

ARTS IN PUBLIC PLACES

2025 MASTER PLAN



Erie County Public
Art Plan



ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC ART PLAN



MISSION

The Erie County Arts in Public Places (AIPP) Initiative seeks to make art accessible for all Erie County residents and visitors and to support a sense of community connection and civic pride.

The initiative aims to improve quality of life, support local artists, and foster a vibrant artistic environment that reflects the diverse culture and creativity of Erie County residents.

**MAKE ART ACCESSIBLE
FOR ALL COUNTY
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HISTORY

Erie County routinely provides robust financial support to arts and cultural organizations through annual operating support grants and occasional, one-time capital grants. In the last three years, the county has allocated over \$23 million towards cultural funding, supporting over 100 local arts organizations.

In 2023, the County Legislature passed Erie County Local Law #4 to further develop the county's financial support of public art. The law created a funding mechanism related to certain capital projects. Specifically, the law requires one percent of the cost of qualifying capital projects to be allocated to a "Public Art Fund". The maximum public art allocation for any capital project is \$10,000. Presently, a total of \$290,651 has been allocated to the Public Art Fund, a 2024 appropriation of \$153,000 and a 2025 appropriation of \$137,651.

The fund supports the implementation of public art projects chosen by the Arts in Public Places (AIPP) Committee and finalized in the annual Master Public Art Plan.

IMPACT OF ART IN PUBLIC PLACES

The public art industry contributed more than \$4.4 billion to the U.S. economy in 2023. Public artists earned approximately \$1.7 billion in public commissions last year.¹ The average public art commission fee was \$380,000. Public art is known to improve public safety and well-being.² Additionally, the communal nature of public art gives marginalized communities who have been historically excluded from the public sphere the chance for self-expression and participation in the arts. Works of Public Art have the power to transform public spaces and individual lives.³ These transformations include new job creation, collaboration, and increased tourism.⁴

Erie County endeavors to support worthwhile initiatives that promote the public good and improve the quality of life for residents while promoting the region's unique cultural identity. The Arts in Public Places Initiative allows artists to share their creativity in producing art that will be accessible to all county residents and visitors and foster a sense of community connection and civic pride.

PUBLIC ART
CONTRIBUTED
\$4 BILLION
TO THE US ECONOMY IN 2023

[1] Arntsen, R. (2024, May 6). The Economic Power of Public Art.

[2] Young, C. (2022, November 16). How Public Art Can Improve Quality of Life and Advance Equity.

[3] Public Art Network Council . (n.d.). Why Public Art Matters.

[4] Dhenin, M. (2021, December 6). Why Public Art is Good for Cities.

AIPP COMMITTEE

VOTING MEMBERS

Chairperson: Alexa Wajed

Co-Founder, Eat Off Art

Vice Chairperson: Donald J. Siuta

Director, WNY Artists Group

Committee Member: Susan O'Connor Baird

Board Member, Buffalo AKG Art Museum

Committee Member: Bernice Radle

Executive Director, Preservation Buffalo Niagara

Committee Member: Edreys Wajed

Co-Founder, Eat Off Art

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Erie County Executive: Mark C. Poloncarz

Designee: David Bojanowski

Chairperson of the Legislature: Timothy Meyers

Chairperson of the Legislature's Community Enrichment Committee:

Jeanne Vinal

Designee: Gretchen Schulz

Legislature Minority Leader: John J. Mills

Designee: Bryan Fiume

Commissioner of Public Works: William Geary

AIPP PROCESS

The Arts in Public Places Committee, comprised of visual arts professionals and community representatives, first convened in the summer of 2024. Members elected officers and adopted bylaws in early fall.

Soon thereafter, the Committee began working with various county departments to develop a Call for Artists to solicit public art proposals from local artists. This process involved identifying appropriate locations, establishing application and insurance requirements, and determining scoring criteria.

In late fall 2024, a selection committee was established to review submissions and make recommendations for funding. Recommended project proposals, approved by the general AIPP Committee on January 14, 2025, are incorporated herein. A Public Hearing was held on February 6, 2025 to allow public review and comments.

