

Public Art FAQ's for the City of Lancaster, PA

What is public art?

“Public Art” is defined as any temporary or permanent object, project, installation, design feature, landscape, or structure of any medium; works in media with an undefined or malleable presence such as sound, light, video, or web based; or projects that engage communities that are sometimes called “social practice projects” that are created by an artist or groups of artists. The definition or consideration of “Public Art” does not include similar types of objects, projects, installations, design features, etc. by members of allied fields such as architecture, landscape architecture, engineering, or graphic design unless members of those allied fields create the work of Public Art in collaboration with an artist. When creating new public art, careful consideration is given to the site selection and every effort is made to incorporate historical and community needs into the design.

Why is public art important?

Humans have been creating art and placing it in public places since the beginning of time. From cave paintings and pyramids to monuments and architectural design, art has always been a part of the public realm. Public art offers visual appeal, pride, a sense of celebration and fun.

Public art and affiliated community activities:

- Encourage people to pay attention and perceive more deeply the environment they occupy
- Invigorate public spaces and gathering places
- Endow public spaces with distinctive identities
- Provide opportunities for civic dialog
- Encourage tourism
- Represent a tangible commitment to the public environment
- Strengthen civic pride and identification with the city
- Celebrate our past, present and future
- Serve as a catalyst for revitalization
- Represent the health and wealth of the city
- Are accessible to everyone regardless of education, income, race, gender or age

Why does Lancaster need public art?

- Public art enhances the urban design and improves the visual environment for all residents. Public spaces enriched with public art are more welcoming and pleasing for residents and visitors.
- Public art strengthens civic identity and boosts community pride. Residents, newcomers, visitors and tourists appreciate the livability and beauty that public art adds to shared spaces where they work, visit, commute and recreate.
- Public art initiates community dialogue.

- Public art memorializes the past, expresses shared values and concerns for the future. Public art created through a public process becomes a historical record of the community.

What is the process for Lancaster's public art projects?

The City of Lancaster's Public Art Guidelines are followed for every project. The Public Art Advisory Board spent two years developing these guidelines. Board members reviewed guidelines available through the Americans for the Arts Public Art Network and researched guidelines from other cities with successful public art programs. The City of Lancaster Public Art Guidelines were approved by the City Solicitor and accepted by the Mayor. To download the Guidelines visit the [City Website](#).

Who selects the art?

The Public Art Advisory Board selects a Project Planning Committee for each project initiated. Committee members include arts professionals, community members, project stakeholders and one member of the board. The Public Art Manager serves as an advisor and is a non-voting member of the committee. The Project Planning Committee surveys the site/s, develops a call for artists and reviews the artist's professional qualifications. Once finalists are selected (a minimum of 3 reference checks are conducted), they are asked to develop concept proposals and make a formal presentation to the committee. The committee is responsible for evaluating the work for its aesthetic and construction quality, appropriateness to the site, and engineering/maintenance criteria. Finalist's designs are presented to the community at a public presentation and online via the City of Lancaster and Visit Lancaster City websites and social media outlets. Community feedback is gathered through surveys distributed at public meetings and through online voting.

Can local artists compete for public art opportunities in Lancaster, PA?

Yes. In fairness to all artists, and as mandated by the State of Pennsylvania, the City of Lancaster, PA implements an open call for all public art projects. A Project Planning Committee comprised of stakeholders, community members, one board member, and art professionals is assembled for each project. These volunteer committees review qualification packets submitted from local, national, and international artists for each project. Packets include a resume/CV, letter of interest, 15 to 20 images of recent work, and background materials.

There is a strong commitment to support local artists, but ultimately artists with the strongest qualifications and proposals are selected, regardless of where they live. The desire to select local artists does not take precedence over selecting the most qualified applicant and the strongest proposal/design.

Public art projects pose many more challenges than exhibiting in a gallery. Artists working in the public realm have to know how to develop architectural plans, work with fabricators, architects & engineers, manage contracts, and handle a variety of unusual

installation issues related to construction projects. With this in mind, working with experienced artists—in the same way that you would want an experienced architect to design and build your house—reflects responsible decision-making.

