

## CALL FOR ARTISTS

### Lower Passaic River Artist in Residence Program

### Lower Passaic River Urban Waters Federal Partnership

**December 3, 2024**

The Lower Passaic River Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP), in partnership with Newark City Parks Foundation, Newark Arts and the New York — New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) is requesting proposals from artists to participate in a 13-month process intended to engage the public around critical water challenges and other environmental concerns. This Call for Artists is funded as part of EPA's Artist-in-Residence Initiative which was co-developed with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and is designed to spur investment and alignment of arts and culture across the federal government, make art more accessible to people from underserved communities, elevate new voices through the arts and humanities, and expand opportunities for artists and culture bearers to capture the community's connection with the beauty and function of waterways in their neighborhood. The non-profit Hudson River Foundation, which hosts the UWFP and HEP, is administering this Call for Artists.

A total of \$72,000 is available under this Call for Artists. Only one artist (or group) will be selected. The selected artist will be expected to begin the 13-month residency in March 2025. The residency program will consist of a series of phases to connect with and learn about the Lower Passaic River and its community, develop a cultural project that reflects the community and the challenges and opportunities facing these waterways, engage the public in events showcasing the cultural project, and participate in evaluation of the overall program. The residency will include meetings and interaction with partners and stakeholders; community events and programs to gather insight and engage the public; and meetings with other artists and partners participating in this national program. The selected artist will then propose, create, and share one or more projects with the public.

A webinar reviewing the content of this Call for Artists is scheduled for [January 21, 2025](#). Prospective applicants will be able to ask questions about this solicitation and the application process at that time. A letter of interest is due **January 31, 2025**. Selected applicants will be notified by **February 7, 2025** if they have been invited to prepare a full submission. Full submissions from those selected applicants are due **February 26, 2025**. We anticipate inviting finalists for interviews during the week of **March 3, 2025**, with a final selection made by **March 14, 2025** (see details at the end of this notice).

This Call for Artists includes the following information:

- I. Program Background
- II. Project Background and Structure of Residency
- III. Artist in Residency Project Objectives
- IV. Artist in Residency Responsibilities
- V. General Guidelines for Applicants
- VI. Submission Process
- VII. Appendix A: Budget
- VIII. Appendix B: Evaluation Criteria

## 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 standing committees and work groups. One of these is the Lower Passaic River Urban Waters Federal Partnership (LPR UWFP), one of 21 Urban Waters Federal Partnership locations across the nation. The LPR UWFP connects community-based organizations and public agencies to help overburdened and underserved communities reconnect to their waterways, improve water quality and human health, and restore impacted riverfronts while pursuing environmental justice. Learn more about HEP and our upcoming 2025 - 2035 Action Agenda [here](#) and more about the LPR UWFP [here](#). The nonprofit [Hudson River Foundation \(HRF\)](#) hosts HEP and the UWFP and will be the contracting entity for this Call for Artists. [HRF's](#) mission is to inspire and inform action through science and engaging people to enhance the Hudson River, estuary, and watershed. Newark City Parks Foundation (NCPF) and Newark Arts are partnering with HEP and the LPR UWFP in this Call for Artists. NCPF a public-private partnership committed to producing over 200 annual programs in the areas of arts & culture, health & wellness, on-water activities, and environmental education in the City of Newark. Newark Arts is a non-profit with a mission to sustain a thriving arts ecosystem in the City of Newark and provide arts access in every ward.

## II. Project Background and Structure of the Residency

[EPA's Artist in Residence \(AIR\)](#) pilot initiative to address critical water quality challenges is intended to demonstrate how arts and culture can help stewardship partners work more effectively with communities, build understanding of water quality and other environmental concerns, establish stronger connections between communities and their waterways, and better meet communities' unique needs. The EPA AIR pilot was developed in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). It 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. For the Lower Passaic River, these challenges have been identified in the goals and objectives of HEP's upcoming [2025-2035 Action Agenda](#) and the [2022-2024 LPR UWFP location objectives](#).

The selected artist is expected to:

- Immerse themselves in the water quality and other environmental challenges facing the Lower Passaic River and local communities (Spring 2025);
- Conceptualize one or more cultural projects and discuss them with the project committee. Project must relate to water quality and climate change as well as address the Community Engagement goal in HEP's EPA-approved [2025-2035 Action Agenda](#) (Spring 2025);
- Implement the selected project(s) and document the work and the process (Summer and Fall 2025);
- Participate in evaluation of this pilot initiative (Winter 2026).

