



## **ALAMEDA COUNTY ARTS COMMISSION PUBLIC ART PROGRAM**

### **CALL FOR ARTISTS**

#### **African American Wellness Hub in Oakland**

**Deadline Extended! New Application Deadline: Thursday, May 14, 2026 (11:59pm Pacific Time)**

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Alameda County Arts Commission invites visual artists to apply to be considered for public art opportunities at the future African American Wellness Hub in Oakland. The art opportunities may include site-specific integrated artworks and the purchase, commission or license of small, medium and large two-dimensional or low-relief wall-mounted artworks.

The African American Wellness Hub (AAWH) is a project of the County of Alameda and the Alameda County Behavioral Health Department (ACBHD). The goal of the AAWH is to offer culturally affirming services and programs that improve health and wellness for African Americans in a connected and supportive system of care — one that improves outreach, access, and collaboration across services, not only for African Americans but for the overall health of the Alameda County community. The new AAWH will be located at 1918 Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Oakland and will be open to the public in early 2028.

This Call for Artists is a request for qualifications for visual artists who live in the Bay Area. Artists are invited to submit examples of their past artwork to demonstrate their artwork themes, styles, and materials. At this stage, artists will not submit proposals to create new artwork. Artists who apply will be considered for the range of projects such as site-specific, integrated opportunities as well as for the purchase, commission or license of small, medium and large two-dimensional or low-relief wall-mounted artworks. Public art opportunities will include projects with a range of budgets. Specific details about the projects will be provided to the artists later in the selection process. Artists who respond to this opportunity may also be considered for other projects with the Alameda County Arts Commission. Artists currently accepted into the Alameda County Artist Registry, which was established in 2021, must submit a new application to be considered for public art opportunities at the AAWH.

#### **Opportunities for emerging, mid-career and established artists who:**

- Create artworks that reflect and honor African American culture, identity, and the diaspora
- Create artworks that are positive and uplifting and encourage health, healing, and wellness
- Want to be a part of creating a welcoming and culturally affirming space where people will feel empowered and treated with dignity
- Create small, medium and large-scale two-dimensional or low-relief artworks including drawings, paintings, prints, photographs, quilts, textiles, murals, digital artworks, mixed-media artwork, etc.
- Have a range of experience including artists with little or no public art experience as well as artists who have completed major public art commissions

## RESOURCES FOR ARTISTS

### Learn More about this Opportunity and How to Apply

**Informational Video:** Watch a video with information about how to submit an online application through CaFÉ™.

**Online Info Session:** Wednesday, April 1 from 5:30-6:30pm. Artists can meet with Arts Commission staff and have their questions answered.

**In-Person Info Session:** Thursday, April 9 from 6:00-8:00pm (Drop-In Hours), at the Joyce Gordon Gallery, 406 14th Street, Oakland. Artists can meet with Arts Commission staff and have their questions answered. This is a drop-in event. Come at any time and plan to stay for 10-20 minutes. RSVPs to the in-person session are encouraged but not required. Contact the Arts Commission office to RSVP or for more information.

**Contact the Arts Commission Office:** Artists who are new to public art and have never applied to a Call for Artists are encouraged to contact the Arts Commission staff. All questions are welcome.

**For links to the informational video and Zoom meeting visit:**

<https://arts.alamedacountyca.gov/public-art-updates/>

**To contact the Arts Commission Office:**

Call (510) 208-9646 or email [artscommission@acgov.org](mailto:artscommission@acgov.org)

## Background

The County of Alameda and the Alameda County Behavioral Health Department (ACBHD) are building a new African American Wellness Hub at 1918 Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Oakland. A new modern-designed facility will be built at this site and is expected to open in early 2028.

The new African American Wellness Hub will:

- Contribute uniquely to African American health and wellness
- Be centered on education, training, and treatment
- Be centered on the African American community and be welcoming to everyone
- Focus on holistic wellness that is broader than the traditional view
- Provide a place of healing
- Feel like a home – attuned to African American culture – and a place to belong

AAWH Project Overview:

- The emphasis of this project is to expand the capacity to deliver, create, incorporate, and influence systems of healing devoted to the restoration of wellness for African Americans and connected to culturally affirming programs and practices.
- The AAWH will serve as a focal point designed to preserve and actualize the core understanding and best practices of African American people with a focus on wellness.
- The goal is to include direct services, County and community-based partners, service coordination, and systemwide referrals as needed. Supports may include, but are not limited to, behavioral health, public health, and social services; and referrals to primary/medical care or housing.

