

Request for Qualifications

Heart of Kensington

Allegheny Ave. & Kensington Ave. Commercial Corridor

Deadline to apply: **November 15, 2019**

Introduction

Mural Arts Philadelphia, together with Impact Services, is seeking an artist (or collaborative team) to create a creative placemaking project in and around Kensington and Allegheny (K&A) commercial corridor. Mural Arts is a part of a five-year initiative, with partner Impact Services' *Heart of Kensington Collective Impact 2022* (HOK) plan, to build social cohesion and bolster resiliency in Kensington through an intersection of public art, behavioral health, youth engagement, and workforce development.

More specifically, this project will be executed in the service of promoting the K&A commercial corridor as a vibrant community hub. The form of artwork created is open to the discretion of the artist but should contain visual touch points that enliven the corridor and can include the implementation of creative placemaking with deep interaction with community residents. The development and creation of the project will be executed alongside Impact Services' community engagement efforts and the Heart of Kensington project partners. Additionally, we are looking for an artist or collaborative team who will engage residents throughout the entire creative process to improve social cohesion and collective efficacy within the commercial hub. Currently, we anticipate choosing one artist/collaborative team that will execute the project between January 2020 through the spring and summer 2020.

The Heart of Kensington vision is for neighbors to feel connected to each other, take shared responsibility for the neighborhood, feel empowered to make a change in their environment, and envision a positive future for themselves and their children despite the neighborhood being heavily affected by the opioid crisis.

The commission is being managed by Mural Arts Philadelphia in conjunction with Impact Services (the lead organization responsible for implementing the *Heart of Kensington Collective Impact 2022* plan.)

Goals of the Heart of Kensington collaborative project include:

- Health and safety: residents feel safe in their neighborhood and live in an environment that promotes wellness
- Education: residents are educated and informed about issues affecting the neighborhood

- Economic Opportunity: residents are employed and self-sufficient
- Housing: residents have access to quality affordable housing and are stable in their homes
- Community: residents feel connected, take shared responsibility for the neighborhood, feel empowered to make change, and envision a positive future

Over the last few years Mural Arts Philadelphia has launched several storefront hubs to maximize its presence in communities where we are involved in major participatory public art projects. With projects such as [Southeast by Southeast](#) in South Philadelphia, [Neighborhood Time Exchange](#) in West Philadelphia, and the [Tacony Lab in Tacony](#), we have found that having a consistent presence helps to galvanize the community, provide additional services, create a safe and welcoming space, and make an impact on life along a corridor. In Kensington, we look to the K&A corridor as the point of inspiration and the creative hub as the spark. With civic projects such as the Esperanza Health Center, and greening projects, the neighborhood is entering a new phase of exploration, evaluation, and transformation. We are inspired by the robust blend of challenges and opportunities the neighborhood provides; it is the perfect creative springboard for artists. With the launch of a similar lab and the production of several public art interventions along the corridor, we are engaging the community in the language of placemaking. This process, infused with the presence of artists working on public projects in public space, explores the cross-fertilization of the visual arts and demonstrates how working with creative thinkers and artists can amplify community assets while tackling challenges.

The Project

Mural Arts has worked with Impact Services to identify what range of possibilities might exist for creative placemaking along the corridor during our first year of collaboration. This list is not exhaustive and artists are welcome to make other recommendations that fit the goals of the project.

The project recommendations include:

- Creative placemaking activation within local storefront
- A combination of murals or local photography for placement along corridor/ hub
- Creative practice that collects oral stories from residents

The goals of the public artwork created as part of the Heart of Kensington include:

- Use art to enact a vibrant commercial corridor
- Help residents address the impacts of the neighborhood's drug trade and gun violence
- Engage in a participatory project that reflects the vision of the surrounding community during the project