The funds granted to artists can be used to support artist fees, local travel, equipment/supplies, fabrication, temporary installation, and documentation of the art. Funds can also be used for signage, insurance, and other services required to support creation, permitting, temporary installation, and community programming.

HEP / UWFP staff will administer this overall process and provide background information and connections for the artist to gain understanding of the Lower Passaic River, communities along the banks of the river, and important estuary management issues affecting community members and the River. Together with local partners, including NCPF and Newark Arts, the UWFP 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, Newark Canoemobile/Paddling Programs in October 2025, HEP's Annual Conference in November 2025, and other local events to be determined. NCPF and Newark Arts as the local art partners will support the artists in a variety of ways, supporting the artist in the development of their workplan and budget, helping scope the creative effort and related programming and securing permits, and providing the artist with local knowledge and expertise to inform their work. The EPA/NEA Headquarters Team will provide national level guidance and opportunities for shared learning and reflection across the six locations across the country.

### III. Artist in Residency Project Objectives

The selected artist will work with the LPR UWFP, HEP, NCPF and Newark Arts, and additional local partners in meeting the following objectives of the AIR project:

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

### IV. Artist in Residence Responsibilities

- **Discovery:** Join meetings of the LPR UWFP, HEP work groups, and other local partners on a regular basis to gain understanding of our work. Attend and participate in community meetings and events (to be scheduled). Interview or otherwise engage with key community, local, state, and federal partners. The artist should expect up to 20 hours a week of meetings, activities and

overall engagement during the Spring of 2025, the artist's discovery/immersion stage. For the next phases, the exact schedule will be determined by the artist and project team.

- **Conceptualization:** Present and discuss conceptual creative projects with the AIR project team composed of representatives of the LPR UWFP, NCPF, Newark Arts, EPA Region 2, and community partners. Select ideas will be prioritized for implementation in collaboration with the AIR project team and the artist will be asked to develop a proposed workplan, budget, and timeline for one or more projects in the Spring of 2025.
- **Implementation:** Implement the approved plan, including as appropriate securing equipment/supplies, fabrication, temporary installation, performance(s), signage, and insurance. Work with local partners to obtain required permits and undertake related community programming and provide clear and on-going communication about progress with the AIR Project Team. Share your art and your process at community and partner events. This will at minimum include City of Water Day in July 2025, Newark Canoemobile/Paddling Programs in October 2025 and HEP's Annual Conference in November 2025. The residency will also include an ongoing public component including sharing highlights through communication channels like the HEP Tidal Exchange newsletter and social media posts.
- **Documentation:** Capture the process and work through visual, written, audio or other forms of documentation with the goal of sharing lessons learned with the estuary community, peers and for any future AIR programs in the Winter of 2026.
- **Project Communication and Evaluation:** Participate in meetings and otherwise maintain communication with AIR partners, EPA, and the peer-to-peer artist in residence pilot network to brainstorm, discuss progress, troubleshoot and share lessons learned on this pilot initiative. This will include travel and meeting in Washington D.C., at least quarterly virtual meetings as scheduled, and any additional artist cohort meetings as scheduled (meeting in DC to be scheduled after artists across all locations have been selected). There will be ongoing opportunities for sharing but the process will conclude in Winter 2026.

## V. General Guidelines for Applicants

### Artist Eligibility:

Artists working in any media are encouraged to apply. However, artists must have experience with community engagement and collaboration as part of their practice. Ideally this community engagement and collaboration experience demonstrates an interest in environmental, science, and/or climate issues.

The artist must be able to commit to a 13-month residency and participate in public events and travel within the metropolitan area and to Washington D.C. Artists must be available to meet regularly with the project team (schedule and frequency of meetings to be determined with the artist and team after the artist is selected).

The artist(s) must live in and/or be able to demonstrate a meaningful connection with the Lower Passaic River and the communities along its banks. This includes but is not limited to previous work in these communities. Knowledge of Spanish is a plus.

Individuals or small teams of artists are eligible to apply. For artists applying as a team, a lead artist who will represent the team at planning and evaluation meetings must be identified.

Artists must be eligible to work in the U.S. for the length of the residency. The residency will not sponsor green cards, visas, or citizenship. Paperwork should be sorted out prior to residency start date, which is not flexible.

