



Public Art Call to Artists

Project:

Sculpture Park

Normal, Illinois

CALL TO ARTISTS

The Town of Normal is pleased to announce a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to professional artists with existing inventory of outdoor sculpture available for purchase. This is the first project of the Town's Public Art Master plan, adopted in June 2024. The sculpture park will be located in the green space at the center of the circle drive at 1110 Douglas Street in Normal. This body anticipates selecting up to three unique pieces of art to be purchased and installed by the end of 2025 or spring 2026. Once the final selections are approved, the artists and the Town of Normal will agree to the budget and installation timelines in the final contract.

To apply:

Submit a digital copy of your RFQ response by the deadline to [Cultural Arts Director Beth Whisman](#). Early application is encouraged.

TIMELINE

Deadline:

Applications must be received no later than Friday, Sept. 5, 2025, at 5 p.m. Central Time. Applications received after the deadline may not be considered during the selection process. Application before the final deadline is encouraged.

Review and Selection:

Rolling review by staff and the Public Art Working Group following the deadline; the Town may request additional information or conduct interviews.

Anticipated Installation:

Fall 2025 through Spring 2026.

ELIGIBILITY

An artist/artisan is defined as a skilled practitioner who generates designs and concepts for creative works that reflect form, beauty and aesthetic perception.

The Town's art purchases are open to all professional artists, artisans, or artist-led teams legally authorized to work in the United States. Preference may be given to artists who (a) reside or maintain a studio in Illinois, (b) demonstrate a strong record of work with Illinois communities or institutions, or (c) proposals with robust local benefit and engagement plans.

Works must be original to the artist. Art created by Artificial Intelligence (AI) will not be considered.

Subcontractors may be used and are defined as those providing technical implementation such as construction, fabrication and/or assembly for portions or all of a finished product under direct supervision and control of the selected artist. (Examples might be a base for a sculpture, adding certain materials to a finish, etc.) The contracted artist will be required to provide proof of insurance for themselves and any subcontractors if they are selected for the final installation.

Persons not eligible for submission:

- Town of Normal employees and their immediate family members/persons living in their household
- Elected officials and their immediate family members/persons living in their household

PROJECT SITE

Location:

The sculpture park will be in the green space at the center of the circle drive at **1110 Douglas Street**, Normal. (see maps below)

About the site:

The site is home to One Normal Plaza which originally started as the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's home and school (ISSCS) in 1865 to house and care for orphans of the Civil War. It later housed orphaned children whose fathers served in any war.

An existing memorial sculpture, "Circle of Friends," will remain as part of this park experience. This piece honors the people who lived and worked at ISSCS.

Today, open space surrounding the area is used for recreation and sports, and the Town offers programs at an indoor recreation facility called the Community Activity Center. The site is located just off historic Route 66.

Map:



Image description: This map shows the planned Sculpture Garden location, identified by the yellow star (★). The sculpture park will be in the green space at the center of the circle drive for the Town of Normal Community Activity Center, 1110 Douglas Street, Normal.

The circle drive is bounded by Lincoln Avenue to the south and the Community Activity Center to the north.

Design Sketch:



Image description: This illustration shows a conceptual drawing of the proposed Sculpture Garden, bounded by Cole Street to the east, the Community Activity Center to the north, Douglas Street to the west and Lincoln Avenue to the south.

The illustration identifies approximate sculpture locations by yellow stars (★).

The locations are primarily on the east side of the Sculpture Garden, closest to Cole Street. All approximate locations are near planned walkways.

ARTISTIC OBJECTIVES

The Public Art Working Group has no preferred themes and does not wish to limit content. Rather, its members ask artists to consider the unique location, history and natural aesthetics of the space.

Selected pieces must be durable, safe and cost-effective to maintain with limited annual maintenance. All artwork must meet the ADA and Illinois Accessibility Code requirements for any protruding objects in the pathways.

The artist must be comfortable engaging in public activities in collaboration with the Town of Normal and its art partners, including but not limited to the McLean County Arts Center and Illinois Art Station. Examples of public engagement could include educational conversations with students or residents, talking with media about the artwork, or attending a ribbon cutting.

Engineer/Architect Notes:

- The artist should consider that this art piece will be located in a family-friendly area where pedestrians and children will be present. The safety of the piece should be taken into consideration.
- The artist should consider the possibility of graffiti or vandalism to the piece and provide ideas or solutions to accommodate such acts.
- The sculpture shall not contain a fire or water element.
- The art installation should not create habitat or opportunities for pigeons to roost.

