

**Request for Proposal – Artist/Creative Team
Region 4, ND
ENDLESS SKY - DYNAMIC LAYERS**

***ARTS ACROSS THE PRAIRIE:
Placemaking in Rural North Dakota***

Arts Across the Prairie is a first of its kind, statewide Creative Placemaking program, developed by North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA). This grew out of a presentation on art as a catalyst for community change at the fall 2019 Governor’s Main Street Initiative in Bismarck. The statewide participants discussed the need for artistic and cultural enrichment and access to art within their rural communities. North Dakotans expressed a concerted desire for greater cross-community collaboration and to enhance the vitality of art throughout the state.

Arts Across the Prairie will create eight large-scale art installations – one in each geographic region in the state – that reflect the unique history, landscape, and cultural heritage as defined by Stakeholder Groups in these regions. All eight artworks will be placed in decidedly rural locations. (Rural = no buildings, no people!) The art installations should reference and represent the natural setting, as well as the cultural and economic history of the region as determined by each of the Stakeholder Groups.

As a community-driven initiative, *Arts Across the Prairie* aims to promote civic pride, affirm uniqueness of place, and strengthen cultural identity. This program will create public-private partnerships throughout the state and will provide a national model of this type of creative placemaking, an important step forward for our state. The initiative will foster community innovation across North Dakota in a way that is equitable, scalable, and sustainable.

The goals of *Arts Across the Prairie* are to:

- Strengthen cross-county networking and regional collaboration
- Promote tourism for in- and out-of-state visitors
- Stimulate economic activity and development in rural areas of North Dakota
- Build stronger arts communities across the state
- Invest in North Dakota artists by providing professional training and support
- Celebrate and leverage existing assets with an infusion of creative expression
- Heighten visibility of North Dakota’s creative sector and talent

NDCA is committed to providing opportunities to all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnic origin, religion, political belief, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or physical ability.

PLACEMAKING IN REGION 4 – NE NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota has eight distinct regions. Northeastern North Dakota's Region 4 is comprised of Pembina, Walsh, Grand Forks, and Nelson Counties. Regional and local leaders from business, arts, education and community were recruited to formulate a roadmap for the development of one site to be the artistic, historical, and cultural representation for the four counties.

NDCA is working with Red River Regional Council in Grafton and Public Arts Commission in Grand Forks to facilitate the Region 4 project. The Stakeholders Group came together and met online over the course of more than a year to plan the second statewide *Arts Across the Prairie* project.

ENDLESS SKY - DYNAMIC LAYERS

The vision is for a permanent large-scale art installation, and the finalist's proposals should reflect your affection for and attention to place. Rural communities/residents will be living with the artwork for a long time, perhaps generations. The finalist selection for this project will also require the ability to teach and share with others as we train future North Dakota artists in the outdoor installation process.

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

An artist or creative team may apply; the total fee for the project will not alter. You must be an established artist, with experience in large-scale outdoor installations, public art, placemaking or placekeeping, community work, and teaching.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

- Wednesday, March 8, 2023: 4-5pm CT: Informational Webinar; email arts@nd.gov by *March 7* to receive log-in information
- Monday, March 27, 2023: 11:59pm CT: **PHASE ONE** Interested artists and collaborators submit initial artist application and materials
- Monday, April 10, 2023: Notify three finalist candidates with detailed RFP for Phase Two
- Friday, May 12, 2023: 11:59pm CT: **PHASE TWO** Three finalist candidates' proposals due
- Thursday, May 18, 2023: 3:30-6pm CT: Online interviews with three finalists
- Thursday, May 25, 2023: Final Artist Selection announced

HOW TO APPLY – PHASE ONE

DO NOT submit a project proposal or design at this time.

If you need a reasonable accommodation, please email arts@nd.gov. All requests must be made by March 20. We will attempt to implement late requests but cannot guarantee they will be met.

It is recommended that all potential applicants join an Informational Webinar to be held on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 4-5pm CT.

Provide the following in a single (one) PDF document. Please do not include supplemental materials beyond the requirements listed below. Work samples (JPEGs) can be sent as separate files. The single (one) PDF document should include the following:

- One-page of contact information for the lead artist, as well as creative team members. All applicants must live in the contiguous United States.
- One-page letter describing interest in the project and approach to art making; please include statement addressing eligibility criteria, approach to research and stakeholder engagement, and integrating educational opportunities into the process.
- One-page bio or resume; if you have multiple team members, please keep biographical information for each team member to one (1) page.
- One-page list identifying each of up to seven work sample images, to include title, year, medium, dimensions
- Work sample images: up to seven (7) digital images of your recent projects. Individuals and teams are limited to seven (7) images maximum. All images must be in JPEG format, 1920 pixels maximum on the longest side, 72 dpi, with compression settings resulting in the best image quality under 2MB file size. The image files should be named so that the list sorts in the order of the image listing. (If the work cannot be documented well with still images, please include video links.) Reminder, up to 7 work samples total.

Again, DO NOT submit a project proposal or design at this time.