## ARTIST ELIGIBILITY

This Call for Artists is open to practicing, professional visual artists who are 18 years or older and who live, are permanently employed, or rent/own an artist's studio in one of the following 9 Bay Area counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Santa Clara, San Francisco, San Mateo, Solano, and Sonoma. For artists who are applying as a team, all team members must be artists from the counties listed above. *Additional Requirements: Based on County policy, Alameda County employees and consultants, Alameda County Arts Commissioners, Alameda County Public Art Advisory Committee members, and members of other standing Alameda County Arts Commission committees are not eligible to apply for this opportunity. Alameda County Board of Supervisors' appointees to official County Boards and Commissions are also not eligible to apply. For questions about eligibility, please contact the Arts Commission office.*

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for this Call for Artists must be submitted online through the CaFÉ™ website ([www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org)). There is no application fee to apply or to use the CaFÉ™ online application system. Applicants must submit information through CaFÉ™ to be considered; no slides, printed photos or other hard copy materials will be accepted. **Incomplete submissions will not be accepted.** For complete entry requirements and instructions go to [www.callforentry.org](http://www.callforentry.org), register a username and password, navigate to the "Find Calls" or "Apply for Calls" tabs and search the list for: **African American Wellness Hub Project** or click on the following link [https://artist.callforentry.org/festivals\\_unique\\_info.php?ID=17167](https://artist.callforentry.org/festivals_unique_info.php?ID=17167). Technical assistance in using the CaFÉ™ system is available during regular business hours (Mountain Time) via e-mail at [cafe@westaf.org](mailto:cafe@westaf.org).

Applications must be completed online by **Thursday, May 14, 2026 (11:59pm Pacific Time)**. Allow adequate time to submit an application as technical difficulties can occur.

Applications must include the following:

- **Artist Statement:** Statement describing the artist's artwork and professional experience (themes, process, materials, etc.). Applicant artist must not submit specific artwork proposals. Statement length: not to exceed 2,000 characters with spaces.
- **Interest Statement:** Statement including information about the artist's meaningful connection to the African American community, culture, and identity in Oakland and the Bay Area and how their work as an artist is aligned with the overall goals and values of the African American Wellness Hub. The statement can include information about the artist's lived experiences, shared history and knowledge, and past and current art projects related to the African American community and the diaspora. Do not submit specific artwork proposals. Statement length: not to exceed 3,000 characters with spaces.
- **Images of Past Work:** Submit ten (10) images of past work.
  - Recent artworks completed during the last five years are preferred. However, for artists who have completed large-scale public art projects, artworks made within the last 10 years may be submitted.
  - The style and imagery of the artwork must be appropriate for public spaces. The AAWH will provide services to people of all ages and backgrounds from areas throughout the County and the Bay Area. Artwork that is community-oriented, friendly, and contains positive imagery is encouraged. Examples of imagery that is not acceptable include artworks with religious content, nudity, or depicting violence, drugs, or illegal activities.
  - The artworks must be solely the result of the applicant artist's creative efforts or that of a collective artistic team. Applicants should not submit artworks created by other artists for which the applicant played only a supportive role. If the applicant artist is applying as a member

of an artist team, please refer to the Artist Team Requirements section for more information. If the applicant artist is submitting artwork that was made as part of a team, the description of the artwork must clearly describe the role of the applicant in the information provided in the Artwork List.

- The artworks must not include AI-generated imagery, projects which are incomplete or in a proposal form.
- The artwork images must include ten (10) unique artworks. Applications should not include more than two images of the same artwork. Applicants must not include more than one artwork per application image.
- Instructions on how to format images to CaFÉ™ specifications can be found on the CaFÉ™ website under the Help tab, Uploading Media to CaFÉ™.
- **Résumé:** Applicants must submit a current résumé, no longer than two pages, that outlines their professional accomplishments as an artist. If applying as part of an artist team, with two or more artists, each artist must submit an individual résumé no longer than two pages. (Note: Please refer to the Artist Category information below. Some artists who are early in their career may not have an extensive résumé. This is acceptable. Contact the Office of the Alameda County Arts Commission for questions about what to include on the artist's résumé.)
- **Artist Category:** The Arts Commission has a goal of commissioning and purchasing artwork from artists at all levels of professional development. Applicants must select the Artist Category that best describes their professional development. Artists will be reviewed based on their level of professional development. The Arts Commission staff may alter the artist's selected category to ensure a fair and balanced evaluation of the applicant pool. Please select one of the 3 categories. Definitions listed below are used for the purposes of this program:
  - Emerging Artist:* An emerging artist may have participated in group shows but has not yet had a solo exhibition. The artist may have little or no experience showing their work in public venues.
  - Mid-Career Artist:* A mid-career artist has been a professional practicing visual artist for several years and has participated in several group exhibitions. Artist may have had a solo exhibition and/or completed one or two public art projects with modest budgets.
  - Established Artist:* An established artist has had at least one solo exhibition in a gallery, art museum and/or nonprofit venue and has shown their work extensively. A public art artist in this category has completed several public art projects of varying budgets for multiple commissioning agencies.

