

# Proposal From the Chicago Public Art Group to the Alphawood Foundation

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

provide the following narrative regarding your organization. You may determine the length of each answer, provided that the entire narrative is **5-6 pages in length in the Application Summary**. We expect that some answers may be one sentence long. Others will by necessity be longer. If a question is inapt to your organization or you decline to answer, please let us know that. In order to review the length in pages of your application press the **Application Summary** button that is just above.

What is your mission?

CPAG unites artists, communities, and organizations to produce high-quality installations that reflect their environment. We mentor, inspire, and support artists to create public art throughout Chicago and teach creative skills to children and adults. This collaboration provides our constituents with tools to articulate their ideas and the confidence to transform their urban landscape. Our current projects as well as our archival documents preserve the history and culture of neighborhoods throughout our city. We believe that:

- Everyone deserves to experience the powerful impact of art.
- Public art should be inspired by a community voice.
- Public art motivates activism and investment, provokes thought, and catalyzes change.

CPAG fulfills an expansive mission with limited human and financial resources. Public art is focused on making a positive and significant impact on its audience and its environment. Residents request art for their communities because an aesthetic that reflects their unique identities humanizes the urban landscape.

Making spaces feel safe and inviting also brings interest and investment to underserved neighborhoods. Art that highlights or challenges assumptions creates a social and cultural dialogue that infuses its surroundings with relevance and purpose. The impact of public art is as multifaceted and important as the people it engages and the stories it tells.

This grant will provide critical support that brings communities together through art and allows CPAG to maximize our stewardship of talent, creativity, and innovation.

Installations across the city are testimony to CPAG's ability to produce successful results. After 50 years of service, the organization continues to be invited to create public art and supported by a variety of corporate, government, foundation, and individual funders.

\* Who are the intended beneficiaries of your work?

Residents across the city are the beneficiaries of our work. Communities as diverse as Bronzeville, Woodlawn, South Chicago, North Lawndale, Roseland, Hyde Park, Little Village, and Pullman are included in our portfolio.

CPAG's primary focus is underserved neighborhoods where art can make a significant impact. Projects dating as far back as 1960 form a tapestry of the city's heritage and a symbol of unity that crosses racial, ethnic, and cultural divides.

Since a variety of communities are served, the needs vary greatly from one group to another. However, these expectations are consistent: art that reflects the traditions and history of the neighborhood, is compatible with cultural norms, represents meaningful issues, instills pride of place, and is the product of collaboration and dialogue between the artists and the residents.

CPAG has established partnering relationships with the communities we serve. Our activities are promoted by word-of-mouth, the internet, social media, print publications, and news media, and outreach to organizations and individuals.

The 37 Illinois artists who participate in the organization also benefit. We provide the management and communications expertise that allows artists to create large-scale projects they would not have the resources to manage independently. We offer a fair wage, workman's compensation insurance, studio space, publicity, recognition, and mentorship.

\* How do you serve your intended beneficiaries? Describe your programming or activities. CPAG grounds its programming in the social and spiritual needs of the community and the physical world of appropriate materials, ease of maintenance, and functional design.

The organization has a national reputation for engaging citizens in every step of the artmaking process. Artists are carefully matched to projects to ensure that their aesthetic and technical skills will be compatible with the working environment. An extensive and inclusive dialogue enables community residents and other constituents to voice a range of opinions. The objective is to create consensus around an installation that advances civic goals and delivers the benefits that stakeholders are seeking.

CPAG's roster of talent represents both mature and emerging artists. The team is experienced at meeting the demands of outdoor as well as indoor public art installations. They are accustomed to working with architects, landscape designers, and urban planners to maximize the potential of each space and to meet the social and cultural goals of every client. Dialogues, design workshops, visual research, oral histories, and problem-solving sessions encourage collaboration. This intense interaction strengthens community bonds and results in shared goals and achievements.

