

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY HARBOR & ESTUARY PROGRAM

Program Support for an Artist in Residence Program on the Harlem River

August 23, 2024

The New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) is requesting expressions of interest from Bronx-based arts organizations to provide programmatic support for an Artist in Residence program for the Harlem River. The Artist in Residence (AIR) is a pilot initiative funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to address critical water quality challenges. It was developed in response to President Biden's Executive Order (EO) on Arts and Humanities (EO 14084 Promoting the Arts, the Humanities, and Museum and Library Services, October 5, 2022). EPA is supporting HEP and the Bronx & Harlem River Urban Waters Federal Partnership location (BxH UWFP) to demonstrate how arts and culture can help inform efforts to work more effectively with communities, build understanding of water quality and other environmental concerns, build stronger connections between communities and natural resources, and better meet communities' unique needs. The Hudson River Foundation (HRF) hosts HEP and the BxH UWFP and will be the contracting entity for this request for expression of interest (RFEI).

A total of \$20,000 is available under this RFEI. HEP anticipates making up to two grants totaling \$ 20,000 for Bronx-based arts organizations to support the Artist in Residence Initiative between October 1, 2024 and March 1, 2026. Grant recipients must be a unit of local government or non-profit organization located in and/or serving the communities along the Harlem River in the Bronx.

The Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) is due September 19, 2024. We will invite a small number of the most promising applicants for interviews by September 26, 2024 with a final selection by October 10, 2024.

This RFEI includes the following information:

- I. Program Background
- II. Project Background
- III. Project Objectives
- IV. Roles and Responsibilities
- V. General Guidelines for Applicants
- VI. Submissions Process
- VII. RFEI Content
- VIII. AIR Project Timeline
- IX. Appendix A: Expression of Interest Form

New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program

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X. Appendix B: Budget Form

I. Program Background

The New York New Jersey Harbor Estuary is a complex ecological system at the heart of the nation's largest metropolitan area. The New York - New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) engages people, partners, and communities to collaboratively advance understanding, improve stewardship, and enhance our shared waters and watersheds.. Created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at the request of the governors of New York and New Jersey, HEP is an ongoing collaboration to develop and implement a consensus driven plan to protect, conserve and restore the estuary. HEP decisions and activities are carried out by staff and partners organized through committees and work groups. One of these is the Bronx and Harlem Rivers Urban Waters Federal Partnership (BxH UWFP), which connects community-based organizations and public agencies to help overburdened and underserved Bronx communities reconnect to their waterways, improve water quality and human health, and restore impacted riverfronts while pursuing environmental justice. Learn more about HEP and the priorities of our 2017 - 2025 Action Agenda [here](#) and more about the BxH UWFP [here](#). The [Hudson River Foundation \(HRF\)](#) hosts HEP and will be the contracting entity for this RFEI. HRF's mission is to inspire and inform action through science and engaging people to enhance the Hudson River, estuary and watershed.

II. Project Background

[EPA's Artist in Residence \(AIR\)](#) pilot initiative to address critical water quality challenges is intended to demonstrate how arts and culture can help inform efforts to work more effectively with communities, build understanding of water quality and other environmental concerns, build stronger connections between communities and natural resources, and better meet communities' unique needs. The EPA AIR pilot, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), will support a broad range of local artists and culture bearers in six geographic areas within National Estuary Programs (NEP) and Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) locations. Select local artists and culture bearers are being asked to help boost local engagement, awareness of estuaries, and participation in addressing critical water challenges, consistent with the goals and objectives of HEP's Action Agenda and the Bronx & Harlem UWFP location workplans.

HEP and the BxH UWFP anticipate issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) in the fall of 2024 to identify qualified Bronx artists. We expect that up to \$75,000 will be made available for an artist(s) to:

- Immerse themselves in the water quality and other environmental challenges facing the Harlem River and local communities (Winter 2025);
- Conceptualize one or more creative projects and discuss them with the project committee (Spring 2025);
- Implement the selected project(s) and document the work and the process (Summer and Fall 2025); and
- Participate in evaluation of this pilot initiative (Winter 2026).