The final version of this Plan will be submitted to the Erie County Legislature for approval by March 1, 2025, per the requirements of the law.

STATEMENT OF CHAIR

"I am honored to be in a position to amplify my preexisting advocacy and support for professional and practicing artists. Our Committee centered its enthusiasm around providing fair opportunities, realistic wages and compensation for working and aspiring artists. Part of the committee's mission is to diversify representation in the public arts space specific to Erie County, with varying entry points that allow for exhibition, installation and acquisition of fine art through this Arts in Public Places Initiative. With that said, we will continue to thoughtfully and strategically announce more calls for art best suited for demonstrating our mission and initiative reflecting this Public Art Law."

— **ALEXA WAJED**
AIPP Chair

Approved artists will work with county officials and AIPP committee members to finalize contracts, produce final designs in coordination with Erie County Department of Public Works, and oversee the fabrication and installation of artwork.

2024 AIPP CALL FOR ARTISTS

Overview

The 2024 Call for Artists invited artists to submit public art proposals for five locations throughout Erie County: Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park, Como Lake Park, Ellicott Creek Park, Erie County Health Mall, and the Buffalo Convention Center. The Call was open exclusively to artists residing in Erie County with an additional focus and priority for artists who are racially and ethnically diverse. Artist budgets could not exceed \$200,000. The AIPP Committee reserved the right to recommend one, multiple, or no projects arising from the 2024 Call for Artists, depending on the quality of submissions.

Launch

The Call was finalized and released to the public on October 15th, 2024 and remained open until December 16th, 2024. In addition to multiple press releases and a coordinated social media campaign across Erie County and AIPP Committee affiliated accounts, the Committee held a press conference on October 18th. The press conference was attended by Deputy County Executive Lisa Chimera and Legislature Chairwoman April Baskin. The press strategy generated multiple promotional stories across various media outlets.

On November 15th, Chairwoman Wajed hosted a virtual information session to provide artists with a live forum to ask questions. Thirty-two participants joined the session which was recorded and later posted on the AIPP website for artists unable to attend. A summary of questions and answers was also posted.

Submissions

A total of 58 eligible submissions were received in response to the Call for Artists. Applications were received both online and in-person at the Erie County Rath Building.

Below is a breakdown of submissions by location:

- Convention Center: 15
- Como Lake Park: 6
- Ellicott Creek Park: 12
- Erie County Health Mall: 15
- Seneca Bluffs Natural Habitat Park: 10

In reviewing submissions, committee members considered the artist's professional background and experience with similar projects, the proposed design and its relationship to the site and broader community, as well as maintenance requirements associated with the project.

Schedule and Milestones

October 15, 2024	Call for Artists: Open
November 5, 2024	Deadline for Questions on Call
November 13, 2024	Erie County AIPP Response to Questions
November 15, 2024	Virtual Information Session for Artists
December 16, 2024 at 12pm	Deadline for Submissions
February 6, 2025	Public Hearing on Draft Master Public Art Plan
March 1, 2025	Final Public Art Plan Submitted to Legislature
Spring 2025	Selected Artists Under Contract
May 1, 2025	Master Public Art Plan Presented to DEP by Legislature
Spring – Winter 2025	Fabrication and Installation

RECOMMENDED PUBLIC ART PROJECT



Buffalo Convention Center Mural Artists: Cassandra Ott and Chuck Tingley

Address: Buffalo Convention Center, 153 Franklin Street, Buffalo, NY, 14202

Public Art Location: Exterior wall along Pearl Street

Artist Description: Our mural design covers the majority of the proposed Buffalo Convention Center wall and is inspired by Buffalo's beloved blue and red. We used these colors as a springboard to create a vision for a colorful corridor down Franklin Avenue. Buffalo is full of murals depicting its namesake bison and legendary wings, but Buffalo is so much more than those icons. The welcoming communities, deep histories and industry along Lake Erie are represented here in a harmonious swell of blues and reds. Elements representative of nature, waves and fingerprints line the sidewalk with a sea of colorful connections that welcome the community and visitors to the region. Highlights of a metallic gold are interspersed throughout the design to represent the sun over Lake Erie and add interest.

