

**DC PUBLIC LIBRARY  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS  
PUBLIC ART COMMISSION - VESTIBULE OF THE MLK LIBRARY**

Temporary (Long-Term) Public Art Commission

Budget: \$10,000 (Artist Fee inclusive of Design and Public Engagement Programming; does not include Fabrication/Installation)

Deadline: **February 4, 2019 (extended as of 1/31)**

Open To: All artists, designers, and art/design teams aged 18 or older with Federal Tax ID

**SUMMARY**

The District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) Public Art Program is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) from individual artists, designers or art/design teams to create a two-dimensional artwork. The work will be a vinyl decal design applied to the interior glass walls of the main entrance of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial (Central) Library, at 901 G St. NW, in conjunction with a major modernization project to be completed in 2020. The artwork for this space should be a creative visual interpretation of Dr. King's legacy as it connects to the Library, and which reflects multiple perspectives from D.C. communities. The selected artist will be required to create two public engagement programs at neighborhood libraries that inform some aspect of the design and/or creative process.

After reviewing responses to the RFP, a review panel will select the finalist on the basis of past work samples and a statement of artistic approach. The finalist will be required to attend a public program in late February regarding Dr. King's legacy as it relates to DC Public Library. Following that event, the finalist will develop a proposal that includes (a) a visual design that reflects upon Dr. King's legacy as it connects to the Library, and (b) two public engagement programs that will inform some part of the design or creative process. Final designs will be submitted in September 2019. In collaboration with the artist, the Library will oversee fabrication and installation of the artwork in mid-2020.

**BUDGET**

The selected artist will be awarded a design fee of \$10,000 total; \$8,000 for design development of the artwork and \$2,000 for the required public engagement component, to design and execute two public programs during calendar year 2019 in collaboration with DC Public Library. Fabrication and installation of the artwork will not be the responsibility of the artist.

**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

For the past eleven (11) years, DCPL's primary focus has been on improving the infrastructure of the library system. As a result, to date nineteen (19) libraries have been rebuilt, renovated, or refurbished, with one more current in construction and three more in the design process or set

to begin design in the coming months. As the next step in the transformation of the Library's physical landscape, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial (Central) Library, at 901 G St. NW, will have a major modernization to meet the current and future needs of D.C. residents.

The building, designed by modernist architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, was designated a historic landmark in 2007 and will re-open in 2020 following a three-year modernization led by the world-renowned design team of Mecanoo and Martinez + Johnson Architecture. The MLK Library Building Program, developed through extensive community outreach and feedback, aims to go beyond a library that is merely transactional—a place where you go simply to check out a book—to create a library that truly transforms lives—a world-class library for the 21st Century. For more information on the Library modernization, visit: <https://www.dclibrary.org/mlkfuture>.

To inform the modernization of the MLK Library, the DC Public Library has produced a series of programs, an online exhibition, and several art installations exploring dimensions of Dr. King's legacy in D.C. In 2015, the Library hosted "Dr. King in D.C. -- A Community Conversation," at which Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton observed "Dr. King's meaning for D.C. is not static," but always evolving. In 2018, for the 50th anniversary of the events of 1968, the Library produced an online exhibition about Dr. King's experiences and relationships in Washington D.C., curated by Dr. Marya McQuirter and DC Public Library Archivist Derek Gray, which explored why Washingtonians claim King as a native son. During spring and summer 2018, artists and librarians created traveling installations inspired by the activism of the 1968 Poor People's Campaign, which occupied the National Mall in spring 1968 to demand government action to realize Dr. King's vision of a just society, free of poverty, racism and war. The artwork created for the MLK Library vestibule will continue the Library's ongoing exploration of Dr. King's local significance, creating a visual design that goes beyond the depiction of historical events and incorporates present-day perspectives on King's ideals into a unique visual composition that integrates with the Library's light-filled and redesigned entrance.

## PROJECT GOALS

**Create a unique visual interpretation** of the connection between Dr. King's legacy and the Library today;

**Reflect multiple perspectives** from local residents on this theme;

**Engage the public** in some aspect of the design or creative process;

**Complement the library's architecture**, with sensitivity to Mies van der Rohe's original designs and the enhanced openness of the new vestibule.

## SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

As shown in the [final designs](#), the main entrance of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library at 901 G St NW has been altered significantly to enhance a sense of openness and welcome. The brick walls flanking the east and west sides of the vestibule were removed and replaced with double-height glass walls, which showcase two grand, monumental staircases accessible from the lobby on either side of the entry. This change to the building's historic structure

enhances the transparency of the building, in line with Mies van der Rohe's original architectural principles, and increases access and foot traffic to the Library. The treatment applied to the glazing on the glass walls must comply with marking requirements for glass wall safety (i.e., with two markings, one located at least 30, but not more than 36 inches above the floor, and the other at least 60, but not more than 66 inches above the floor), and will be fabricated in vinyl with a frosted/etched glass appearance to create a seamless integration with the architect's design.