The funds can be used to support artist fees, travel, equipment/supplies, fabrication, installation, and documentation of the art. Funds can also be used for signage, insurance, and other services required to support creation, permitting, installation, and community programming. HEP staff will administer this overall process and provide background information and connections for the artist to gain

understanding of the Harlem River and its management issues. Together with local partners, including the selected arts organization, HEP will organize, staff, and otherwise create community and regional events that will provide an opportunity to showcase the artist and their work, including City of Water Day in July 2025, the Harlem River Community Festival in October 2025, the annual HEP Conference in November 2025, and other Bronx venues/events to be determined. The EPA/NEA Headquarters Team will provide national level guidance and opportunities for shared learning and reflection across the six locations across the country.

Through this RFEI, HEP anticipates partnering with one or two Bronx-based arts organizations with deep experience and knowledge of arts programming and the artistic community in the Bronx. Ideally the arts organization would also have prior experience conducting an artist in residence program. The selected organization(s) would be full partners in this effort, helping shape the RFQ, selecting the artist(s), and showcasing the artist's creative work. The RFQ and overall project would be co-branded as a partnership effort.

III. Artist in Residency Project Objectives

The selected organization(s) will partner with HEP and the BxH UWFP to support HEP, the BxH UWFP, and the selected artist in meeting the following objectives of the AIR project:

1. **Express data, science and/or community knowledge** that elevates the understanding and appreciation of the Harlem River's ecology, water quality, the impacts of current and past uses of the waterway, and impacts of climate change.
2. **Articulate the values of environmental justice**, including the history of the Harlem River, the overburdened communities along its shores, policies and practices that led to the degradation of the river, and loss of utility by the public.
3. **Celebrate parks, public spaces, and other improvements** that are improving access to the Harlem River and / or enhancing water quality, enhancing habitat, and building climate resiliency.
4. **Engage community members** and especially young people and students in forthcoming planning and decisions about the management of the Harlem River and /or specific infrastructure projects being advanced by federal, state, and local agencies.
5. **Demonstrate the power of collaboration** between community, government, independent scientists, and/or utilities.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities of the Selected Bronx Arts Organization

The roles and responsibilities of the selected organization(s) selected through this RFEI are listed below. Please note that that some of these roles/responsibilities are marked as optional. Our evaluation of applicants will recognize the overall experience and capacities of arts organizations; Potential ability to provide these specific services will be just one consideration.

1. Review and advise on the request for qualifications (RFQ) for artists
2. Assist with distribution of RFQ to arts community
3. Be part of review panel and selection of the artist

4. Provide workspace for the artist (optional)
5. Provide contacts and engagement opportunities for the artist with other Bronx artists and the community
6. Provide the artist with information and access about selected public spaces to present the arts appropriate
7. Help secure permissions and any required permits for the performance, installation, and programs as needed and appropriate (optional)
8. Include opportunities for artist to participate in specific public programs as appropriate
9. Social media/marketing/communications for residency program
10. Participate in evaluation of the AIR program

V. General Guidelines for Applicants

Eligibility: Applicants must be non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status or local government entities located in or otherwise serving located in and/or serving the communities along the Harlem River in the Bronx. Organizations without 501(c)(3) status may apply, but they must partner with a local government entity or another organization with 501(c)(3) status that will serve as a fiscal agent for the project/proposal.

Schedule:

Announcement of Request for Expression of Interest	August 23, 2024
Expression of Interest Due	September 30, 2024
Invitations for Interview	October 4, 2024
Partners Selected	October 14, 2024
Contracts Signed	October 18, 2024
Project Period (subject to change)	Completed by March 1, 2026
Final Report	March 1, 2026

Funding: A total of \$20,000 is available under this RFEI. HEP anticipates making one or two grants totaling \$20,000.