SELECTION PROCESS and DEADLINES

PHASE ONE: Selection of finalists

NDCA Staff will review all initial submissions to determine if basic qualifications are met.

Applications will then be reviewed by a Selection Committee composed of stakeholders, artists, and community members.

Selection of three (3) finalists will be based on the following criteria:

- Quality of letter of interest directly related to the site; why do you want to be involved in this project?
- Quality of work samples

- Ability of artist(s) to complete project based on bio and prior work experience
- All PHASE ONE materials must be received by 11:59pm CST Monday March 27, 2023**
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PHASE TWO: Initial design concepts by three selected finalists

Only *three* finalists will be asked to develop a design concept presentation to the Selection Committee. They will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- Design concept's resonance with the project description
- The installation is presented as a community asset and creates a sense of welcome
- The artist/s mode of working and design process approach, including budget
- An ability to communicate and engage with diverse communities, including fabrication and construction professionals

All PHASE TWO materials must be received by 11:59pm CST Friday, May 12, 2023

Please submit all RFP materials via email to arts@nd.gov

* Subject Line – Arts Across the Prairie - Region 4

- This is not a postmark deadline; no materials will be accepted after the listed time
- No application materials will be returned
- NDCA will not be responsible for applications delayed or lost in transit

NDCA and the Selection Committee reserve the right to withhold the award of a commission or re-release the call for entries.

The three finalist interviews will take place via Zoom on **Thursday, May 18, 2023**; the Selection Committee will announce the artist selected for the Region 4 *Arts Across the Prairie* project by **Thursday, May 25, 2023**.

BUDGET INFORMATION

Region 4 – The total project budget of \$150,000 is secured. Fabrication/construction and other expenses will be discussed with finalist/s for this remote build.

The artist/creative team budget is \$55,000 *of the total listed above*. The expenses covered include:

- design
- technical drawings
- 3D charette/model
- in-state transportation
- lodging
- per diem
- Two-three trips to North Dakota (dates TBD)

FULL PROJECT TIMELINE

- Late Spring/Summer 2023: Planning Process includes design, budgeting, community involvement and construction plans
- Late Summer 2023: Break Ground
- Summer/Fall 2023: construction work will be 'build' and weather dependent
- Subsequent training of North Dakota artists TBD. This will be a workshop situation, hopefully on-site, utilizing artist's specific installation materials
- Spring/Summer 2024: construction
- Late Summer/Fall 2024: public unveiling

BACKGROUND/THEMES FOR REGION 4, ND ENDLESS SKY - DYNAMIC LAYERS

Region 4 Stakeholders met over 12 months and discussed the area's culture and history. Interesting imagery began to emerge, representing diverse ethnic populations, stories, and landscapes. In seeking a location to best represent the cultural heritage of Region 4, six sites were seriously considered. Ultimately, the Stakeholder group selected Dahlen Esker (more detail below).

The Esker represents "the forces of nature that have impacted not only our landscape but our lives". It ties into adjectives that describe our human history and the human traits that have helped us survive and thrive. The height and perspective of looking out over the land was an important aspect discussed. The installation should harmonize with and reinforce these key symbolic messages. The location represents the endless sky and dynamic layers of the region - indigenous culture, roaming buffalo, our glacier landscape of steep hills and valleys, open prairie with endless sky and stars. The design of the public work should be a symbolic reference of the natural setting and to the culture and economic history of the region. Stakeholders would like to see these themes represented in the art installation. *You are encouraged to investigate.*

Eskers are, in effect, inverted river channels that snake their way across the countryside. Eskers were deposited by streams and rivers flowing on the surface of a glacier, in cracks in the glacial ice, or, sometimes, in tunnels beneath the ice. These Ice-Age rivers and streams deposited gravel and sand in ice-walled valleys, just as a modern stream deposits sediment in its earthen valley. When the ice banks of the esker rivers eventually melted away, the gravel deposits in the ice-walled valleys remained as ridges above the surrounding countryside.

North Dakota has thousands of esker ridges. Most are small and non-descript, apparent only from ariel views, but some eskers are impressive. The Dahlen Esker is one of the best examples of an esker in the U.S., located midway between Fordville and Dahlen. It can be seen as a prominent ridge off to the west where State Highway 32 crosses the Grand Forks-Walsh County line. Dahlen Esker was deposited by a meltwater stream flowing in an ice-walled channel, most likely a tunnel, near the edge of the glacier. This esker is about four miles long, 400 feet wide, and as high as 50 to 80 feet. In some places, native prairie covers the surface. It is surrounded by farmland.

