



Oklahoma Art in Public Places Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

Project: Choctaw Code Talkers of World War I (1914-1918)

Deadline: December 1, 2021

Overview and Project Description

Artists are invited to submit qualifications and a brief proposal for a painting commemorating the Choctaw Code Talkers of World War I for an Oklahoma Art in Public Places project at the Oklahoma State Capitol. The Oklahoma Arts Council in partnership with the Office of Management and Enterprise Services, are seeking an artist to create artwork for placement in the west hallway of the second floor of the Oklahoma State Capitol, in a proposed "Hall of Heroes." The Capitol building is located at 2300 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The location for this artwork will be a publicly accessible area.

The Oklahoma State Capitol is a neo-classically themed building inspired by the United States Capitol. It was designed by Solomon A. Layton and completed in 1917. The exterior is composed of Indiana limestone atop a base of Oklahoma pink granite. The interior features marble floors and stairwells, recently renovated public spaces, and a new color scheme throughout that is designed to highlight the many intricate architectural elements.

A Brief History of the Choctaw Code Talkers

Code Talking, the use of Native American languages as a means of transmitting messages for the U.S. military, got its start during World War I. At a time when Native Americans were still not citizens and did not have the right to vote, thousands of men from tribal communities all over the United States volunteered to fight in WWI. Among them, nineteen members of the Choctaw Nation have been documented as being the first to use their own language as a "code" to transmit military messages. Many German officers spoke excellent English and had successfully intercepted and broken American military codes. An American officer, Colonel Alfred Bloor, overhearing two Choctaw soldiers speaking with each another, realized he could not understand them. If he could not understand them, neither could the Germans, no matter how good their English skills. With the cooperation of the Choctaw soldiers, a new code was developed and deployed, using the Choctaw language in place of regular military code. This was all the more remarkable because it took place at a time when Native American youth were being actively discouraged from speaking their own languages at boarding schools around the country. The first combat test on October 26, 1918, was the successful repositioning of two companies of infantry, taking the Germans by surprise. By placing Choctaw soldiers in each company, messages could be transmitted safely even if the radio was overheard, or the telephone lines tapped. The success of this experiment led directly to the use of Native Americans as "Code Talkers" in later arenas of combat. Members of the Choctaw Nation and other tribes served with distinction using Native languages in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

Theme and Intent

The central vision for this project is a historically accurate representation of a group of WWI era Choctaw Code Talkers in uniform. The Artist will, using their own unique style and approach, create a painting that honors the historic importance of the contributions of the Choctaw Code Talkers of WWI. The artwork will be an original design appropriate for indoor display and able to withstand conditions of variable temperature and humidity. The selected artist will complete the painting in either oil or acrylic on linen. The dimensions of the painting will be not less than 24" high x 32" wide and not greater than 36" high x 48" wide. The artwork will be framed by the Oklahoma Arts Council in accordance with the Oklahoma State Capitol Art Collection guidelines and be approved by the State Capitol Preservation Commission.

Project Funds

The artist will receive \$15,000 to create the painting. Artists will be responsible for design, fabrication, delivery, and installation of the artwork within the given budget. Framing and installation will not be required within the \$15,000 budget. All other costs associated with this public art project are covered by this budget, and no additional funds will be available.

Eligibility

This opportunity is open to all artists living full-time in Oklahoma. Artists who are veterans or enrolled members of federally recognized tribes are strongly encouraged to participate.

Application Requirements

Artists will complete an application form at https://arts.ok.gov/Our_Programs/OAIPP/Calls_for_Artists.html and provide support materials listed below. Please be sure to allow adequate time to submit your application as technical difficulties can occur. Applications that are mailed, emailed, faxed, or hand-delivered will not be considered. Applications will not be accepted after the December 1, 11:59 p.m. (CST) deadline

Application materials include:

- a. Statement of Intent
 - i. A statement of interest will include a summary of artistic focus and professional career, especially as your background relates to this project.
 - ii. A brief description of the concept to be proposed, should the applicant be selected. This can include a description of the thematic direction, possible color palette, etc.
 - iii. Statements cannot exceed two pages.
- b. Sketch
 - i. A sketch of the proposed artwork indicating placement, materials, colors, and size.
 - ii. Resume/CV
 - iii. Five images of relevant previous work, per member of team with a maximum of fifteen images
 - iv. Files can be up to 2mb. Images should be at least 72 dpi.
 - v. Please number images 1-5, etc., in the file name using this system, #LastName,FirstName.jpg
- c. Image descriptions
 - i. Please include title, medium, dimensions, and year for each artwork. You may also include a brief statement about each work (2 sentence maximum).
 - ii. Number your descriptions, corresponding to the image file names.

Selection Process

RFQ applications will be reviewed by the Director of Visual Arts & Capitol Collections and the Director of Art in Public Places to identify the short list of qualified artists to be considered for the project based on the following criteria:

- Artistic excellence as evidenced by representations of past work and other supporting materials.
- Appropriateness of artwork to the goals of the project, as evidenced by representations of past work and other supporting materials.
- Professional experience is adequate to meet the demands of the project.
- Availability to participate in the design, approval, and implementation of the project as required.

The list of qualified artists will be presented to the Art Standards Committee for the Capitol Preservation Commission. The Committee will identify up to 3 finalists who will be invited to develop concept proposals after attending a mandatory orientation session. Each finalist will be paid an honorarium of \$1,000 for the development and presentation of a full design proposal.

Timeline

Application opens October 10, 2021

Application deadline December 1, 2021

Notification of selected finalists December 16, 2021

Mandatory finalist orientation session December 20, 2021

Finalist proposal materials due February 7, 2022

Anticipated notification of selected artist February 25, 2022

Installation of artwork May 2022

Once selected, the artist or artist team will work with Alan Atkinson, Director of Visual Arts & Capitol Collections, to coordinate an installation schedule that allows for safe physical distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Questions/Follow up

Please direct questions or requests for additional information to Alan Atkinson, Director of Visual Arts & Capitol Collections, at Alan.Atkinson@arts.ok.gov.

The Oklahoma Arts Council administers the Oklahoma Art in Public Places Program in accordance with HB1824.