What's an RFQ or RFP?

RFQ is an acronym for Request for Qualifications and RFP is an acronym for Request for Proposals.

What are the qualifications of a public artist?

Most public art professionals have a Bachelor of Fine Art and/or a Master of Fine Art Degree/s. In addition, many have degrees in Architecture and Engineering and experience in construction.

Before competing for public art opportunities, artists should consider the following:

- Public art tends to be a highly competitive field, which requires a high level of professionalism and project management skills.
- Working in the public realm requires interaction with many different decision-makers including government & elected officials, community members, construction professionals, highway & transportation authorities, users of public space, and other designers.
- Working in the public realm requires patience and willingness to accept comments and critiques from non-arts professionals. It also requires flexibility, good negotiating skills and a willingness to work outside the studio.
- Working on public art projects with public funding requires a high level of professional integrity as it necessitates the management of large sums of taxpayer money, sometimes over a long period of time. The artist also has to be prepared to answer to the commissioning agency and/or the media.
- If an artist is awarded a project, they'll have to enter into a comprehensive contract with rigid insurance and legal requirements.
- Originality is the artist's responsibility and aesthetic integrity should be an artist's primary goal. Artists are obliged to make every effort to make original, innovative art that is authentically relevant to the artist and to the circumstances of the project.

Many public artworks will be in place for years if not decades. Long-term maintenance and engineering are crucial considerations.

How do artists find out about public art projects?

Artists find information about upcoming projects through online listservs and websites. [Americans for the Arts Public Art Network](#) is an excellent resource. RFQ's for the City of Lancaster are posted on social media outlets and the [City of Lancaster, PA](#) and [Visit Lancaster City](#) websites.

How much money does an artist make?

Most people assume that the artist gets all of the money budgeted for the project. The fact is, a professional public artist functions much like a contractor or architect. They develop a proposal, work with a licensed architect or engineer to develop design plans, and work with other artists and contractors to create and install the work. The artist receives a fee for their work, as does the engineer, suppliers and contractors. Typically the artist receives 10 to 15% of the budget ie: for a \$50,000 project, the artist makes \$5,000-\$7,500.

Who pays for public art?

Most public art is not publically funded. Churches, schools, hospitals, corporations, Individuals, and private nonprofits support most of the art we see in the public realm. The City of Lancaster has received grants from National Endowment for the Arts, Lancaster County Community Foundation, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Sprite Parks Sparks Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Federation, Dept. of Community & Economic Development, Wells Fargo, The Steinman Foundation, Highmark, Fulton Financial Corporation, and the S. Dale High Family Foundation. Lancaster's City Council approved the designation of \$100,000 in Capital Bond funds to be used toward public art projects (bond funds must be matched 1:1 with raised funds).

Where can I find public art in Lancaster?

Check out our [Public Art Map](#). Pinpoints indicate the location, provide an address and display a photo and brief description of the art.

Where can I find out more information about the City of Lancaster Public Art Program?

[Visit Lancaster City Website](#)
[City of Lancaster PA Website](#)

Do other municipalities have public art programs?

Yes. There are over 350 established public art programs in the United States. These include federal, state, city, county, transit, and aviation programs. Most are legally mandated with 1/2% to 3% of various construction project budgets set-aside specifically for public art.

What is the economic impact of public art?

- Artist's fee/s, design work, travel, per diem and hotel
- Insurance suppliers
- Construction: fabricators, engineers, electricians, surveyors, landscape architects, and concrete contractors
- Installation
- Materials, labor, contractor's fees, equipment rental, etc.
- Maintenance

Revenue is generated through sales tax, direct purchase of materials, overhead (studio, utilities, etc.), salaries and wages of artists and subcontractors hired to fabricate and install artwork.

How can I get involved in public art projects?

Attend a Public Art Advisory Board Meeting, public presentation, or volunteer to be on a Project Planning Committee. Public Art Advisory Board Meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month in the Commission Meeting Room, City Hall Annex, 120 N. Duke Street, 4:00-5:30 p.m. For more information, contact Public Art Manager, Heidi Leitzke at hleitzke@cityoflancasterpa.com or 717-291-4829.