**Schedule:**

<b>Details:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Announcement of Call for Artists	January 2, 2025
Informational Webinar	January 21, 2025
Submission Deadline for Letter of Interest	January 31, 2025
Applicants Selected for Full Submissions	February 7, 2025
Full Submissions Due from Selected Applicants	February 26, 2025
Invitations for Interviews	March 6, 2025
Interviews with Selected Finalists	March 10-12, 2025
Artist Selected (subject to change)	March 14, 2025
Initial engagement meetings with partners and community	Spring 2025
Formulation, discussion, and approval of conceptual plans, workplan, and budget	Spring 2025
Fabrication, presentation, performance, and community engagement including but not limited to City of Water Day (July 2025), Newark Canoemobile/Paddling River Programs (October 2025), Annual HEP Conference (November 2025), and local events as scheduled by NCPF, Newark Arts and others.	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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**Funding:** A total of up to \$72,000 is available for the selected artist for the 13-month residency.

Once an award is made and a contractual agreement is signed, grantees will receive an advance of \$10,000 of the total grant, followed by four quarterly payments based upon approved budget and production needs. Payments will be made upon completion of agreed upon milestones and proposed expenditures. The final payment of \$5,000 will be made following submission and approval of the final report.

**Eligible Expenses:** Funds can be used to support artist fees, travel, equipment/supplies, fabrication, temporary installation, and documentation of the art. Funds can also be used for signage, insurance, and other services required to support creation, permitting, temporary installation, and community programming. Food and site construction 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.

**Copyright:** In summary, the Hudson River Foundation, NCPF, Newark Arts, and EPA retain the right to use documentation and representation of the AIR's work in promotional and other materials. The AIR retains copyright to produced work and the work itself, unless mutually agreed upon by the AIR and the Hudson River Foundation, NCPF, Newark Arts, and EPA.

**Deliverables and Conditions:** Award recipients are required to provide interim progress reports and invoices, complete the project in a timely manner, and submit a final report. Guidelines for these reports will be distributed with the grant award. Award recipients must acknowledge the role of the UWFP, HEP, NCPF, Newark Arts, EPA, NEA, and HRF funding using specific language and logos for any public presentations or printed materials.

**Quality Assurance & Quality Control Requirements:** If the AIR plans to publish, post, distribute, analyze, or otherwise use data collected through monitoring or other means (including data collected previously by the AIR or others), proposals will be required to develop a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) that must be approved by HEP and EPA before any monitoring or data analysis can begin. A QAPP is a written plan of why, how, and where you intend to collect data; once submitted, the approval process can take two months or more. Please note that data collection or analyses conducted solely for educational purposes (no data published, posted or distributed in any manner) does not require a QAPP. HEP staff will provide technical assistance for the development of the QAPP, if needed, but be sure to allocate time and effort for QAPP preparation as part of the proposal.

**Proposal Evaluation:** Final decisions will be made by UWFP staff and representatives of the project partners (HEP, HRF, NCPF, Newark Arts, UWFP partners) based on the scoring criteria included in Appendix B.

## **VI. Submission Process**

All application materials will be submitted through [ProposalCentral](#), Hudson River Foundation's grants portal.

You will need to [create an account using this link](#) to access the grant application. Once you've created an account, you can search for the grant within the portal by clicking the "Grant Opportunities" tab, then searching for "Artist in Residence Program: Lower Passaic River" then clicking on "Apply Now"

Please see below for more details and specific application requirements.

### ***Informational Webinar (January 21, 2025)***

An informational webinar will be held January 21, 2025. Please register in advance of the webinar [here](#). You may also submit any questions about the Call for Artists in advance of the webinar via e-mail to Liz Balladares at [eballadares@hudsonriver.org](mailto:eballadares@hudsonriver.org).

### ***Letter of Interest (due January 31, 2025)***

Prospective applicants are invited to submit a letter of interest via our grants' portal. This will include contact information, a resume (max of three pages), work samples (up to ten uploads), and a letter of interest (max of two pages) addressing the following:

- Please discuss your interest in this program and why you should be selected.
- This program will take place in the Lower Passaic River watershed and will prioritize connection with the local communities along its banks. Please tell us about any personal and/or professional connection you have to this location including previous or current partnerships and examples of work.
- Some of our major program objectives are to uplift the importance of environmental justice, create community awareness about water issues and other environmental concerns, and to increase community resiliency in the face of climate change. Can you tell us about how your interests align with these values and any prior experience working with these objectives?

Please see the full instructions for submitting a letter of interest document on the [Artist in Residence grants webpage](#). Please submit your letter of interest through the [grants' portal](#) by 11:59 PM on **January 31, 2025**.

### ***Invitations to Submit Full Proposals (February 7, 2025)***

Applicants will be notified by February 7, 2025, if they are invited to submit a full proposal. You must submit a letter of interest to be considered for a full proposal.