RECOMMENDED PUBLIC ART PROJECT



(Artist Rendering)

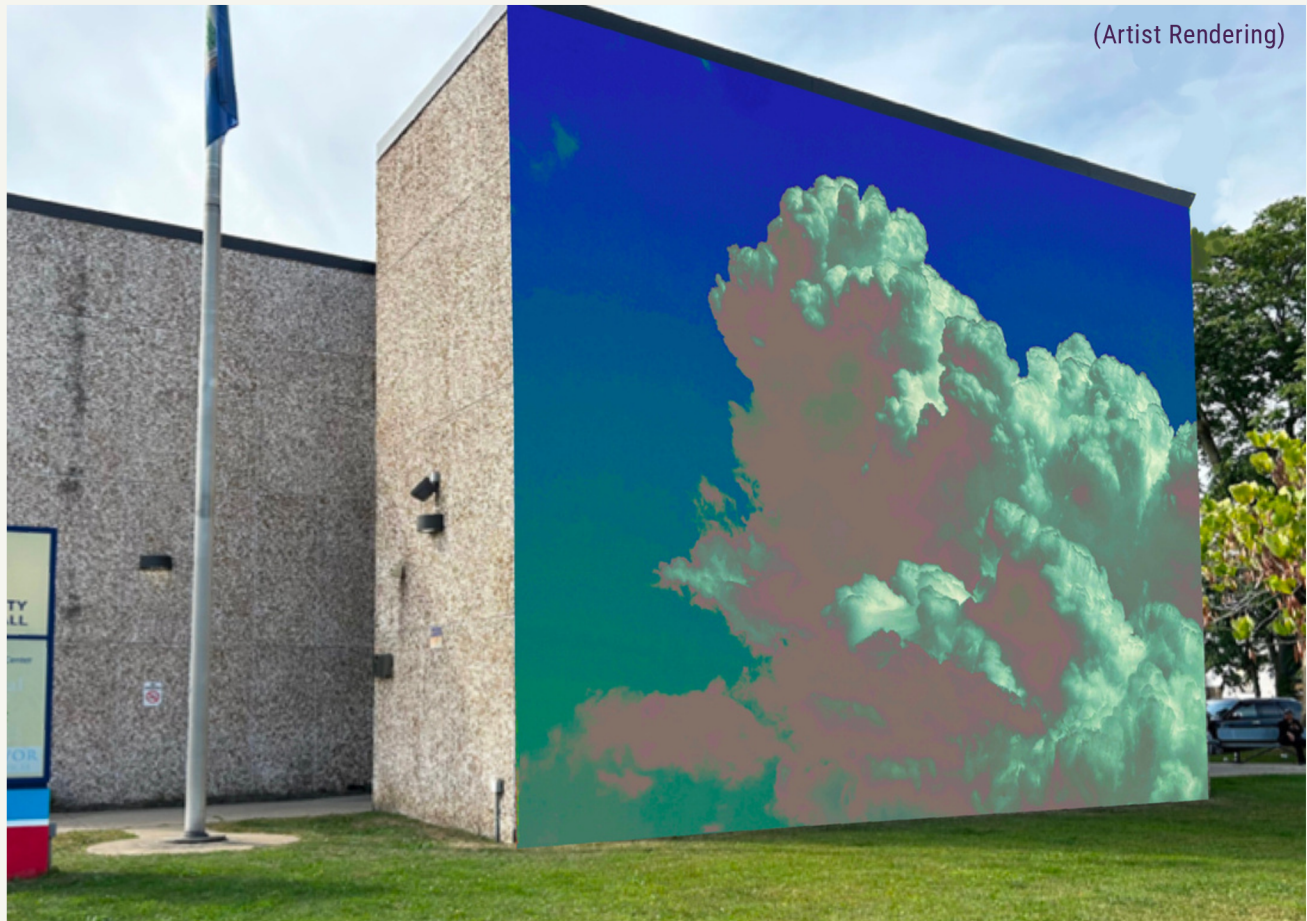
Ellicott Creek Park Sculpture Artist: Ellen Steinfeld

Address: Ellicott Creek Park, 1 Ellicott Creek Drive, Tonawanda, NY 14150

Public Art Location: Triangular grassy area along main park road at turn into park casino parking lot

Artist Description: The proposed sculpture, Flora & Fauna, incorporates many images experienced while walking, biking, or fishing and using the recreational amenities of Ellicott Creek Park. Various habitats and diverse images: of fish, plants, flowers, balls, sun, and water are all integrated into the sculpture. The finished color blue represents the sky and the waterways.

