

LA River Headwaters – Canoga Park Civic Art Project

Q&A From Artist Informational Session, August 4, 2026

1. Is this an RFQ for a sculpture or mural project?

No. This opportunity is for a site-specific artwork composed of artist-designed interpretive signage and hardscape along a part of the LA River trail. While the interpretive signage may include sculptural or three-dimensional approaches, artists are encouraged to explore a range of creative forms that support the project themes and site experience.

2. Could you share an overview of the overall scope of the project area location, in terms of starting point and endpoint?

Yes. A location map is provided on Page 4 of the Call for Artists. The project site is a specific quarter mile long landscaped area alongside the river channel, adjacent to the river walk, within the LA County right-of-way between Canoga and Owensmouth Avenues.

3. Can a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization be the primary applicant among a team of other organizations and artists?

The business status of an applicant does not impact eligibility. A 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization may serve as the primary applicant as long as it meets all eligibility requirements outlined in the RFP. The applicant must demonstrate that it satisfies the stated criteria, regardless of its organizational type, and may apply as the lead entity among an artist team.

4. Can you explain what “demonstrable involvement with Native American communities” means as listed under the eligibility requirements?

Applicants should demonstrate meaningful cultural, artistic, academic, and/or professional relationships or collaborations with Native American communities. The selection panel will evaluate this experience based on the information provided in the application.

5. How can I best demonstrate my connection to Native American communities and culture?

Applicants shall use the “Description of Interest” section of the application to describe their connection to Native American communities and culture, including relevant experiences, relationships, collaborations, or forms of engagement. Applicants may share examples from their artistic practice, professional work, community partnerships, cultural learning, or other experiences that demonstrate a meaningful and respectful connection. The selection panel will review this information as part of the application evaluation process.

6. Would all posts/signs need to be the same design and only the content changes?

No. The interpretive signage elements do not need to have the exact same design. The selected artist or artist team should develop a cohesive overall vision for the site, but individual elements may vary in form, scale, materials, and approach depending on the artwork concept and site needs.

7. Will local artists be given preference?

No. This is a national, open competition, and no geographic preference will be given. Applications will be evaluated according to the published selection criteria, including artistic merit and suitability for the project themes and goals. Artists will be expected to demonstrate an ability to meaningfully engage with the site, communities, and project stakeholders throughout the process.

8. How does this project coordinate with the Gehry Partners designed Headwaters Pavilion? Is shared design language expected or is there full artistic independence?

This Civic Art project is separate from the Gehry Partners designed pavilion. There is no requirement for shared design language or artistic interdependence between the artwork and the pavilion.

9. In regards to team submissions, is it helpful for one of the team members to be a representative of Native American cultures?

No. Teams are not required to include a Native American artist or representative. Applications will be evaluated based on the published selection criteria, including the applicant's demonstrated experience with Native American communities.

10. To clarify, the project area doesn't run the entire length of the trail from Canoga park to Long Beach?

Correct. The project area is not the full length of the LA River trail from Canoga Park to Long Beach. The artwork site is a specific quarter mile long landscaped area alongside the river channel, adjacent to the river walk, within the LA County right-of-way between Canoga and Owensmouth Avenues.

11. Beyond the map and site boundaries of the project indicated in the RFQ, will you provide a more detailed site plan of the location?

No. Additional site information, including more detailed plans, will be provided to the finalists invited to develop proposals. At this stage of the process, applicants are submitting their qualifications and not expected to prepare project proposals or site-specific concepts.

12. For work samples, are previous murals acceptable even though this is artist-designed signage?

Yes. Artists may submit previous work samples from all kinds of media. The selection panel will consider how an artist's existing body of work demonstrates the ability to create a meaningful, site-responsive artwork for this project. Artists are not expected to have previously completed artist-designed signage or a project of this exact type.

13. If someone on the team is not a US citizen but works frequently between LA and Mexico can they apply?

Applicants are not required to be citizens of the United States; however, they must fully comply with all laws, including ones governing a noncitizen's eligibility to work in the United States.

14. Because of the unique suite of qualifications needed, is it possible to publish a list of interested participants to help us build teams?

No. The County cannot publish a list of interested applicants or participants, as sharing this information would require individual consent and/or waivers from each participant. Artists are welcome to identify collaborators independently and form teams that bring together the range of experience and expertise needed for this project.

15. Do Native American artists need to be local to the area to be successful?

No. Artists do not need to be local to the area to be successful. This is a national call because we recognize that Indigenous communities and artists have histories and connections that extend beyond geographic boundaries, including experiences of migration and displacement.