### ***Full Proposals from Invited Applicants (Due February 26, 2025)***

Proposals must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM EST **February 26, 2025** through the HRF grants portal. **Please note that at this stage we are asking for initial concepts and ideas; you are not expected to have a final project proposal. Our intention is that the initial project concept will continue to develop with the support of the AIR project team and with input from the community through the first stages of the residency in the Spring of 2025.**

**Full proposals will need to include the following:**

**Project Concept:** In 3-5 paragraphs, please describe one or more cultural project(s) you would implement for the Artist in Residence program. Please consider that the project will be primarily focused on the Lower Passaic River and the communities along its banks. In your description, be sure to address the following:

- The proposed name of your project(s)
- The medium(s) you will use to complete the project
- The issue(s) you plan to highlight (i.e. flooding concerns, water quality, access to the river, etc.)
- Your vision of the final project and its impact

**Experience:** In 2-3 paragraphs, please describe how your knowledge of the selected issues, knowledge of the Lower Passaic River community, and experience as an artist will help you succeed in completing the described project in the 13-month project period. You will be asked to include a portfolio and/or link to a website/social media handle demonstrating your work.

**Community Impact:** In 1-2 paragraphs, please address how your project will engage the community around your selected issues, including the outcomes (skill building, increased awareness, etc.) you anticipate from this engagement. Please discuss how this project and your engagement during project implementation will be reflective of the values, culture, and history of the Lower Passaic River and the communities along its banks.

**Research, development, and engagement plan:** In 2-3 paragraphs, please briefly describe some of the strategies you will use to research and develop your project, noting any agencies/community organizations you aim to connect with. Please also note the strategies you will use to engage the Lower Passaic River community around your project, including any methods of communication (social media, flyering/canvassing, etc.).

**Budget:** Using the budget form (Appendix A), provide an **estimate** of the anticipated budget for this project.

#### ***Invitations for Interview (March 6, 2025)***

We anticipate inviting 3-5 finalists for an interview by **March 6, 2025**. The interviews will be scheduled with individual artists and the Artist in Residence Project Team. Interviews are expected to take place the week of **March 10, 2025**.

#### ***Grant Award (Anticipated March 14, 2025)***

Award notification to applicants is expected on or about **March 14, 2025**. Projects cannot start until both parties sign the contract. HRF reserves the right to modify, postpone or cancel this solicitation and to reject all applications.



**VII. APPENDIX A: BUDGET**

<b>BUDGET CATEGORY</b> (Add/remove itemizing lines below major categories as necessary, but please do NOT delete major categories):	<b>Brief budget description (as appropriate):</b>	<b>Estimated Budget:</b>
<b>A. Artist Fees (add a row for any additional artists who will receive funding for this project)</b>		
<b>B. Local Travel (possible travel to Washington D.C. will be covered separately)</b>		
<b>C. Materials/Temporary Installation</b>		
Supplies		
Equipment/Technology		
Fabrication		
Temporary Installation		
<b>D. Marketing/PR</b>		
<b>E. Venue/Workspace Rental</b>		
<b>Total:</b>		

**VIII. APPENDIX B: EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Score: 1 = not likely, 2 = somewhat likely, 3 = likely, 4 = very likely. Maximum score: 72.

	<b>This proposal...</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
<b>Project Description</b>	Details a realistic project for the given location and timeline of the Artist in Residence program.	
	Anticipates use of appropriate media and techniques for completing the project.	
	References and supports relevant goals and objectives as described in the Call for Artists.	
	Addresses priority concerns/opportunities of the Lower Passaic River.	
<b>Experience</b>	Provides sufficient experience of past work to demonstrate ability to complete proposed project.	
	Demonstrates knowledge/past experience working with the community.	
	Demonstrates knowledge and/or intent to gain knowledge on specific concerns/opportunities the project aims to address.	
	Demonstrates knowledge/experience working in the specific media in project description.	
<b>Research, Development and Engagement Plan</b>	Provides a clear and well-thought-out course of action, including a list of specific tasks, actions and methods.	
	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the required information and project development needs.	
	Addresses realistic and appropriate strategies for connecting with the community.	
	Discusses intent and strategies for meeting with other stakeholders.	
<b>Community Impact</b>	Demonstrates knowledge and/or intent to gain knowledge on the Lower Passaic River community's specific values, culture, and history.	

**Budget**

Describes how project will meet the Lower Passaic River community's specific values, culture, and history.	
Discusses realistic project outcomes for community members.	
Helps build civic awareness and environmental engagement in the Lower Passaic River community.	
Has costs that are realistic, reasonable, and justified.	
Demonstrates experience working with a set budget.	