Project Schedule

Oct 15: RFP released

Nov 12: Deadline for Questions

Nov 15: RFP closes

January 30 : Shortlist presentation at KABA meeting

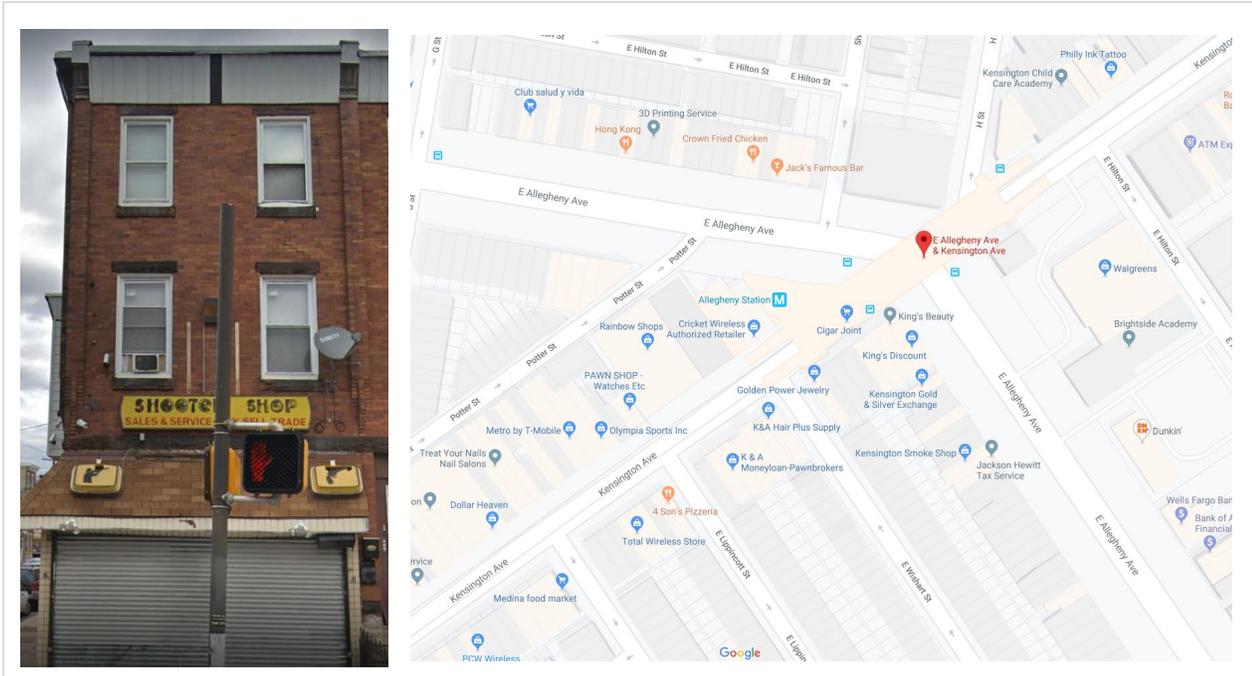
Mid Feb: Final Artist Announced

Mid March - April: Meetings with project partners to discuss engagement plan

April - July: Public art & community engagement process

August: Mural Arts Internal Design Review

September- October 2020: Art production



The Site

The project will be centered on the K&A commercial corridor located along Allegheny Avenue. As the literal and psychological heart of the community, the intersection of Kensington and Allegheny is of critical importance. Kensington Avenue has all the tools for a thriving commercial corridor, but it is not currently maximizing its potential. General blight, crime, safety, and poor marketing are contributing factors towards its underutilization. Proposed investments along the corridor include the Kensington Storefront Challenge and the new Esperanza Health Center which serve as catalysts for the focus zone and helps to implement overall neighborhood strategies and tactics. Additionally, residents feel that there is a perception problem in Kensington, ranging from the commercial corridor to the overall narrative of the neighborhood. This project seeks to direct attention to improving the “feel of the neighborhood” through visual representation, infrastructural improvements, and community-building projects to consolidate the commercial corridor’s identity.

Suggested targeted corridor locations for activation:

Shooter Shop
2001 E. Allegheny Avenue
A former gun store

SEPTA Allegheny Train Station
Market-Frankford Line
3200 Kensington Avenue

Vacant Lots
3238-3244 Kensington Avenue

Artist Scope of Work

Artist/Collaborative Team Responsibilities:

The artist/collaborative team will be asked to work in collaboration with Impact Services staff, Mural Arts, and directly with Kensington community members to engage in a series of art-centered activities and a creation process that is centered on themes around any of the following: addiction, micro-community network creation, pop-up markets, vacant lot greening and clean up, energy efficiency, public space, self-image, identity, entrepreneurship, blight, safety, creative 21st-century job training in a semi public space. Artists should be prepared to share their personal practice with interested community members.

Artist/Collaborative Teams to be selected for community vote and input are responsible for the following:

- Conduct research as necessary to understand the site, the project, the community's history and culture, and other considerations as necessary to inform the artistic approach.
- Develop a concept for murals and/or other artworks on the project site.
- Develop a community engagement plan alongside Impact Services.
- Present concept to Mural Arts and Impact Services.
- If selected for final review, presentation of concepts to community members.