RECOMMENDED PUBLIC ART PROJECT



Erie County Health Mall Mural **Artist: Laura Valkwitch**

Address: Erie County Health Mall, 1500 Broadway Ave Buffalo NY 14212

Public Art Location: Exterior wall on the east side of the building

Artist Description: This artwork would invite viewers to pause and reflect, offering them a moment of tranquility and inspiration in their everyday lives. It could serve as a gentle reminder of the beauty in nature and the vastness of the world above us, encouraging everyone to look up and dream.

2025 AIPP SMALL WORKS ACQUISITION PLAN

Overview

The Arts in Public Places Committee is committed to enhancing Erie County's public spaces with the inclusion of artwork that reflects the diversity and creativity of the local community. As part of this commitment, the Committee will consider the purchase of small works of art to be displayed inside various Erie County-owned properties. This initiative provides local artists with an opportunity to contribute to the aesthetic and cultural landscape of the region while promoting public engagement with the arts.

Call for Artists - Spring 2025

A Call for Artists will be issued in the Spring of 2025, inviting Erie County residents to submit their work for consideration in the small works acquisition program. The selected pieces will be displayed in various county-owned buildings, such as government offices, libraries, and community centers, where they can be enjoyed by the public and contribute to a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere.

Submission Guidelines

Eligibility: The Call for Artists is open exclusively to artists who are current residents of Erie County. Artists may submit up to three works for consideration, provided each submission adheres to the guidelines set forth in the Call

Submission Process: Artists must complete an online application and submit digital images of their work, along with a brief

artist statement, a description of the submitted artwork(s), and a proposed installation plan (if applicable). Additional required documentation may include the artist's resume and proof of Erie County residency.

Artwork Specifications: Submissions should be suitable for indoor display, considering factors such as scale, material durability, and safety in public spaces. Artwork that is easy to maintain, transport, and install will be given priority.

Selection Process: The Arts in Public Places Committee will review all submissions based on artistic merit, relevance to the public, and the fit for specific spaces within Erie County-owned properties. The selection panel will ensure that the works align with the County's goals of cultural representation, diversity, and public engagement.

Timeline

Spring 2025	Call for Artists announcement and open submission period.
Summer 2025	Submission review and selection process.
Fall 2025	Notification of selected artists and coordination for installation.
Ongoing	Display and celebration of selected works in Erie County properties.

2025 AIPP SMALL WORKS ACQUISITION PLAN CONTINUED

Submission Details and Further Information

Artists will be able access the complete guidelines, including technical specifications, submission instructions, and FAQs, at erie.gov/publicart. All updates, deadlines, and notifications regarding the Call for Artists will also be posted on this website.

We encourage all local artists to participate and look forward to seeing the creative works that will enhance the public spaces of Erie County for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors.

2025 PUBLIC HEARING

Date: Thursday February 6, 2025

Time: 5:30 PM

Location: Burchfield Penney Art Center

A Public Hearing was held at the Burchfield Penney Art Center on February 6th, 2025 at 5:30PM. The hearing was advertised in the Buffalo News, The Criterion, and posted on Erie County's website and social media. The public was invited to review and comment on this Plan and the proposed public art projects and small works acquisition plan included herein.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Erie County Art in Public Places Committee would like to thank the following organizations for their diverse contributions to the development of this Plan, including offering their facilities for meeting space.

Eat Off Art

WNY Artist Group

Buffalo AKG Art Museum

Erie County Department of Public Works

Erie County Department of Parks, Recreation, & Forestry

Burchfield Penney Art Center

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