16. Can you provide trail dimensions and right-of-way details?

No. Detailed site dimensions and right-of-way information will be provided to the selected finalists during the proposal stage of the selection process. At this stage, artists are being asked to submit their qualifications and demonstrate their relevant experience, artistic practice, and connection to the project themes. Artists are not expected to develop design proposals as part of this application.

17. I often work with Indigenous culture bearers and the project I would be proposing would center work with one of them. Should I be the one applying or should we apply together?

If you have demonstrable experience working with Indigenous communities, you are eligible to apply as an individual artist. Whether you apply independently or as a team with

an Indigenous culture bearer or collaborator is a decision you should make together based on the nature of the partnership and the roles each person will play in the project.

18. Are you looking specifically for artists who have experience working with Indigenous communities in California, or would experience with Indigenous communities in other regions also be relevant?

We are looking for artists who have experience working with Indigenous communities in California and beyond the region. We recognize that Indigenous peoples and communities have diverse histories, including histories of displacement, migration, and continued relationships to ancestral lands beyond specific geographic boundaries. Applicants should demonstrate meaningful engagement, relationships, and experience working with Native communities that are relevant to their artistic practice.

19. Is there a rough sense of how many discrete signage/hardscape elements are expected along the quarter mile?

No. The Call does not specify a predetermined number of interpretive signage or hardscape elements. Finalists invited to develop proposals will determine the number, scale, and configuration of elements based on their artistic concept, project budget, and the site.

20. If my previous mural works are not particularly text-based and mostly portraiture, would it be relevant to show in the application?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to submit work samples that best represent the quality of their artistic practice. Work samples do not need to be text-based or resemble interpretive signage. The selection panel will evaluate how your artistic practice and body of work demonstrate artistic merit and suitability for the project's themes and goals.

21. Have you done targeted outreach to Indigenous art communities?

Yes, we have conducted targeted outreach to Indigenous arts communities and organizations, and we continue to expand those efforts throughout the application period. If you have any recommendations for organizations or networks that we should connect with, please share them by emailing Iris Regn at iregn@arts.lacounty.gov

22. If we have questions for you, could we communicate them with you via email?

Yes. For questions about this Call for Artists, you may contact Iris Anna Regn, Civic Art Project Manager, at iregn@arts.lacounty.gov

23. Do you need to have worked on other projects of this scale and award amount to be considered?

No. Applicants are not required to have completed projects of a similar scale or budget. Emerging artists are encouraged to form teams or partner with experienced project managers, fabricators, or other artists to ensure they have the expertise needed to successfully complete the project.

24. How broadly are you defining signage for this Call for Artists? Could it include a sculptural landmark or gateway element that incorporates identity and wayfinding, rather than conventional signage?

Yes, the artist-designed signage is interpreted broadly and may include sculptural or other artist-designed elements, including the types of landmark or gateway features described in this question. The artwork may address entries to the river walk, suggest gathering spaces, or commemorate cultural, community, or recreational history or practices. However, the artwork is not required to function as wayfinding signage.

25. Will more signage be added to the full trail in the future?

It is not known at this time.

26. Because fabrication is included, but installation is not, can we assume that footings and engineering would be completed by others?

Artists are responsible for engineering and fabrication of the artwork. Installation, including footings, will be provided by others.

27. Is there any more information/specific guidance on what the signage is intended to direct or communicate in the designated location?

No. The Call for Artists identifies the project's goals and themes, which shall inform the artist's overall approach. Beyond those guiding principles, applicants are encouraged to develop their own artistic interpretation. More specific project direction will be developed during the proposal phase.

28. Does the budget include a maintenance plan?

No. The budget does not include funding for ongoing maintenance. However, the artist's project requirements will include submittal of a pre-fabrication conservation review and final conservation and maintenance report, which includes maintenance guidelines, both of which must be reviewed and approved by a qualified Art Conservator.

29. Are artists required to apply in a team?

No.

30. Does the Call for Artists anticipate or encourage the integration of technology, lighting, digital, or interactive elements? Or is the intent to focus more static artforms?

No. The project does not include plans to provide electrical power to the signage elements. Artists may explore non-powered interactive elements, such as QR codes or other digital components, where appropriate.

31. Is there any publicly available information on First Nations stakeholders and organizations who have provided input related to the LA River Master Plan or other river projects? I am looking for organizations with previous involvement with the LA River.

Yes. This information is included in the LA River Masterplan, which is linked in the Call for Artists document or available online. We encourage artists to review this resource as part of their research and understanding of the project context.

32. Why isn't this Call directed exclusively at Native American artists?

California State law prohibits public agencies from limiting contracting opportunities based on race, ethnicity, or national origin. This means the County cannot restrict eligibility in this Call exclusively to Native American artists because doing so would constitute preferential treatment, which is not permitted under California Government Code Section 7400 and federal law.