



March 2024

Ray Charles Easley Memorial Sculpture

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

DEADLINE: APRIL 29, 2024, 11:59PM CST

INTRODUCTION

The City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), in partnership with the office of Alderman Christopher Taliaferro and the Chicago Park District invite professional artists and artist teams with a demonstrated history of completing major permanent outdoor public art projects to submit their qualifications for a **\$150,000** commission remembering community leader Ray Charles Easley and his continuing legacy to be placed in Austin Town Hall Park. (Location is pending Park Enhancement Committee approval).

PUBLIC ART MENU PROGRAM

This project is generated by the City of Chicago's Public Art Menu Program, through which DCASE works collaboratively with Aldermanic offices to administer neighborhood public art commissions using discretionary capital funds provided by the City's Wards.

SUMMARY OF THE OPPORTUNITY

DCASE, Alderman Christopher Taliaferro, and the 29th Ward seek to honor Ray Charles Easley for his significant contributions to the Chicago Westside community. As a long-time community activist with the Westside Branch of the NAACP, Mr. Easley held the position of Chair of the labor and industry committee.

In this role, he facilitated job opportunities for Westside residents by offering classes, teaching basic skills, assisting with job applications, and providing computer guidance. His efforts in promoting job readiness and empowerment positively impacted the lives of many within the community.

In addition to his work with the NAACP, Mr. Easley served as the human resources director for the Village of Maywood. He also collaborated with organizations such as the Westside Ministers' Coalition, the Westside Health Authority, and the Northwest Austin Council. Furthermore, he chaired the board of Circle Family Health Care Network, demonstrating his dedication to improving healthcare accessibility in the community.

Ray Charles Easley's contributions are a testament to his commitment to Chicago's Westside, leaving a lasting legacy of service and empowerment.



The site for this sculpture will be near the east entrance of Austin Town Hall Park, 5610 W. Lake St. Chicago, IL 60644 next to Central Avenue. The park has been a place of community activism, where residents have gathered for protests, rallies, and social justice movements. It has provided a platform for the local residents to voice their concerns and advocate for change.

Successful public art proposals will approach the artwork's subject with a deep understanding of Ray Charles Easley's personal story and his leadership role in impacting the Westside of Chicago. Successful proposals will address its site with a bold and creative vision that is sensitive to the historic setting. Designs will be informed by a robust community engagement process involving the artist and interacting with project area neighborhood residents, Ray Charles Easley's family, historians and organizers. Designs should include elements of an appropriate size, scale, likeness and orientation to engage viewing from multiple potential vantage points. The artwork must be engineered to withstand the demands of a permanent outdoor installation in a dense urban setting and require minimal to no annual maintenance; only durable and resilient media will be considered. Artists skilled in crafting sculptures that accurately capture the likeness of the subject are preferred.

Community members are encouraged to share this opportunity with artists they hope will apply.

SITE

The Austin neighborhood on Chicago's west side has a rich and storied history, and at the heart of this vibrant community lies Austin Town Hall Park, a place that has played a pivotal role in the development and identity of the area.

The Austin Town Hall Park and Cultural Center, which once served as the town hall of the Village of Cicero, Illinois, has been repurposed as a vibrant space for Park activities. Today, it offers a range of programs, including dance, music, and theater classes, as well as music production and more. Situated on the former site of Cicero's town hall, Austin Town Hall Park features a Georgian Revival-style field house and cultural center, designed by architects Michaelsen and Rognstad. This versatile building, inspired by Philadelphia's Independence Hall, provides spaces for both athletic and performing arts activities.

The sculpture honoring Ray Charles Easley and his legacy will be located near the east side of Austin Town Hall Park next to the gateway on Central Ave. The location is pending Chicago Park District Park Enhancement Committee approval. This entryway is used by the majority of the community because of its proximity to Central Ave.



Austin Town Hall Park front entrance, that faces south.



Image is on east side of the cultural center next to Central Ave. Yellow rectangle indicates possible sculpture location.



Austin Town Hall Park aerial view. Yellow dot indicates sculpture's location.

COMMUNITY

The Austin neighborhood of Chicago is a vibrant and historically significant area located on the city's west side. Its history is deeply intertwined with the growth and development of Chicago, dating back to the late 19th century when it was first settled. One of its most notable historical features is Columbus Park, a beautifully landscaped park designed by famed landscape architect Jens Jensen. This park serves as a testament to the city's commitment to green spaces and community recreation. Austin is also home to the Austin Town Hall Cultural Center, a grand Beaux-Arts building constructed in the 1920s, which has played a central role in the neighborhood's cultural life.

Demographically, Austin has experienced significant changes over the years. During the mid-20th century, it saw an influx of African American residents as part of the Great Migration. In recent years, the neighborhood has become more diverse, with a mix of African American,



Latinx, and other communities. Present-day Austin is a neighborhood that showcases resilience and community spirit. Residents are engaged in local initiatives to revitalize the area, improve education, and create economic opportunities. The neighborhood faces challenges related to crime and economic disparities but continues to work towards a brighter future, with community organizations and leaders actively striving to make Austin a safer and more prosperous place for all its residents.

Community Data Snapshot | Austin



Population and Households

The population and household tables include general demographic, social, and economic characteristics summarized for Austin.

