural, as the organization is best set up to execute this type of work. Decisions will be based on whether or not we believe Mural Arts has the capacity to successfully support a project and the final artworks' potential long-term impact on a space and community. We are willing to provide support and guidance to artists who have never created a mural before but have the desire to do so. We may also give preference to artists and/or collectives who identify as being on the spectrum or have an intellectual disability.

Process

A short list of candidates will be invited to an interview based on their application and prior work samples. DBHIDS and Mural Arts staff will be involved in the initial selection. Interviews will take place between July 29-August 2, and will be held virtually. Three artists will then be selected to flesh out a tentative project proposal. Artists will be given three weeks to complete a plan and be paid \$500. Mural Arts may ask for a second interview if questions arise after looking over the submitted materials. Artists not selected for the project will retain full ownership over their ideas. Applicants will be notified of a final decision by September 6, 2024.

How to Apply

Preliminary Consultation

Artists who are interested in submitting their qualifications are encouraged to contact Mural Arts with any questions about the project, its scope and requirements, or how to complete an application. Please contact Paige Phillips at paige.phillips@muralarts.org. Periodically, questions and answers of general interest will be posted to the Mural Arts website where this RFP is posted (<https://www.muralarts.org/for-artists/artist-opportunities/>).

Paige Phillips will hold an open meeting on July 10, 2024 from 2PM-3PM to answer any questions and provide feedback to applicants. This meeting will be held virtually, via Zoom. To join, please use the below link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82384334544?pwd=1VLkSGMymCwRYAj1tLrB1WfgJvTp4C.1>

Submission Instructions & Requirements

Artists interested in applying for this opportunity should submit applications [through this link](#) by July 22, 2024. Late submissions will not be considered.

Application Checklist:

1. **Statement of Interest** (up to one page) that addresses:
 - Relevant experience with public art projects and community engagement, or experience and interests that demonstrate an ability to complete such work.
 - Why are you interested in this project specifically, highlighting any prior work or research with individuals with an intellectual disability or are on the autism spectrum disorder that makes you a good candidate to lead a project focused on building community.

Artists may substitute written statements with an audio recording or video of up to five minutes.

2. **Short biography** of the artist or collective
3. **Work Samples** of one of the following options:
 - a. Twenty images of work samples that are relevant to this project, which may include detail shots. *Please do not submit samples of work as an assistant artist.*
 - b. Links to two video or sound samples that are relevant to this project. We will watch/listen for up to five minutes total. Please indicate cue points and provide passwords if necessary.
 - c. A combination of images and videos: ten images and one video with a cue point. We will watch up to 2.5 minutes of the video.

Digital images must be JPEG files and must be no more than 300dpi and no larger than 1024 x 768 pixels resolution.

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. Or, work samples may be combined into a single PDF with the artist's name.

4. A corresponding **work sample list**, including the following information:

Image name, Artist's name

Title of artwork, Location, Date of Completion

Medium and Dimensions/Duration

Brief description

5. Artists selected for an interview will be asked to provide **two references** who can speak to their creative practices.

Background:

Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For over 30 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative process, rooted in the traditions of mural-making, to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives.

The **City of Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services** seeks to educate, strengthen, and serve individuals and communities across Philadelphia, so that all Philadelphians can thrive. The vision of DBHIDS is of a Philadelphia where every individual can achieve health, well-being, and self-determination.

The **Porch Light program**, a joint collaboration with the City of Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, focuses on achieving universal health and wellness among Philadelphians, especially those dealing with mental health issues or trauma.