

# **RFQ Call for Public Artworks**

**RFQ# AAHC-25-121**

## **Dunbar Tower**

Ann Arbor Housing Commission



**Request for Qualifications Issued JULY 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**Due Date: AUGUST 31<sup>ST</sup>, 2025 by 11:59 p.m. EST**

**Issued By:** Ann Arbor Housing Commission through its  
501c3, Ann Arbor Housing Development Corporation

2000 S. Industrial Hwy Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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**[“COMING HOME” NARRATIVE](#)**

## **Request for Qualifications**

The Ann Arbor Housing Commission (AAHC), on behalf of its non-profit, the Ann Arbor Housing Development Corporation (AAHDC), and the Community Leadership Council (CLC) are seeking the services of artists to create art for a development that includes low-income housing and community space at 121 Catherine, Ann Arbor, Michigan (Dunbar Tower). The 6-story affordable housing facility features 63 apartments, two residential community spaces, and a standalone community space which will be open to the public.

The selected artists will be commissioned to create original artwork for either the interior or exterior of the building, as well as for the new community space. The goal of this RFQ is to gather artists to create public-facing works that will celebrate the spirit of the development and the surrounding historic Black neighborhood. The work can be in any medium appropriate for the conditions (i.e., interior, exterior, etc.).

## **Background**

The City of Ann Arbor's elected officials, as well as its residents, have repeatedly expressed their desire to significantly increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing options in the community. 121 Catherine has served as a public, metered surface parking lot for several decades on the corner of Catherine Street and Fourth Avenue in downtown Ann Arbor.

For most of the twentieth century, the area was a predominately Black neighborhood centered around several Black-owned businesses at Ann St. and N. 4th Ave. The west side neighborhood would ultimately be shaped by the civil rights and fair housing policies of the 1960s and 1970s, the desegregation of the Ann Arbor Public Schools in the 1970s, and economic pressures. New investment in the late twentieth century brought with it the double-edged sword of revitalization and gentrification.

In 2019, the City selected the AAHC and SmithGroup to lead a community engagement process focusing on the development of this and other City-owned properties as affordable housing. This process identified broad public support for an affordable residential development at 121 Catherine.

In 2023, the City sold the property to the AAHDC to develop affordable housing for households at 60% or less of the Area Median Income while preserving as much public parking as possible. The ground floor of the residential component will feature offices for property management and tenant support services, as well as community spaces for residents. The design includes ~2000 SF on the ground floor that is required by deed to be used for a public purpose. The AAHC hired Avalon Housing as a co-developer through a Request for Proposal process to design and construct the building.

The AAHC and Avalon formed the CLC, a community advisory board comprising multi-generational Black former and current residents of the neighborhood, as well as local Black artists and entrepreneurs. The CLC-led community engagement process determined that the public purpose of the first-floor space should be to educate the public about the history of Black residents and the historically Black neighborhood, support Black artists and entrepreneurs, and provide a welcoming community space for all residents. The CLC created a vision for this space, titled "Coming Home," which is included as an attachment at the end of this RFQ. In addition to having 32 units with project-based vouchers providing supportive housing, the remaining 31 units in the building will be leased preferentially to income-qualifying artists and creatives.

## Scope of Work

### Location

This RFQ includes various artwork locations throughout the interior and exterior of Dunbar Tower. Specific locations will be provided and selected for each artist upon shortlist selection by the CLC Arts Subcommittee. Locations may range from exterior walls and interior lobbies to exterior-mounted signage and parking deck surfaces.

The locations are as follows:

- (1) Prominent Exterior Feature Mural (556 sq/ft)
- (6) Exterior Murals (35 - 660 sq/ft)
- (2) Interior Murals (129 - 170 sq/ft)
- (2) Interior Commemorative Plaques
- (1) Exterior Building Signage (~48 sq/ft)

### Budget

The following fee ranges reflect the varied sizes, complexities, and technical requirements of the artwork locations within each category. These fees are all-inclusive, except in the case of signage where the costs for fabrication and materials for final installation are not included in the artist fee. The AAHDC will pay for the fabrication and installation of all commemorative plaques and exterior building signage. The AAHC will select a signage fabricator. Signage artwork will require coordination with the signage fabricators for the design, fabrication, and installation of the artwork.

The range of artwork fees will be as follows:

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| • Prominent Exterior Feature Mural      | up to \$25,000 |
| • Exterior Murals                       | up to \$15,000 |
| • Interior Murals                       | up to \$2,000  |
| • Interior Plaques and Exterior Signage | up to \$1,000  |

### Project Deliverables

The selected artists will be required to deliver the following:

- Draft (thumbnail) Image
- (2) CLC Presentation meetings
  - 50% Concept
  - 100% Concept
- Final installation
- Process documentation (images and/or video)
- Maintenance and materials information for long term care of artwork

## Submittal Requirements

**Due Date:** August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025 - 11:59 pm EST

**Questions:** Please contact Arin Yu, Planning Specialist, AAHC, [ayu@a2gov.org](mailto:ayu@a2gov.org) (preferred) or at (734) 794 - 6720 ext. 47244. Question Deadline: Friday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> - 2:00 PM EST

**Format:** Electronic submittal via **email**\*

Please compile a **PDF** or **zipped file** no larger than **25MB**\* of the following for submission:

**1) Artist Statement/Team Bio**

- a. Introduce yourself and/or your team.

