



## **Request for Qualifications**

**Issue Date: September 10, 2021**

**Durham County Artists**

**Budget: \$90,000 (Mosaic/Surface Art, Sculpture, and Lighting)**

**Deadline for Applications: October 1, 2021 (11:59 PM)**

### **Project Opportunity:**

## **The Durham Convention and Arts Complex\*: Ground Plane/Surface Art, Sculptural Elements, Lighting Installations for the Durham Convention Center/Carolina Theatre Plaza**

*\*"DCAC" - Durham Convention Center, Carolina Theater, The Armory and the Durham Arts Council*

The DCAC is seeking qualifications from artists or artist teams to transform the Durham Convention Center/Carolina Theatre Plaza through creative placemaking elements. *This is a Request for Qualifications **only**. Finalists selected from RFQ will be asked to prepare and present proposals. Site plans, maps more details will be provided to assist finalists in proposal preparation.*

Artists/Artist Team will be asked to design a system of art elements that visually connect the four buildings into a cohesive group so that it can be used and marketed as the Durham Convention and Arts Complex. The DCAC wants the art elements to include sculptural elements, mosaics and/or other surface art, and strategic light installations.

### **Total Project Budget: \$90,000:**

The total budget will be \$90,000 for the comprehensive project. *The DCAC would like to recommend that a targeted team of multidisciplinary artists collaborate to produce the final work. A primary artist can assemble a team to bring the expertise and experience to execute all art elements in the scope of work.* The DCAC envisions the artist team to address the ground plane/mosaic/surface artwork, the sculptural elements and strategic lighting installations. This budget includes all costs involved in the design phase, engineering, fabrication, insurance, storage, transportation, installation, as well as any other costs incurred by the artist(s). The DCAC will ensure that appropriate electrical outlets and lines are available for lighting installation.

## Project Site

**The Durham Convention Center/Carolina Theatre Plaza is a key public space identified in the SmART plan for revitalization.** Its present state includes bland concrete surfaces; poor sight lines from building to building, overgrown trees, and confusing navigation. This plaza is the key exterior space connecting the Armory, Convention Center, Carolina Theatre and Durham Arts Council.

*Convention Center/Carolina Theatre Plaza - Existing Condition*



## **Project Goals:**

The new art elements should activate and enhance the plaza at the center of the group of buildings and create a wayfinding system of sculptures, mosaics and lighting that pulls the four separate entities into an easily recognizable group for citizens and visitors alike. The art elements would need to create an artful four-way connection system from the Armory to the Convention Center, to Carolina Theatre, and to the DAC Building via sculptures, mosaics, and lighting on the plaza and approach areas.

The goals of this project are to:

- Brand the Durham Convention Center Complex corridor as a vibrant convention and arts destination, and encourage safe and informed pedestrian movement. The public art elements should create a cohesive feel for visitors who come to Durham for meetings and conventions, and enhance their ability to navigate among the four venues.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience and reflect the distinct and unique characteristics of Durham and this Center City area. Distinguish the Complex as a unique, creative convention & arts environment that will be attractive to meeting and event planners.
- Find opportunities to inform or complement the new visual branding and promotional materials design program happening in parallel (managed by Discover Durham), that will create complimentary marketing collateral and signage for the Complex.
- Activate and enhance the cultural connectivity, economic vitality and walkability in downtown Durham through engaging artwork and creative placemaking.
- Build on Downtown Durham's SmART Vision Plan and increase cultural connectivity and economic vitality in downtown Durham.

[www.smartdurham.org](http://www.smartdurham.org)

## **Project Background:**

The Durham Convention and Arts Complex is a new initiative and economic development strategy spearheaded by Discover Durham and the four facility partners - the City of Durham's Armory, Durham Convention Center, Carolina Theatre and Durham Arts Council- for the purpose of attracting larger conventions and special events that could be accommodated by the expanded combined square footage and artistic amenities that the four organizations provide. The public art enhancements outlined in this proposal will provide an exciting creative atmosphere and visual brand that will enhance the experience of all visitors to the Complex.

