

SWARTHMORE TOWN CENTER Request For Qualifications for Mural Artists

Activated: August 11, 2022

Application deadline: September 30, 2022

Submission Address: murals@swarthmoretowncenter.com

Call Summary

Artists are invited to submit qualifications to paint an outdoor mural in their own unique style and design that reflects the ethos of the Swarthmore Town Center, Inc. (Town Center) and emphasizes its unique attributes.

Background

Swarthmore is a small town with about 6,000 residents located 10 miles south of Philadelphia with a compact and active downtown. Swarthmore College is adjacent to the downtown and plays a big part in the life of the town, as does the Arboretum which is located on the Swarthmore College campus.

Swarthmore, affectionately known as “the ‘Ville,” is known for its active and engaged residents. The Farmers’ Market is a popular gathering spot on Saturday mornings, and the Swarthmore Co-op is one of the oldest food co-ops in the country. The Horticultural Society tends the many spectacular gardens in town and the Friends of the Arts sponsors monthly art exhibitions in Borough Hall. The library, located in the Town Center, has the highest per capita circulation rate of all public libraries in Delaware County. The newly established Park Avenue Community Center offers a performing arts venue and multiple programs for residents. Music, the arts, and crafts are highly appreciated by residents, many of whom are talented musicians and artisans.

Swarthmore’s downtown has enjoyed a resurgence of activity in the last few years because of new businesses and events in the town. The Town Center has embarked on updating the downtown’s visual identity to be more contemporary and to also build upon Swarthmore’s momentum as a destination for the arts— visual, performing, culinary, horticultural, and crafts.

In sum, Swarthmore is:

- A small town that is quaint, friendly, and welcoming.
- A place where craft is at the center of everything you'll discover — art, music, food, drink, horticulture.
- A place where green living is celebrated and supported in all of its forms.
- A place where kids feel safe, and families thrive.
- A place where generations of residents mix and mingle.
- A place with outdoor events and festivals where neighbors, friends, and visitors come together.

The purpose of this project is to help make Swarthmore a truly enjoyable place to walk where people can experience art daily. It is intended to enhance our sense of community as well as attract visitors to strengthen our local economy. We are ultimately seeking to install five murals around the town. The artist can use our positioning as a destination for the arts—visual, performing, culinary, horticultural, and craft-- as inspiration though is not limited to these categories

The first mural location is 5 Park Avenue in Swarthmore, centrally located in the downtown. The deadline to submit a proposal and qualifications is Friday, September 30 at 5PM. The Selection Committee will select up to three semi-finalists who will receive a stipend of \$500.00 to prepare design concepts. One finalist will then be selected by the Selection Committee, to complete, design and install the mural. The completion date for the mural is projected to be mid – late Spring 2023.

Project Commission

The artist's commission is for design and execution of the mural. Additionally, the Selection Committee would like the artist to share their design concept and methodology at a community event and be present at the unveiling of the mural. The artist will be responsible for materials, rental equipment, insurance, and travel and lodging expenses.

Project Description

The project is a 676 square foot outdoor mural (22' 6" width x 25' 7" height) on the side of an existing building at 5 Park Avenue in Swarthmore, PA 19081 (as displayed below). The mural area includes a steel door and a 43" wide side return, which includes two windows. Additionally, a vinyl shed and wooden railing abuts the building (see second photo below). The artist should incorporate the shed into the mural design and paint the wooden railing to integrate with the entire design. The shed is approximately an additional 100 square feet of surface area.



The building is three stories tall and faced with red brick. The wall has a southern exposure and receives direct sunlight. This necessitates the use of paints and a protective coating that will ensure the integrity of the mural colors over the years. There is easy access to the wall as there is open ground around the building.

Application requirements

Applications are to be submitted by e-mail to murals@swarthmoretowncenter.com in the recommended format so the selection committee may evaluate them in an objective manner. Entries that do not meet submission requirements will not be considered. All entries should be submitted in a digital form. All images and document files must be compiled into one PDF document. File size should not exceed 25MB.

Required information and materials to be submitted must include:

- Letter of interest (approx. 500 words), including applicant's legal name, and contact information. Describe your approach to developing imagery.
- Artist Bio, Resume or CV.
- Images of previous mural work and/or work in similar scope/scale showing proficiency for mural work. Artists are allowed to apply in teams. For each mural, provide:
 - Client's name and contact information
 - Mural cost
 - Duration to complete and installation date
 - Methods on how each mural was executed (paint system, mural substrate—masonry, cementous board or canvas

NOTE: This is not a request for proposals. Artists are not required to submit a mural design or concept until selected.

Selection Process

The selection process has two steps:

1. Selection of Semi-Finalists:

The first step includes a committee review of the applications received beginning in early October 2022. Up to three semi-finalists will be chosen from the submitted applications. Each semi-finalist will receive \$500.00 to create a detailed design concept for the mural.

The selection criteria for semi-finalists are as follows:

- Creativity and innovation
- Integration with Swarthmore Town Center

- Mural experience
- Skill and craftsmanship
- Community response

2. **Submission of Final Design by Semi-Finalists:**

The second step is the submission of the detailed design concept, including the projected cost, by each semi-finalist. The Selection Committee will review these submissions and one finalist will then be selected to receive the commission. The selected artist will then finalize their design and provide up to two iterations to respond to comments.

The selection criteria for the design are:

- Creativity and innovation
- Integration with Swarthmore Town Center
- Positive emotional impact of the design
- Community response

Timeline

September 30, 2022, 5PM:	Deadline for submissions
November 5, 2022:	Semi-finalists announced
December 15, 2022:	Semi-finalists detailed design concepts due
January 6, 2023:	Announcement of the selected artist and design concept
Spring 2023:	Installation period of mural
Early Summer 2023:	Public celebration and dedication

Additional Information

If you need additional information about Swarthmore or the project, please send an email to murals@swarthmoretowncenter.com.