Artist/Collaborative Team selected for the commission are responsible for the following:

- Create an approved design for the artworks.
- Collaborate with Mural Arts production team on the completion of the artworks.
- For any art components other than murals, identify and secure the services of suppliers, fabricators, installers, and other professionals as necessary to fulfill the artist's responsibilities in the production of artworks.
- Fulfill artist responsibilities within the contracted budget and timeline
- Participate in community engagement and education activities

Mural Arts' responsibilities include:

- Coordinate reviews and permissions in regard to artist selection and concept development, with appropriate partners.
- Provide production support, including the provision of technical assistance, materials, supplies, and some labor as coordinated in advance.
- Coordinate marketing, documentation, and public engagement.

Budget

The overall budget available for the artworks is **\$40,000**. This budget would be all-inclusive, including artist fees, artist assistant costs, artist studio costs, materials and supplies, specialty consultants and installation of all artworks. External costs such as marketing, documentation, security and evaluation do not need to be included in the budget.

Artist Selection Process

Eligibility

We are seeking artists or collaborative artist teams who can make a commitment to working in Philadelphia as necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of this project. For the purposes of this RFQ, “artist” refers to an individual artist or a collaborative team of artists. Any artist, and/or collaborative, established or emerging, working in any medium, is encouraged to apply. Please note that we cannot offer additional budgetary resources to individual members. Artists must be citizens of the U.S. or have U.S. work authorization.

Selection Process

This will be an open call. Artist qualifications/portfolios will be solicited by Mural Arts Philadelphia. Mural Arts, its artistic advisors, and Impact Services will review the artist submissions and identify a short list of finalists.

Up to three artists/teams will be short-listed for each site. Each will be invited to present their concepts to the residential and business community on the K&A corridor. Mural Arts will select the artist/teams that will be invited to the short list, and then awarded the final commission, in consultation with the community and Impact Services.

The decision will be based on a review of artist/team qualifications and concepts using the criteria that are listed below. Mural Arts is not required to make a selection from the submissions it receives if, in Mural Arts’ judgment, the relevance, quality, or the qualifications of the artists are not appropriate.

Qualifications and Review Criteria

The evaluation of artist/team qualifications will be based on a review of completed works, works in progress, or as otherwise described in curatorial writings, critiques, articles, or other publications. The artists’ qualifications shall demonstrate:

- Experience in creating permanent, durable, outdoor public artworks, or experience activating public space
- Experience with social justice issues with in art practice
- Appreciation of infrastructure design, urban design, and public space.
- Ability to accomplish projects of similar complexity within the budget, timeline, and technical constraints presented, based on examples of prior work
- Experience in community-engaged art processes and research

- Ability to create site-specific artwork that is responsive to the opportunities and constraints of the site
- Ability to create work that engages a wide audience

The evaluation of the finalist artist/team concepts will be based on a review of submitted concepts, using the artistic and urban design goals outlined for the project, as well as the following criteria:

- Creativity in addressing the constraints of the site through materials and methods
- Creativity in community engagement approach
- Success in addressing goals related to enhancing pedestrian spaces
- Success in addressing goals related to reflecting the community's vision and spirit
- Feasibility of completing the project within the allotted budget and timeframe

About the Heart of Kensington Collective Impact Plan

In 2016, Impact Services launched a collaborative, inclusive planning process, with the generous support of the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation, that engaged 453 local residents, community organizations, and other stakeholders as decision-makers, leaders, and doers. This process helped develop a vision for the future of Kensington as a neighborhood that is a safe, healthy, and clean community.

The Heart of Kensington (HOK) is a community located a few miles north of Philadelphia's Center City district. Historically, it was a densely industrial area known as "The Workshop of the World." In the 1950s, factories started closing, jobs began disappearing, and the neighborhood was sent into a long decline that still reverberates today. In the last few years, Kensington has faced increased challenges stemming from sustained poverty and unemployment, and exacerbated by the growing opioid epidemic—a public health crisis of an order of magnitude that is hard to overstate. Last year, Philadelphia's overdose rate was three times that of the gun homicide rate in Chicago—and Kensington is at the epicenter of this crisis in Philadelphia.

While the neighborhood has suffered from deeply-rooted and multidimensional challenges, it is also a rich community with dedicated residents and opportunities to build on the strengths that already exist. Leveraging these assets, however, will require a new approach that recognizes trauma in the community, acknowledge its effect on people who live here, and addresses how to overcome it. Trauma-informed care provides a framework to do this. Impact Services is part of a growing movement of trauma-informed organizations and is applying this approach to its community development work as well.