## **DESIGN CRITERIA / REQUIREMENTS**

The artwork must:

- Activate the main entrance of the MLK Library, highlighting the Library's unique identity in the District;
- Reflect a creative interpretation of the theme as expressed under project goals, with preference for original and/or abstracted approaches that are not limited to depictions of historic individuals and events;
- Be output as a digital file to be printed on vinyl decal or wrap with a frosted/etched glass appearance and installed by the Library with the artist's approval;
- Be completed and delivered as a high res file by March 2020 in order to be fabricated and installed by mid 2020;
- Comply with marking requirements for glass wall safety in consultation with the project team (see illustration below);
- Be consistent with the look of etched glass and suitable for meticulous review and approval by several government agencies including the Historic Preservation Office (DCSHPO), the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), in compliance with the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) Section 106 Process for mitigation of changes to a historic structure;
- Take into consideration artistic and thematic relevance throughout the lifespan of the installation (anticipated as approximately 5 years).

## **PROJECT TIMELINE**

December 2018	RFP is released
February 1, 2019	RFP Closes
February 2019	Applications reviewed by review panel + community advisors; Finalist announced Public Program (artist attendance required)
April - June 2019	2 Public Programs with Public Engagement Component to inform design
September 2019	Final design due
Mid-2020	Fabrication & Installation

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

The DC Public Library will conduct a thorough review of applications based on the selection criteria below. In February 2019, eligible applicants will be reviewed by a professional review panel and community advisors, and a finalist will be chosen to develop an artistic proposal and community engagement approach. The selected finalist will be awarded a contract to cover the design of the artwork and the community engagement process. During the design development phase, the selected finalist will attend a public program in late February regarding Dr. King's legacy as it relates to DC Public Library. The selected finalist will develop their initial concept and public engagement approach by March 31; the Library will work with the finalist to develop two public programs for the community engagement portion of the project. Informed by this public engagement process, the final design will be due by September 30, 2019. The Library in consultation with the awarded artist will oversee design development, select a fabricator and coordinate the fabricator's installation of the artwork from January through mid-2020.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

This RFP is open to all artists, designers, and art/design teams aged 18 or older. While US citizenship is not required, the lead artist/designer must have a social security number or Federal Tax ID (EIN) in order to receive payment. A proven track record in public art is not required; however, experience adapting studio work to larger-scale projects and managing complex projects is desired. The ability to work iteratively and collaboratively in the refinement of the final design is essential.

## **APPLICATION DETAILS FOR RFP (Due February 1, 2019)**

- Name, Address, Phone, Email Address, and (optional) Website of artist or team leader
- Artist Statements: Please answer the following prompts (250-500 words each):
  - a. Statement of Artistic Approach: Describe your artistic approach and experience working on projects related to culture and history, and/or incorporating multiple perspectives on a topic.
  - b. Statement of Intent: Describe how you propose to engage the public and incorporate this engagement in some aspect of your creative and/or design process. Note that the budget for public engagement is included within the total artist fee, and that the selected artist will work with DC Public Library to further refine the initial concept using feedback from the review process.
- Artist or Team Biography (250 words): Summarize relevant credentials and experience, including any connection to Washington, D.C. culture and history (through past or current residence, or past work or research).
- Resume (Teams should include all resumes in a single PDF)
- 10 Work Samples (high-quality JPGs). Samples should reflect capacity for this opportunity with the majority of projects completed in the last five years; details of any community engagement should be noted in Image Script.
- Optional, if the work cannot be documented well with still images: 1 movie file (3 minutes, maximum)
- Image Script

- Up to six items of support material (e.g. publicity, letters of support, programs, awards, etc.)

Please submit your RFP through [Submittable, here](#). Once your entry has been submitted, please email Diane Wooden at [diane.wooden2@dc.gov](mailto:diane.wooden2@dc.gov) to inform her that your entry is complete.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

The Contractor shall respond to the following Evaluation Factors:

Evaluation Factors	Points
<p><b>Factor 1 - Artistic Quality</b></p> <p>Level of excellence demonstrated in previous work samples, including overall coherence, clarity, and visual impact; innovation; emotional impact; accessibility to a broad audience.</p>	<b>25</b>
<p><b>Factor 2 – Demonstrated Professional Accomplishment in Chosen Field</b></p> <p>Including exhibition history, awards, honors, and publications, demonstrated proficiency and technical knowledge of the medium(s) in which the artist regularly works, and aptitude for planning and collaboration with partners as indicated by past project information.</p>	<b>25</b>
<p><b>Factor 3 - Proposed Artistic and Public Engagement Approach</b></p> <p>Including demonstrated experience engaging the public and/or incorporating multiple perspectives in artistic projects, and understanding of project goals as reflected in statement of interest.</p>	<b>25</b>
<p><b>Factor 4 - Connection of Past Work to D.C. Culture and/or History</b></p> <p>Including potential for resonance with local communities and experience working on projects related to D.C. culture/community/heritage.</p>	<b>25</b>
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>