#### **ARTIST TEAM & ARTIST REPRESENTATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

- Applicants can apply as an individual artist and apply as part of one artist team only. Artists may not apply to be part of more than one artist team.
- Applicants who are part of an artist collective or other type of established group can apply as a team. However, all team members must be identified in the application and one artist must be identified as the lead artist.
- If the applicant artist is applying as an artist team, the Artist Statement must describe how the team has worked collaboratively in the past and what role each team member played. If the artist team does not have previous experience working together, the team must describe the plan for working together.
- The Arts Commission strongly encourages artist teams to submit images of completed artwork that demonstrates a collaborative effort by all members of the team.
- Artist representatives for individual artists or an artist team, must contact the Arts Commission office prior to submitting an application to receive additional information and instructions. Please contact the Office of the Alameda County Arts Commission at (510) 208-9646 or [artscommission@acgov.org](mailto:artscommission@acgov.org).

## **PROJECT TIMELINE** *(Subject to Change)*

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|------------------|---|
| NEW May 14, 2026 | Deadline for artists to respond to AAWH Call for Artists (11:59pm Pacific Time)   |
| June – July 2026 | Review and approvals by the Artist Selection Committee, Alameda County Public Art Advisory Committee, and Members of the Arts Commission                                  |
| Late July 2026   | All artists notified of their standing  |
| July – Sept 2026 | Semifinalist Artists advance to the next phase with submission of artworks to be considered for purchase or submission of proposals for site-specific integrated projects |
| Oct – Nov 2026   | Reviews and approvals by Artist Selection Committee, Alameda County Public Art Advisory Committee, and Members of the Alameda County Arts Commission                      |
| Oct – Nov 2026   | Semifinalists presentations and interviews with Artist Selection Committee, Alameda County Public Art Advisory Committee, and Members of the Arts Commission              |
| Dec 2026         | Selected artists under contract. Final approval by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors  |
| Jan – April 2027 | Artworks purchased or created for site-specific integrated projects   |
| Jan 2028         | AAWH Construction complete  |

## **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The following selection criteria will be used during all phases of review:

- Artistic excellence and originality as evidenced by digital representation of past work.
- Appropriateness of artist's medium, style, and experience as they relate to the location and project goals as well as artwork that is appropriate for public viewing and/or adequate professional experience to meet the requirements of a project.
- Artist's meaningful connection to the African American community, culture, and identity in Oakland and the Bay Area and how the artist's work is aligned with the overall goals and values of the African American Wellness Hub.
- Artist's ability to respond creatively and uniquely to site-specific design challenges, including the physical, environmental, and community-related conditions inherent to each project.
- Demonstrated ability to work productively and collaboratively with design collaborators and public agencies, including ability to meet the overall design and other project requirements.
- Alameda County artists will be awarded preference points during the first stage of review. For this project, Alameda County Arts Commission considers an Alameda County artist an individual who lives, is permanently employed, or rents/owns a studio in Alameda County. For artist teams, all members of the team must be Alameda County artists to qualify for preference points.

## **SELECTION PROCESS FOR PUBLIC ART PROJECTS**

The Alameda County Arts Commission will use the following steps for artist selection for the AAWH:

- Step 1: The public art opportunities will be defined by the Alameda County Arts Commission in collaboration with ACBHD and the construction project's design team. Each opportunity will be defined by project scope, materials, budget, and other parameters. Multiple opportunities are expected.
- Step 2: After the application deadline and depending on the number of applicants, a selection committee may review the applicants and may narrow down the applicant pool.
- Step 3: For each public art opportunity, an Artist Project Pool will be identified using the Selection Criteria above. The Arts Commission staff will contact artists before they are placed in the Project Pool to describe the opportunity and confirm that each artist is interested and available for the opportunity,

if selected. Once placed in the Project Pool, artists may have the opportunity to update some of their images to better suit the specific project. The Alameda County Public Art Advisory Committee and the Members of the Arts Commission must review and approve each Project Pool.

- Step 4: The Arts Commission staff will present the Project Pool to an ad hoc Artist Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will be appointed by the Members of the Arts Commission and may be comprised of community members, project stakeholders, and local artists and arts professionals. Depending on the number of opportunities, more than one Artist Selection Committee may be assembled for the AAWH.
- Step 5: The Selection Committee will review the artists' application materials and may select semifinalists, who will be paid an honorarium to develop a project proposal.
- Step 6: The semifinalists' proposals will be placed on view for community feedback. The feedback collected will be shared with the Selection Committee when they reconvene to interview the artists.
- Step 7: The semifinalists will present their proposals to the Selection Committee and be interviewed by the Committee. Upon completion of all interviews, the Selection Committee is expected to recommend one or more artists to be awarded the commission for each project. Multiple opportunities are expected.
- Step 8: The Selection Committee's recommendations must be approved by the Alameda County Public Art Advisory Committee, the Members of the Alameda County Arts Commission, and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors before the artist's contract can be issued.