**2) Letter of Interest** (up to one page)

- a. Clearly describe your interest in the project and how you and/or your team will be able to contribute to its success.
- b. Explain how your art practice is connected to the project through shared experience, locality, method of working, etc.
- c. Articulate your interest and/or experience in public art design, fabrication, and/or project collaboration.
- d. Summarize your experience in developing and/or executing creative projects of this scope in the public art realm (i.e., site-specific art installations, interactive and participatory artworks, multimedia projects, creative placemaking events, festivals, etc.)
- e. Indicate if you or your team intends to work in a partnership or mentorship for this project.

**3) Resume/CV** (for each team member if applicable, partnership or mentorship is welcome)

- a. Artist's Experience: list your professional or applicable experience including any commissions, artist residencies, touring, exhibitions, collaborations, projects involving the community, and work in the public sector.
- b. Education: list any educational background, training, or apprentice experiences.

**4) References**

- a. (2) references, professional or community focused.

**5) Images, Video, Audio, or Multimedia**

- a. A relevant body of work that demonstrates conceptual, aesthetic, and technical mastery in at least one artistic medium. Attach up to 6 .pdf or .png images and/or video files.
- b. Include descriptions within your uploaded portfolio images or an image list with title, date/year, materials, size, and budget.

\*If your submission cannot be limited to the 25 MB file size limit, please email Arin Yu at [ayu@a2gov.org](mailto:ayu@a2gov.org) for file coordination.

## Selection Process

The CLC will review all RFQ responses and will select a shortlist of artists. The shortlisted artists will be assigned a location and theme to create a draft concept for submittal through which final artists are selected. Selected artists will be asked to meet with the CLC in person and to present (1) 50% artwork concept and (1) 100% artwork concept and installation plan before doing final revisions based on technical feedback and site logistics. There will be opportunities for CLC feedback and comments with each presentation.

Shortlist selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Letter of Interest
- Experience
- Quality and Relevance of Portfolio
- Connection to neighborhood or project through shared experience, locality, practice, etc.

The selection schedule is as follows:

Questions due to administrator	Friday, August 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 2025
Submission of Qualifications Due	Sunday, August 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2025
Notify Shortlisted Artists	Tuesday, October 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2025
Draft Artwork Concept Submission*	Sunday, November 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2025
Notify Selected Artists*	Tuesday, December 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2025
50% Artwork Concept Presentation Meeting*	Monday, January 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2026
100% Artwork Concept Presentation Meeting*	Monday, February 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2026
Artwork Installation**	March 2026 – June 2026

*\*Dates are subject to change and are presented for guidance only. These dates will be communicated after shortlist selection. This schedule does not include meetings for artist coordination and technical assistance.*

*\*\* Installation to occur between March 2026 and June 2026 after anticipated building completion February 2026, except in the case of signage. Signage installation is to be completed by anticipated building opening, February 2026. Please be aware that the timeline for signage will be condensed to ensure time for coordination.*

## **General Terms / Requirements**

Artists must be eligible to work in the United States. Selected artists will be required to enter a contract with the commissioning body for the duration of the project.

### **Insurance**

Selected Artists are required to carry insurance from contract execution to the date of installation completion. The insurance minimums are as follows:

- General Liability
  - Minimum of \$1M / \$2M limits to include Additional Insured; Primary / Non-Contributory and Waiver of Subrogation in favor of Ann Arbor Housing Development Corporation and 121 Catherine LDHA, LLC.
- Workers' Compensation
  - Limits of \$500K/\$500K/\$500K including Waiver of Subrogation or Workers Compensation file an exclusion form with the Insurance Compliance Division.
- Auto Liability
  - Minimum of \$500K limit to include Additional Insured; Primary / Non-Contributory and Waiver of Subrogation in favor of Ann Arbor Housing Development Corporation and 121 Catherine LDHA, LLC

The AAHDC will reimburse insurance premium costs for the coverage and limits outlined above for up to \$500, upon receipt of an invoice for insurance premium payments and a Certificate of Insurance. The AAHDC will cover insurance premium costs associated with this project for the period required. This compensation would be in addition to artist fees.

### **Copyright and Ownership**

Selected artists will be required to sign a release and waiver of publication and ownership rights to the artwork unless otherwise negotiated.

### **Original Artwork and AI-Generated Content**

All artwork submitted as a result of this RFQ must contain original artwork created by the submitting artist(s). By submitting artwork, the artist confirms that the work is their own and does not infringe upon any existing copyrights, trademarks, or intellectual property rights.

Artworks that include visual material generated in whole or in part using artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning tools, or generative algorithms must disclose this in the submission. Failure to disclose the use of AI-generated content may result in disqualification from the selection process.

The commissioning body reserves the right to request additional documentation or clarification regarding the originality and authorship of any submitted artwork.

## **Exhibits/ Attachments**

[“Coming Home” Narrative](#)