

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial (Central) Library Grand Reading Room Ceiling RFQ

The District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) Public Art Program is issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and statements of interest from individual artists, designers or art/design teams for a ceiling treatment to be produced in conjunction with the modernization of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial (Central) Library, at 901 G St. NW. This is an opportunity to design a signature visual feature of the Library's Grand Reading Room, drawing upon the Library's vast Special Collections archive of D.C. history. Applicants are asked to submit samples of past work, along with a statement of interest that explains the relevance of past work to this opportunity, by **August 31, 2017**. From this application, a professional Review Panel will award stipends to a group of semifinalists who will develop full proposals this fall.

Apply online at: <http://bit.ly/2h7CByp>

RFQ Frequently Asked Questions:

Where will the artwork be located?

In a double-height open space at the heart of the new 3rd floor Grand Reading Room, which occupies the eastern third of the Library, closest to 9th St. NW. The open space spans the 3rd and 4th floor, and is surrounded by windows that look into Special Collections on the 4th floor. See renderings [here](#).

Who is conducting this competition?

This project is being led by the DC Public Library Foundation, in partnership with the DC Public Library. The contract will be awarded by a Review Panel including a DCPL representative, an external curator, and representatives from the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the Mies van der Rohe Society at Illinois Institute of Technology.

How do I submit my idea for a ceiling design?

Only selected semifinalists will be invited to submit proposals for the ceiling design beginning in October. This RFQ is for past work samples and a statements of interest only. In the statement of interest, applicants should describe the relevance of past work to this opportunity.

How will artists be selected and how long will the process take?

We are issuing the Request for Qualifications in late July, inviting artists and designers to submit examples of past work and a statement on their project approach. The call will be listed here, as well as on the DCCA website, and other regional outlets. The RFQ will close in August.

In October, there will be a public meeting to review work submitted through the RFQ. The Review Panel will then vote to select at least 4 artists as semifinalists who receive stipends to develop full proposals.

The semifinalists will present their proposals at a second public meeting in late November or early December, at which time a finalist will be selected. The design will be developed from January-December 2018, vetted with external agencies and community stakeholders, and installed by summer 2019.

Why is the budget to be determined?

A portion of the hard costs of this project will be covered by the capital construction project through a process that is ongoing. Selected semifinalists will be presented with a budget range to consider when developing their proposals, with the understanding that the contract will be based on 20% of an overall budget that is subject to adjustment.

Who is eligible to apply? Do I need to be a D.C. resident?

You do not need to be a D.C. resident, but you do need to be available to meet in D.C. intermittently during 2018 and oversee site preparation and installation in spring and summer 2019.

All artists, designers, or teams 18 or older with a Social Security Number or Federal Tax ID are eligible to apply. In the event of equal scoring, preference will be given to those with a demonstrated connection to Washington, D.C. culture, history, and/or landscape through their past work or research.

The DC Public Library is committed to an open and accessible selection process for public art opportunities. In compliance with local and Federal statutes, there will be no discrimination based on the basis of actual or perceived: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, or place of residence or business.

How is the Library incorporating community input in this process?

Community input was an integral part of the design process for the MLK Jr. Memorial Library modernization project. The Library began seeking ideas about what residents wanted to see in a modernized central library in the fall of 2013, with over 60 community meetings.

Community representatives will give input to the professional Review Panel, which will select semifinalists and award stipends to develop full proposals in October 2017. The semifinalist proposals will be presented at a community meeting where the public will be invited to provide feedback, in late November or early December 2017. The Review Panel will incorporate this feedback into their final decision.

What kind of artwork will be considered?

The commissioned artwork will take the form of a ceiling treatment, added onto or fabricated as part of an acoustical surface. Three-dimensional structures and modest relief are encouraged in the final design. A full list of goals and design criteria are available in the RFQ.

How can I learn more about the material available for artists to use in Special Collections?

Applicants are not expected to have begun their research at this early RFQ stage. However, some understanding of DCPL's Special Collections may be useful to applicants.

A great place to start exploring DCPL's Special Collections, including the Washingtoniana Map collection, is through the online portal, Dig DC, where the Library's most unique maps can be accessed in digital form: <http://digdc.dclibrary.org>.

While the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library is closed for the three-year modernization, DCPL's unique Washingtoniana collections and reference materials — those not readily available at other local institutions — are being made available through interim services. DCPL Special Collections can also be accessed by appointment at the Peabody Room and at an interim location to be specified this fall. For more information on Special Collections interim services and contact info visit: <https://www.dclibrary.org/node/56712>.

We will hold an online information session about the application process and resources available in DCPL Special Collections to proposing artists. Please sign up for updates at the link below.

What is the relationship between this project and the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities Public Art Program?

DCPL is collaborating with DCCAHA in the selection process and future plans for public art at MLK Jr. Memorial Library. However, this is not an official DCCAHA project; funding for public art at MLK Jr. Memorial Library comes from private fundraising through the DC Public Library Foundation.

What is the future of public art at MLK Jr. Memorial Library?

A number of priorities have been established for the MLK Jr. Memorial Library through this process, which will be synthesized into a public art plan in collaboration with a professional advisory board and DCCAHA.

A guiding consideration of all permanent artworks in the building, due to its historical significance, is to highlight the Library's role as the first memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the District of Columbia, and the legacy of Dr. King's work in D.C. The Library is committed to honoring Dr. King's legacy and love of books through public art that enhances the building as an open and inclusive space for lifelong learning. As the public art plan is further developed there will be continued opportunities for community input. Please join our mailing list (link below) for updates.

CONTACT: For questions or accessibility accommodations, please contact Project Consultant, Natalie Campbell, at (202) 656-5089 or publicart@dcplfoundation.org.

To join our mailing list and receive updates about this opportunity, visit <http://bit.ly/2vWxkNt>.