Once an award is made and a contractual agreement is signed, grantees will receive an advance of 50% of the total grant. Subsequent payments will be paid based on one or more milestones identified in the AIR Project Timeline below as well as submission and approval of the final report. Funds can be used to support salary, fringe, travel, equipment/supplies, professional services, and other direct costs. Indirect costs of up to 40% of staff costs are allowed. Food costs are ineligible.

Match: No matching funds are required, but contribution of outside funds, in-kind services, or other match will be favorably reviewed and should be indicated in the Budget Form.

Deliverables and Conditions: Award recipients are required to complete tasks in a timely manner pursuant to the AIR Project Timeline and submit a brief final report together with the final invoice.

VI. Submission Process

Email Any Questions by September 23, 2024

Interested applicants are encouraged to submit any questions about the RFEI in advance of September 23 via e-mail to christina@hudsonriver.org.

Expression of Interest (due September 30, 2024)

Prospective applicants are invited to submit an expression of interest as described below. The expressions of interest should be submitted via this Google form link by no later than 11:59 PM EST September 30, 2024. (See below all requirements and an attached list of the questions in Appendix A).

Invitations for Interview (October 4, 2024)

We will be inviting a small number of applicants submitting an expression of interest to meet virtually for an interview to determine best fit. The selected applicants will be notified by end of day October 4th and asked to meet sometime the week of October 7th.

Grant Awards/Contracts (Anticipated October 18, 2024)

HEP will work with the successful applicant(s) to develop the final scope(s) of work. Once approved, HEP expects to provide contracts to the selected applicant(s) on or about October 18, 2024. Projects cannot start until both parties sign the contract. HEP and HRF reserve the right to modify, postpone or cancel this solicitation and to reject all applications.

VII. RFEI Content

The Expression of Interest can be submitted using the linked [Google form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeUXmU2A1LFsNSkygMwOlnPYM8Kvh4vJ5_yIs8EIXYRCImOsQ/viewform?usp=sf_link) ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeUXmU2A1LFsNSkygMwOlnPYM8Kvh4vJ5_yIs8EIXYRCImOsQ/viewform?usp=sf link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeUXmU2A1LFsNSkygMwOlnPYM8Kvh4vJ5_yIs8EIXYRCImOsQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)). If you are unable to submit via the Google form, you may submit as a PDF via email to christina@hudsonriver.org.

Each submission must include:

1. **Cover Letter.** Please include a cover letter, printed on an official letterhead and signed by an authorized representative of the lead organization that is applying. This document can be uploaded as an attachment via the Google form.
2. **Expression of Interest:** Please answer the questions included in the Google form (also listed in Appendix A) to help us better understand your interest in the project, knowledge and prior experience, ability to fulfill the roles and responsibilities, and connection to the community.
3. **Budget Form:** Please provide an itemized budget in the table format provided in Appendix B. Please indicate the source of any matching funds or in-kind services. If matching funds are included, please specify if these have been secured or are being sought. This document can be uploaded as an attachment via the Google form.

VIII. AIR Project Timeline

Selection of Partner Arts Organization(s) through this solicitation	October 18, 2024
Announcement of Request for Qualifications	October 31, 2024
Informational Webinar	November 13, 2024
Submission Deadline for Letter of Inquiry	November 22, 2024
Applicants Selected for full Proposal	December 5, 2024
Full Proposals Due from Selected Applicants	December 31, 2024
Interviews Scheduled with Selected Finalists	January 17, 2024
Artist Selected (subject to change)	January 31, 2025
Initial engagement meetings with partners and community	Winter 2025
Formulation, discussion, and approval of conceptual plans, workplan, and budget	Spring 2025
Fabrication, presentation, performance, and community engagement including but not limited to [local partner events TBD], City of Water Day (July 2025, Harlem River / Lower Passaic River Community Festivals aka Wilderness Inquiry (October 2025), Annual HEP Conference (November 2025)	Summer – Fall 2025
Progress Check-in/Milestone meetings	Summer – Fall 2025
Final documentation of art, engagement, experience by artist (narrative, photo, video, other media)	Winter 2026
Residency Evaluation	Winter 2026
Final Report Due to EPA	March 2026