A Trauma Informed approach to Community Development (TICD) takes a strengths-based approach to build community resilience—this means empowering people, investing in communities, and building skills/local capacity. It places a premium on collaboration, transparency, and building trust.

Rather than focusing on how trauma can disrupt a person's life, we are choosing to focus on how communities can come together to become safer, healthier, and more resilient. Resilience is the capacity to overcome adversity, to

believe that some better future might exist, even when no other possibilities are immediately apparent. Many factors contribute to resilience, including social networks and the built environment. Creative placemaking projects offer the opportunity to improve both.

The Heart of Kensington Collaborative is a project funded by the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation Neighborhood Implementation Grant. The Collaborative partners include Esperanza Health Center, Mural Arts Philadelphia, the Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation's Maker Program (delivered at the McPherson Square branch), and Street Soccer USA. Impact Services is coordinating and convening the collaborative group and will oversee the community engagement process.

The information shared above was pulled from the *Heart of Kensington Collective Impact 2022* strategic plan.

For more information please refer to the full plan: https://issuu.com/joannawinchester5/docs/hok_20collective_20impact_202022_pl/16

Report prepared by: Alys Mann Consulting

About Mural Arts Philadelphia

Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For 30 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative process, rooted in the traditions of mural-making, to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives. Mural Arts engages communities in nearly 100 public art projects each year, and maintains its growing collection through a restoration initiative. Core Mural Arts programs such as Art Education, Restorative Justice, and Porch Light yield unique, project-based learning opportunities for thousands of youth and adults.

In recent years, Mural Arts has evolved into a multi-disciplinary arts organization exploring the intersection of muralism, public art and contemporary art. In addition, Mural Arts has collaborated with an increasing range of community, civic, cultural and development organizations to realize projects that have expanded the city's public art portfolio in new and exciting ways. Increasingly, Mural Arts has assisted in private organizations in commissioning artworks that engage the communities where they are working.

For more information: <https://www.muralarts.org/>

Application

Preliminary Consultation

Artists who are interested in submitting their proposal are encouraged to contact Mural Arts with any questions about the project. Periodically, questions and answers will be posted to the Mural Arts website, where this RFQ is posted: <https://www.muralarts.org/artist-resources/calls-to-artists>.

Submission Requirements

Interested artists should submit:

- An application checklist including the names and contact information for all artists on the team, and an inventory of all material that is being submitted
- A CV or resume for each artist (up to 2 pages per artist)
- A current artist statement for each artist
- A short written response that answers each of these following questions:
 - 1) What interests you about this site?
 - 2) What idea(s) would you be interested in exploring at this site?
 - 3) If an artist team, how would your collaborative process work?
 - 4) Describe what opportunities you would like to explore at the site.
 - 5) Discuss experience working on projects with many constraints imposed by the site owner.
 - 6) Discuss any other aspects of your practice that will assist us in evaluating your qualifications in the context of the goals and review criteria listed in this RFQ.
- Up to 15 images of past completed work that you consider relevant to this project
 - Digital images must be JPEG files and must be no more than 300dpi and no larger than 1024 x 768 pixel resolution. Each image must be unlocked and downloadable for viewing.
 - Each JPEG file must be titled with the artist's name and number that corresponds to the annotated image list. File name example: JonesJane001, JonesJane002.
- Please provide a list of images, including the following information:
 - Image name, Artist's name
 - Title of artwork, Location, Date of Completion, Public Art Budget, Medium, Dimensions
 - Brief description
 - Provide references of two or more recent clients, not to include Mural Arts Philadelphia. Include name, address, email address and telephone (preferably other public art clients)

Submission Instructions

Submissions will be accepted electronically by email, DropBox or WeTransfer, sent to the following email address. Mural Arts will reply with an acknowledgement of all submissions it receives.

Cathy Harris
 Director of Community Murals
 Mural Arts Philadelphia
 1727-29 Mt. Vernon Street
 Philadelphia, PA 19130 215-685-0750
 cathy.harris@muralarts.org

Application Checklist

Please complete this checklist and submit as the cover sheet of your application.

Names and contact information for all artists on the team, and an inventory of all material that is being submitted.

	Lead Artist	Collaborating Artist	Collaborating Artist	Collaborating Artist
Name				
Address				
Phone				
Email				
Web				