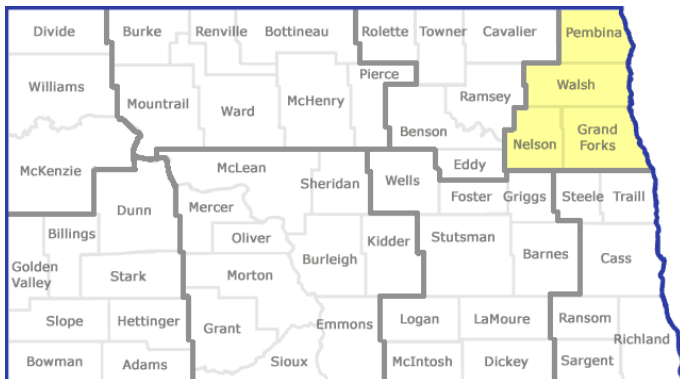
Additional concepts for consideration in your design: Endless Skies, Dynamic Layers:

- Water - very important part of the region, with the Red River {unique in that it flows North} and other waterways running through the four counties.
- Resilience – Referring to the peoples of this land adapting to climate and geography. In addition, all four counties have experienced repeated periods of recovery after natural disasters (water-related).
- Movement of Native people and immigrant settlers – exploration, trade, and transportation (including Ox Cart trails and waterways) have always been an important aspect of the region.
 - Indigenous Cultures - Métis, Chippewa, Ojibwe, Sioux
 - Including settler communities - French fur-traders, Icelandic (Mountain), Ukrainian (Pembina), Polish (Minto), Finland (Pelto), Petersburg (Norwegian)
- Transformation - impact of the landscape on the lives of the residents

RESOURCES

Arts Across the Prairie **Website** and **Facebook** pages

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pembina_County,_North_Dakota; Pembina population 6,844
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walsh_County,_North_Dakota; Walsh population 10,563
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_County,_North_Dakota; Nelson population 3,015
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Forks_County,_North_Dakota; Grand Forks population 73,170
- <https://www.dmr.nd.gov/ndgs/documents/newsletter/2016Winter/About%20The%20Dahlen%20Esker.pdf>



ADDITIONAL PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Arts Across the Prairie: Placemaking in Rural North Dakota was developed to:

- Celebrate the cultural heritage of rural areas
- Foster creative relationships across counties and regions
- Bolster NDCA's role as a rural development partner
- Spur economic development through tourism

This program will create public-private partnerships throughout the state and provides a national model of this type of creative placemaking.

Transformation of Communities:

Through this program, empowered groups will reach across their regions (and the state) for mutually beneficial partnerships. The culture of rural areas will be celebrated; and community-driven placemaking will create economic, tourism, and equity benefits.

Transformation of Local Art:

The artist(s) will offer training to North Dakota artists to take on projects of this nature. Local artists' capacity will increase with these enhanced skills, resulting in the creation of more art for local communities. This will also expand artists' eligibility for additional funding opportunities. (Workshop parameters TBD)

Transformation with/through State Agencies:

The program signals a shift in the way NDCA does business; instead of acting solely as a granting institution, the Council is actively collaborating with other state agencies and communities to better service their constituents.

- ND Tourism will elevate rural communities and the travel that connect the eight artworks.
- Main Street Initiative (Commerce) communities will use the economic development practices learned to fund new and ongoing projects.
- NDDOT will make meaningful investments that enhance the driving experience on rural byways with roads, pull outs and parking for all eight artworks.

Transformation of Cultural Policy:

The Legislature has gained a better understanding of the importance of art, creativity and culture in building and sustaining healthy vibrant communities around North Dakota. They recently gave support to the *Arts Across the Prairie* program with a \$1 million investment; the annual interest will provide resources to maintain all eight creative installations. Furthermore, NDCA will be more fully engaged with North Dakota citizens – creating a resident-centered responsiveness within their institution.

Partnerships:

Existing Partnerships - This statewide program is in collaboration with North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) and North Dakota Commerce/Tourism, who have committed financial resources for creative installation placement and marketing as the eight locations are identified and constructed.

NDCA is creating multi-sector, multi-jurisdiction groups of statewide Stakeholders who will collaborate to maximize resources and expertise. NDCA will focus on the following list of primary stakeholders in each region to accomplish the *Arts Across the Prairie* program goals and achieve the outcomes identified for each specific region:

Following are the specific steps for the overall *Arts Across the Prairie* program. Timelines for each region will vary depending on resource availability and Stakeholder involvement.

1. Cultivate stakeholders: NDCA forms regional teams, encouraging residents to invest in the project together, across county lines.
2. Foster Learning & Consensus: NDCA hosts/facilitates community events in each region for peer learning, with hands-on activities and material supports. NDCA will also sponsor professional development online with experienced specialists on topics such as planning, design, budgeting, project management, fundraising, partnerships, artist selection process, building, maintenance, and marketing.
3. Create Art: NDCA supports the process of site selection, and the development of regional approaches to create each installation. Broad definitions for creative installations will be used to draw inspiration from the authentic history, current reality, or future aspirations from each of the eight regions.
4. Market: NDCA markets the eight artworks in partnership with ND Commerce/Tourism, while also educating and engaging decision-makers to understand and support the work.
5. Document/Evaluate: NDCA continually documents the project (narrative, data, videotape) and measures/shares its local, regional, and statewide impact.



Council on the Arts