SELECTION PROCESS

Selection Criteria:

Criteria by which all proposals will be evaluated may include:

1. **Artistic quality and originality**
2. **Size and fit for the existing park design**
3. **Relevance to site and context** (reflects community, considers the visitor experience in the park's specific footprint)
4. **Durability, safety, and maintenance** (materials, fabrication quality, conservation needs)
5. **Artist experience** (successful public installations)
6. **Budget and value** (price inclusive of delivery/installation)

Preference may be applied for Illinois and/or McLean County ties. The Town may also consider other factors as it deems relevant to the community's best interest.

Phase I:

During Phase I, responses to this RFQ will be reviewed by Town staff and the Executive Director of the McLean County Arts Center. This group will consider all items that are included in the applications and select a limited number of pieces for the larger working group to review for final selection.

Phase II:

The Town of Normal Public Art Working Group consists of residents, art experts/patrons and Town of Normal staff. This group will lead Phase II of the selection process. Once RFQ responses are assessed by Town staff, the group will review the Phase 1 selections. The Public Art Working Group will make a formal recommendation to the Normal Town Council for the purchase and installation of up to three sculptures.

Council Approval:

The Town Council has the final authority to approve or decline the purchase of any one or more recommended sculptures. The Town Council is in no way bound to adhere to the recommendation(s) of the Public Art Working Group. A sculpture's selection by the reviewing body in Phase I or Phase II does not in any way entitle the artist to selection by the Town Council.

Following selection by the Town Council, Town staff will coordinate with the chosen artist(s) to ensure necessary transportation, delivery, insurance, installation and future care/maintenance plans are in place.

BUDGET DETAILS

The Public Art Working Group has an approved purchasing budget of \$82,500. The budgeted amount includes all expenses associated with purchasing the art pieces, any licenses, taxes, insurance, transportation, delivery, and documentation of the completed project. Any expense that exceeds the contracted amount will be the artist's responsibility.

The artists shall be responsible for coordinating with Town staff and representatives to oversee all aspects of the art installation. The final cost of the art will be agreed upon and included in a written contract.

PROJECT PERFORMANCE AND CONTRACTING

Schedule:

Delivery/installation by agreed date(s); time is of the essence.

Turnkey Delivery:

Price must include crating, shipping/handling, and insurance during transit. Artists are welcome to assist or offer specific instructions for installation.

Warranties and Maintenance:

Warrant against defects in materials/workmanship for at least one year; artist to provide maintenance/conservation guidance.

LEGAL INFORMATION

Intellectual Property and VARA:

Artist retains copyright. The Town will receive a perpetual, royalty-free license to reproduce, distribute, and display representations of the artwork in any media and for any municipal purpose, including commercial purposes. Artist will provide a VARA waiver/consent to allow relocation, reasonably maintenance/conservation, and temporary or permanent removal/deaccession.

Physical Property Rights:

At the completion of the installation of the sculptures, all artwork and installations will be the property of the Town of Normal. The maintenance of the piece(s) will be the responsibility of the Town of Normal, unless the Town determines to enter a maintenance agreement with the contracted artist(s).

Reservation of Rights/No Obligation:

The Town of Normal reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submissions, to waive any informalities or irregularities, and to cancel this RFQ in whole or in part at any time. The Town may request additional information from any respondent and may negotiate with one or more respondents as deemed in the Town's best interest.

This RFQ does not commit the Town to award any contract, to pay any costs incurred in preparing a response, or to procure or contract for any services or products. No contract shall be formed unless and until the Town Council authorizes (as applicable) and the parties execute a written agreement containing terms and conditions acceptable to the Town.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this project, please submit the following documents with relevant information in **one** PDF, in the below order:

Letter of Intent and Portfolio Including:

- Sculpture images and names, indicating what type of medium was used
- Your name and the name of your team members, if applying as a team
- Your contact information including address, telephone number and e-mail address
- Any connections to Normal or Illinois

Resume and Artist Statement:

- Resume for the lead artist (1-page maximum each)
- State any artist goals and objectives

References:

- References of at least three professionals who have detailed knowledge of your work and methods. Include contact name, project type and scale, telephone number and email address for each reference.

Format and Submission Deadline:

- Only send applications in PDF form. No other format will be accepted.
- All submittals become property of the Town of Normal and will not be returned.
- Submissions might be presented for public viewing via the Freedom of Information Act
- Email applications to Beth Whisman, bwhisman@normalil.gov

If you have any questions about this RFQ, please e-mail them to Beth Whisman at the address listed above with subject title "Sculpture RFQ Question" by Thursday, Sept. 4 at 5 p.m.