*The Arts Commission reserves the right to alter the project process and project components for this Call for Artists such as adding an additional review stage depending on the applicants and any other conditions that may develop.*

#### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITH THE APPLICATION SYSTEM**

For technical assistance using the online CaFÉ™ system, visit <https://www.callforentry.org/artist-help-cafe/> or contact CaFÉ™ Support at <https://www.callforentry.org/contact-us/>. Support is available Monday-Friday from 8:30am-5:00pm (Mountain Time).

#### **QUESTIONS & CONTACT INFORMATION**

For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact the Office of the Alameda County Arts Commission at (510) 208-9646 or [artscommission@acgov.org](mailto:artscommission@acgov.org).

#### **ABOUT THE ALAMEDA COUNTY ARTS COMMISSION**

The Alameda County Arts Commission is a division of the County of Alameda with four full-time employees. The Alameda County Arts Commission is dedicated to improving the quality of life in Alameda County by nurturing a thriving environment for the arts and for cultural activities; promoting economic opportunities for Alameda County's artists and arts organizations through programs such as arts grants, public art, and art in education; encouraging public participation in the arts and actively advocating for the arts. The Members of the Alameda County Arts Commission are appointed by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to provide oversight to the programs and services provided to the public. With guidance from the Alameda County Public Art Advisory Committee, the Alameda County Arts Commission Office administers the County's Public Art Program on behalf of the Alameda County Board of Supervisors who established this program through the "2% for Art" ordinance in 1994. The Public Art Advisory Committee is a body of nine community members appointed by the Members of the Arts Commission who are responsible for the oversight of the Public Art Program including the planning of new project sites and related conditions, budgets, processes for artwork selection and artist eligibility requirements, review of artwork selection committee recommendations, artwork proposals and design revisions. All recommendations made by the Public Art Advisory Committee are

reviewed by the Members of the Arts Commission. The goals of the Public Art Program are to generate positive, uplifting art experiences; create engaging public spaces and broaden appreciation of those spaces; promote economic vitality through the enhancement of public spaces; encourage creative expression throughout the community; and recognize the special identity and character of Alameda County. To learn more about the Alameda County Arts Commission visit [arts.alamedacountyca.gov](https://arts.alamedacountyca.gov).

#### **ABOUT THE ALAMEDA COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

The Alameda County Behavioral Health Department is part of Alameda County Health which is an Alameda County government agency that promotes and protects the health and well-being of all who live, work, learn, and play in Alameda County. Alameda County Health coordinates services and cultivates partnerships with community organizations and providers to help ensure access, organize, and deliver health care and services to people with Medi-Cal and without insurance, support resilient communities, and improve health for all. Alameda County Health focuses on health equity by developing programs and systemic solutions that reduce disparities for the people and communities served. The Behavioral Health Department provides mental health and substance use services and supports people along their path to wellness, recovery, and resilience. Behavioral Health Department and all of the Alameda County Health's departments and programs focus on services and supports that provide care for the whole person. To learn more about Alameda County Health visit <https://health.alamedacountyca.gov/> To learn more about the Alameda County Behavioral Health Department visit <https://www.acbhcs.org/>.

#### **ABOUT THE ALAMEDA COUNTY**

One of 58 counties in California, Alameda County is home to 1.6 million people living in 14 cities, from Albany in the north to Fremont in the south and Livermore in the east, as well as in 6 unincorporated communities and rural areas throughout the 813 square miles of the County. The Alameda County government provides health care, social services, public protection, and general government programs for a population that is culturally and ethnically diverse. The cities and communities of Alameda County include Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Castro Valley, Dublin, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Newark, Oakland, Piedmont, Pleasanton, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Union City, and other unincorporated areas.

To learn more about the Alameda County visit [alamedacountyca.gov](https://alamedacountyca.gov).

#### **General Information about this Request for Qualifications/Call for Artists**

The County of Alameda, through the Alameda County Arts Commission, reserves the right to extend or shorten the period of time this Call for Artists is active and to alter any aspect of the selection process or overall project in any way for its own convenience at any time. This Request for Qualifications/Call for Artists does not constitute an agreement to commission artists for the work described herein. The County of Alameda reserves the right to launch separate calls for artists for individual projects and special initiatives. Applicants to this Call for Artists must be practicing, professional artists, must be 18 years or older, and must meet all of the other stated eligibility requirements. The County of Alameda reserves the right to not advance and/or withdraw an artist's application if the applicant does not meet the eligibility requirements and/or if the application materials do not follow guidelines for appropriate imagery or style for public spaces.

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#### **ALAMEDA COUNTY ARTS COMMISSION**

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