Durham is one of the North Carolina Arts Council's eight SmART communities, demonstrating how the arts transform downtowns and build sustainable economic development. In 2015, nationally recognized landscape architect and urban designer Mikyoung Kim created an Artscape Vision Plan as a framework for a reimagined Arts & Entertainment District in Downtown Durham. The plan includes three distinct sectors—City Center, American Tobacco District and Central Park-- along a south to north corridor from Blackwell, Corcoran to Foster St. In 2018, artist Olalekan Jeyifous created monumental art banners wrapping the Corcoran St. Parking Deck providing a vibrant and bold visual linkage from the American Tobacco District to the City Center. In 2019, Mary Carter Taub created three distinctive, ground plane crosswalk designs that built the artistic momentum and a sense of vibrancy for the three districts. More information: [www.smartdurham.org](http://www.smartdurham.org)

## **Selection Process and Time Schedule:**

Artists are invited to submit images of past work and a resume to be included in the pool of artists for initial review by the Artist Selection Committee (ASC). Artists may submit as individuals for specific elements, or as a team for the full scope of ideas.

The ASC will use the *Submittable* platform for submission process and initial ranking of artists. Three artists/artist teams will be selected to create proposals for the designated site. The artists will visit the site by October 28, 2021 and will be paid a stipend of \$1,000 to create a two- or three-dimensional model/rendering to be presented to the ASC and DCAC by December 10, 2021.

The ASC will reconvene for a presentation of the proposals by the artists. Proposals should include a brief, written explanation of the design and budget for fabrication and installation of all elements. The ASC will select the final artist's or artist team's proposal and a contract for the project will be completed by December 17, 2021.

## **Completion Schedule:**

By January 27, 2022	Community Engagement, Final Design complete
February 2022	Site Preparation, Permitting complete
February-April 2022	Artist Fabrication
May 2022*	Installation and unveiling
June 2022	Close Contract

\*Timeframe for Fabrication and Installation may be subject to change.

## **Eligibility & Submittals:**

This RFQ is a regional call to artists and is open to Durham County artists working or residing in Durham County only. Applicants must be age 18 or older, and are eligible regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, military status, sexual orientation, marital status or physical ability.

Submissions will be accepted online only at [Submittable.com](https://www.submittable.com) – Durham SmART Initiative – DCAC Project - by October 4 at 11:59 pm EST.

## **Submission materials must include:**

- **Statement of Interest:** Artists should outline their:
  - interest in this project;
  - experience working on comparable projects of size, scope and budget;
  - experience working with government agencies, arts organizations, neighborhood organizations, or other relevant organizations
- **Community Engagement:** Artists should outline their experience collaborating with community members on public art projects and any proposed methods of engaging with community stakeholders and gathering input.
- **Résumé (no more than 2 pages):** Artists should highlight their artistic background and professional accomplishments.
- **Images:** Up to ten (10) visual images of related art and design projects named and numbered to match an annotated image list; and
- **References:** Three (3) current references with current contact information, with relationship to the artist noted.

**Selection Criteria:** Artists will be selected based on the following criteria, as evidenced in application materials:

- Artistic accomplishment as demonstrated by images of previously completed artwork.
- Demonstrated ability to create artwork that reflects the distinctive characteristics of the place and community.
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate with community stakeholders.
- Demonstrated ability to complete projects on time and within budget.

**Scope of Work:** The services and obligations that will be required from the Artist/Artist Team during the contract period include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Leading, planning and facilitating an engagement process to solicit community input on public art with at least two (or more) community sessions prior to submission of

design concept(s). Sessions should include in-person or virtual community conversations, an online element (i.e., survey, community board, etc.) and at least one on-site event if deemed safe during pandemic.

- Collaborating with the ASC and DCAC on the final design.
- Will oversee the fabrication and installation of the public art piece(s).
- Submission of a reasonable maintenance plan to ensure proper conservation of the pieces.
- Completing project within agreed upon timeframe.

**Artist Selection Committee:** Representatives of the Durham SmART Resource Team and the DCAC committee will participate on the selection committee. Members have expertise in the visual arts, public art, urban design, city planning and economic development and are engaged in the cultural life and growth of Downtown Durham.

As part of our commitment to diversity and equity, Discover Durham and Durham Arts Council are committed to developing mutually beneficial relationships with locally owned businesses, with particular consideration given to ensuring those owned by people of color are invited to bid on contracts and market their products to Discover Durham and Durham Arts Council. We are working to have our supplier base mirror the diversity of the community and will be proactive in inviting such businesses to provide proposals whenever possible.

**For Further Information:** Contact Cheryl Stewart, Public Art Consultant, [ccstewart44@gmail.com](mailto:ccstewart44@gmail.com)