Programming centers around the following broad areas. 1) Collaborations that are requested by community members, nonprofits, corporate philanthropies, healthcare institutions, or artists. These typically involve cultural and social themes that reflect their surroundings, uplift neighborhoods, and can serve as catalysts for change. 2) Restoring or reinterpreting public art. 3) Installations that engage young people and center on educational or recreational facilities.

4) Projects utilizing the CPAG archives. This programming area is new in 2022 and is the result of a major initiative to catalog and organize CPAG's collection.

CPAG exhibits its artists' work at the gallery that is housed in our office. We also hold smaller events and networking opportunities for both artists and community residents in this space.

\* Provide here any highlights from your work over the last year.

Twenty-twenty-two was a highly productive year. Activities included:

- Organizing and cataloging CPAG's extensive archives. CPAG is the guardian of a rich history of art, activism, and achievement. Our archives include 50 years of photographs, video, communications, records, artifacts, and memorabilia from the early days of the community mural movement up to the present. With support from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation and the Fay Slover Fund, we were able to hire Sepia Archival Management to catalog and create systems for managing this material.

Many residents of Chicago are unaware of the wealth of art that surrounds them or its significance to the people and communities where it was created. Our archives are a tool for educating people of all races, cultures, and age groups about public art's unique role in society.

Phases one and two of this project are complete. Now, we are moving ahead with Phase Three, or the collections archive, which includes the works of co-founders, John Weber and William Walker. When the collections are organized, we will begin work on the virtual component of the archive.

- A 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition at the Chicago Art Department. The exhibition was organized around archival material and featured works from each decade of CPAG's history. This event was an opportunity for attendees to learn about: our organization's accomplishments, the mural art movement, and the importance of community-based art installations. Approximately 100 people attended. The activities reinforced previous supporters' affiliation with the organization and energized new constituents to become involved.
- A 50th Anniversary fundraising Gala featuring speakers, Robert Storr and Kimberly Pinder. Writer, artist, and former MoMa curator, Storr, and Dean of the Yale School of Art, Pinder, presented on the national impact of Chicago's community-based public art. Approximately 140 people attended the event, which also honored CPAG co-founder, John Pitman Weber.
- Exhibitions of work by artists Delilah Salgado and Gloria Talamantes, and CPAG co-founder, John Weber at CPAG's gallery.
- Five unveilings of these completed projects: mosaics at Decatur Classical School and Friends Health Center, Restoration of the History of the Packing House Worker, a sculpture for the

Underline Project in South Chicago, a community-engaged mural created by artist, Nikko Washington for Lululemon

Detailed information about these projects follows:

- Decatur Classical School: Artists and mosaicists, Cynthia Weiss and Mirtes Zwierzynski worked with middle school students after school to develop, design, and create five mosaic benches which are now located in the school playground.
  - Friends Health: Artist Rahmaan Static created a vibrant, 2000-square-foot mural. The piece pays homage to Woodlawn's community leaders and heroes. To further enhance the space, artists Damon Lamar Reed and Pugs Atomz created five mosaic planters. The planters are inscribed with inspirational words such as "transform," and "persevere." This installation was well received by the Woodlawn community. Over 100 community members attended the unveiling.
  - The History of the Packing House Worker Restoration and Unveiling: This renowned mural by William Walker depicts scenes of labor history and activism. It is one of Walker's few remaining exterior murals. The piece was restored with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Chicago Housing Authority, and the National Academy of Design. The unveiling featured speakers from the Illinois Labor Society, the City of Chicago, and CPAG artists. Approximately 100 people attended.
  - The Underline Project: This placemaking sculpture site is located beneath the skyway in South Chicago and was created with students from Epic Academy. Derric Clemons was the lead artist. The project was developed based on a Revitalization Plan created by program partners UIC Great Cities Institute. Funding was provided by multiple sources: a \$50,000 Neighborhood Access Grant from the Department of Cultural Affairs and Services, \$20,000 from the State Senator's office. Alderwoman Gaza supported the construction of sidewalks beneath and around the placemaking site in the amount of \$200,000.
  - Lululemon Project: In an effort to give back to the City of Hyde Park and to celebrate its new store opening, Lululemon hired CPAG and artist Nikko Washington to create a community-engaged mural for the city. The mural is 40 x 60 square feet and can be seen from 53rd Street.
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- A lecture at the Evanston Art Center on the history of race and the Chicago Shoreline. The Chicago shoreline is one of the city's treasures. However, it is a resource that has not been enjoyed equally by all residents. This project was inspired by research done by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs that explores: The Right to the Shoreline: Race, Exclusion, and Public Beaches in Metropolitan Chicago. Led by Chicago Public Art Group, core artist, Sonja Henderson, the lecture reflects on the importance of water and the significance of the Chicago lakefront in the struggle for social justice, diversity, and inclusion.
  - Documentary screenings of the films, Pioneer Women Muralists of Hyde Park and a Bronzeville Mural Tour.