General Population Characteristics, 2020

	Austin	City of Chicago	CMAP Region
Total Population	96,557	2,746,388	8,577,735
Total Households	35,864	1,142,725	3,266,741
Average Household Size	2.7	2.4	2.6
Percent Population Change, 2010-20	-2.0	1.9	1.7
Percent Population Change, 2000-20	-17.8	-5.2	5.3

Source: 2000, 2010 and 2020 Census.

Race and Ethnicity, 2017-2021

	Austin		City of Chicago		CMAP Region	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
White (Non-Hispanic)	5,190	5.3	907,499	33.1	4,289,683	50.1
Hispanic or Latino (of Any Race)	17,154	17.6	787,795	28.7	2,005,239	23.4
Black (Non-Hispanic)	72,823	74.8	788,673	28.8	1,402,691	16.4
Asian (Non-Hispanic)	495	0.5	185,202	6.8	636,825	7.4
Other/Multiple Races (Non-Hispanic)	1,651	1.7	72,950	2.7	236,095	2.8

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey five-year estimates.

Universe: Total population

SELECTION PROCESS

Following the RFQ application deadline, DCASE will convene a selection panel of community representatives, arts professionals, JPSTC staff, and elected officials to review the applications. The committee will select 3-4 finalists, who will be commissioned to develop public art proposals. Finalists will present their design proposals to the selection panel and a final artist or artist team will be selected.



SCHEDULE*

* All dates are approximate.

STAGE	START	END	WEEKS
RFQ open via CAFÉ online application system	3/8/24	4/29/24	7
Artist Information Session, zoom, registration required	4/10/24		
Review of qualifications	5/1/24	5/17/24	3
Committee selects 3-4 finalists	5/20/24	5/24/24	1
Notification of finalists	6/10/24		3
Finalists' design development	6/10/24	8/9/24	8
Finalists' presentations	Week of 8/12/24		1
Artist Awarded Commission	Early September		

BUDGET

Finalists will be paid a \$1,000 honorarium to develop proposals.

The artwork commission will be \$150,000, which is to be inclusive of all expenses to bring the project from concept design to installation, including but not limited to artist and design fees, above and below ground engineering, fabrication, city agency review and approvals (e.g. OUC, structural) installation costs, permit fees, and insurance.

A State of Illinois certified engineer will be required for structural drawings and calculations. An installation contractor licensed to perform work in the public way in the City of Chicago will be required for installation.

ELIGIBILITY

This opportunity is open nationally to all professional artists and artist teams, though the project advisory panel may have a preference for locally-based artists and artist teams.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applicants will be shortlisted based on a competitive review of the following:

- Artistic excellence: demonstrated skill and quality craftsmanship in examples of past work; strength and originality of concept conveyed in the letter of interest.
- Artistic Experience: artists skilled in crafting sculptures that accurately capture the likeness of the subject are preferred.
- Community engagement: meaningful relationship of the artwork with Ray Charles Easley, his likeness, and the Austin community.

HOW TO APPLY

Application is available via CaFÉ (www.callforentry.org) at the following link:

https://artist.callforentry.org/festivals_unique_info.php?ID=12709



Interested applicants must register with CaFÉ to view the application. Deadline for submissions is April 29, 2024 11:59 pm, CST.

For technical assistance using CaFÉ, please visit:

<https://www.callforentry.org/artist-help-cafe/>

Virtual Info Session: 4/10/2024
12:30pm
Via Zoom

Register in advance for this meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtde-vrDMpEt0RBFUKfYA50EhY5cnymaf0>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

WHAT TO SUBMIT

Each artist or artist team must submit an entirely digital application.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Applications must include the following materials:

1. **Letter of Interest:** A one- (1) page letter of interest stating why Ray Charles Easley and the Austin neighborhood is meaningful and appropriate for the applicant's work, as well as initial conceptual ideas.
2. **CV:** A two- (2) page resume or curriculum vitae (CV).
 - If applying as an artist team or arts organization, provide one resume or CV for each team member.
 - If applying as an artist team or arts organization, a list of key team members and their roles/affiliations inclusive of designers, fabricators, installers and structural engineer, with individual CVs.
4. **Past Work Samples:** Six (6) to ten (10) total images of past large-scale public art and infrastructure projects by the artist or the artist team's lead artist(s).
2. **Optional:** One (1) video, edited to no more than two (2) minutes in length, may also be submitted but is not required.
3. **Annotated Image List:** An annotated image list that includes the title, media, year completed, dimensions, location (if site-specific), project budget (if applicable) timeline, and client or commissioning entity for each corresponding image or video.
 - If a video is submitted, please include two to three (2-3) sentences to describe its context.
 - Please note, the annotated image list may include thumbnails of submitted images but does not replace the need to upload individual image files in fulfillment of a) above.



***EXCEPTION:**

Artists, artist teams and arts organizations included in the [City of Chicago Public Art Prequalified List 2023-2024](#) may submit to Maryrose Pavkovic, via email: Maryrose.pavkovic@cityofchicago.org

- 1-page letter of interest
- Up to 5 new images of recent work
- Up to 1 new video of recent work (optional)
- Annotated list of artworks

QUESTIONS

No phone calls.

Contact: Maryrose Pavkovic, Maryrose.pavkovic@cityofchicago.org