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Artist in Residence Programmatic Support for the Bronx and Harlem UWFP

APPENDIX A: Expression of Interest

Organization's name:

Organization's address:

Primary contact name:

Primary contact email address:

Additional contacts (Please include name, title, and email address for anyone else in your organization who will act as an additional contact):

Project partners (names and contact information for notable partners, if applicable):

Rationale of Interest: In about 500 words, please describe why you are submitting an expression of interest for this project. Summarize what interests you about this project and how your participation will help to meet your organization's mission and goals. Please note any prior experience with programs related to climate change, water quality, and/or environmental justice.

Knowledge and Prior Experience: In about 500 words, please indicate any prior experience your organization has in conducting and/or supporting an artist in residence program, knowledge you have in arts-based programming, and knowledge of artist needs.

Roles and Responsibilities: Please indicate which of the following roles and responsibilities your organization is able to support (note: fulfilling all of the below is not a requirement for the selected organization).

1. Review and advise on the request for qualifications (RFQ) for artists
2. Assist with distribution of RFQ to arts community
3. Be part of review panel and selection of the artist
4. Provide workspace for the artist (optional)
5. Provide contacts and engagement opportunities for the artist with other Bronx artists and the community
6. Provide the artist with information and access about selected public spaces to present the arts appropriate
7. Help secure permissions and any required permits for the performance, installation, and programs as needed and appropriate (optional)
8. Include opportunities for artist to participate in specific public programs as appropriate
9. Social media/marketing/communications for residency program
10. Participate in evaluation of the AIR program

Roles and Responsibilities: Please add any additional information to describe how your organization can fulfill the roles and responsibilities selected above. This can include any needed explanation of your anticipated budget, including any challenges you anticipate in meeting these responsibilities based on the funding being made offered by HEP. You can also provide details on any funding from other sources and/or leveraged services identified in the Budget Form.

Connection to the Community: In about 500 words, please indicate how you plan to support the artist in connecting with the Harlem River/Bronx community, including your organization's history of serving that community.

Personnel: Define the role of all individuals who will be involved in the project, including contractors and subcontractors, and briefly indicate their relevant experience/skills. Describe the role of additional partner organizations who will be involved in the project and attach letters of commitment, if applicable.

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Artist in Residence Programmatic Support for the Bronx and Harlem UWFP

APPENDIX C: BUDGET FORM

BUDGET CATEGORY <i>(Add/remove itemizing lines below major categories as necessary, but please do NOT delete major categories)</i>	FUNDS REQUESTED FROM HEP	FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES***	TOTAL BUDGET
A. PERSONNEL (list individual staff member, task, and hours or % time) TOTAL:	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
B. FRINGE BENEFITS % of (e.g., 30% of total personnel costs) TOTAL:	\$	\$	\$
C. TRAVEL (estimate number/purpose of trips below) TOTAL:	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
D. EQUIPMENT* (Itemize below) TOTAL:	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
E. SUPPLIES (itemize below) TOTAL:	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
F. CONTRACTS** (identify & itemize below) TOTAL:	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
G. OTHER/SUBAWARDS** (identify & itemize below) TOTAL:	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
H. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (SUM OF A-G)	\$	\$	\$
I. INDIRECT COSTS % of (Up to 40% of total personnel costs are allowed) TOTAL:	\$	\$	\$
J. TOTAL PROJECT COST (SUM OF H+I)	\$	\$	\$

* Note that equipment refers to items that cost \$5,000 or more each. Items of lesser cost are considered supplies.

** F. Contracts refers to goods and services, generally from a for-profit vendor operating in a competitive environment, being delivered at the direction of the applicant. G Subawards refers to funding being provided through grants to non-profit or public sector entities for activities that are addressing proposal objectives.

*** Please indicate the source of any matching funds or in-kind services. If matching funds are included, please specify if these have been secured or are being sought, and if they are from federal or non-federal source.