\* What are your opportunities and challenges as you look to the year ahead?

CPAG will prioritize involving greater numbers of young artists to continue our legacy. We will seek to support talent working in new mediums including using technology in innovative formats. We will also be investigating strategies to diversify revenue streams, with special emphasis on engaging more individual donors.

We are seeking funding to create a strategic/fundraising plan. The goal is to support the organization's sustainability for another 50 years, and into the future. We need to reach beyond our current government and foundation support to identify new donors. However, as stated above, funding from individuals is currently a challenge, especially given limited staff resources for prospecting and cultivation. When donors get to know the organization, they find our mission compelling and worthy of support. But we need more staffing to reach our constituents and tell CPAG's story. As part of the plan, we would like to gain support to retain a development director who could focus solely on fundraising.

Phase Three of our archival project is another significant goal for 2023. The approximate cost will be \$25,000, and there are several organizations interested in providing funding. The work will include organizing the collections of some of CPAG's co-founders and artists and preparing images, documents for digital use, and identifying online options for housing the material.

Enhancing the website, social media outreach, and other technical aspects of our operation is another focus for 2023. We will be purchasing new software in conjunction with the archive project. We also plan to continue adding content to the website and updating it with new project descriptions, artists' profiles, and information about our programs and events.

Who currently serves on your leadership team?

The executive director leads the organization in collaboration with the board.

\* How many employees do you have? Where are they located?

There are three staff positions, an Executive Director, Project Manager, and Project Coordinator/Administrative Assistant. They are located at our office in Chicago, 3314 S. Morgan Street. The staff is in the office two to three days a week. On the remaining days, the staff works from home.

\* Have there been any recent—or do you anticipate any future—significant leadership or staff changes?

CPAG has recently hired a new project coordinator and project manager. At this point, CPAG does not anticipate any significant leadership or staff changes.

\* Describe the role of your governing board.

CPAG's strong working board includes demographic, economically, and professionally diverse representation. Two seats are designated for artists. However, there are four working artists currently sitting on the board. The organization is focused on recruiting leaders who reflect the communities we serve.

The board meets six times each year. In partnership with the executive director, the board oversees the organization's finances, sets the artistic and strategic vision and priorities, reviews the executive director's performance, approves the selection of the auditor and the

audit and form 990, and takes a lead in fundraising activities. The board also evaluates the success of completed projects and supports the recruitment of volunteers, prospective donors, and new artists.

\* Please comment on your financial statements, explaining any significant increase or decrease in revenues or expenses from year to year, as well as any substantial operating surpluses or deficits.

In 2022 contributed support was \$78,831 over budget due to better-than-anticipated fundraising results.

\* Describe your development/fundraising efforts over the last year, highlighting any challenges or success.

The 2022 corporate/foundation/government fundraising goal was exceeded. We are working to expand results in the individual donor category which is a challenge for a public art organization. Towards that end, CPAG is seeking funding to create a new strategic and fundraising plan so that it can remain sustainable and viable for another 50 years.

\* Describe any anticipated challenges regarding future fundraising or earned revenue streams. Do you anticipate any major campaigns or changes?

We don't anticipate any challenges in the next year. However, the change in the economy of the past year is part of the reason CPAG wants to develop a new strategic/fundraising plan.