



MIDWAY AIRPORT PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITIES REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)

Eligibility:	National	
Opportunities:	2	
Project Budgets:	Site "CM3"	\$170,000
	Site "BC2"	\$155,000

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 06/12/26 | APPLY ONLINE [HERE](#)

Virtual artist info session | Webinar recording available [HERE](#)

Answers to FAQs* | Available [HERE](#)

** (Frequently Asked Questions)*

SUMMARY OF THE OPPORTUNITY

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) in partnership with the Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) invites professional artists and artist teams to submit qualifications for consideration for two (2) site-specific public art commissions at Chicago Midway International Airport (MDW): one for the Concourse level (site "CM3"), and one for the Baggage Claim level (site "BC2"). The allocated project budgets for these permanent artwork commissions are, respectively, **\$170,000 for CM3**, and **\$155,000 for BC2**. Each project budget is inclusive of all costs and fees associated with execution of the public art commission for the specified site from beginning through completion, including but not limited to design, fabrication, site preparation, delivery, installation, and related expenses.

PUBLIC ART IN AIRPORTS

Chicago's airports have long served as a canvas for the City's public art with an emphasis on local and global interests. The City of Chicago's world-renowned Public Art Program is reflected in dozens of public artworks at both of Chicago's international airports: Midway and O'Hare. The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events has worked in close partnership with the Department of Aviation to site key works from our collection, commission new public art, and advise on special projects and airport activations.

GOALS OF PUBLIC ART IN AIRPORTS:

1. Deliver a high-quality, world-class art program for Chicago airports.
2. Create a mix of cultural offerings including exhibitions, public art and site-specific performances that showcase the unique talents of artists and arts organizations.
3. Improve customer experience at airports by providing entertainment, beautification, visual and placemaking opportunities through the art program.
4. Promote Chicago as a destination for art and culture and connect visitors to the city's vast cultural landscape.

DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION

The Chicago Department of Aviation (CDA) is self-supporting, using no local or state tax dollars for operations or capital improvements at O'Hare and Midway International Airports. Chicago's airports offer service to over 260 nonstop destinations worldwide, including 47 countries, combined. Together, Chicago's airports serve more than 100 million passengers each year and generate approximately \$60 billion in annual economic activity for the region.



DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy. This includes fostering the development of Chicago's non-profit arts sector, independent working artists and for-profit arts businesses; providing a framework to guide the City's cultural and economic growth; marketing the City's cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors.

CHICAGO MIDWAY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Known colloquially as the "busiest square mile of aviation", Midway (MDW) is a premier point-to-point airport, directly connecting Chicago to 46 of the top 50 markets in the contiguous United States. More than 19 million passengers flew through Midway in 2025. Midway had service to 85 domestic destinations, as well as 11 international destinations in 2025. Six carriers currently provide service — Southwest Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Volaris, Porter Airlines, Allegiant Air, and Frontier Airlines — with Southwest being the largest airline in terms of gates, daily departures, and destinations served.

The CDA continues to invest in Midway, building on capital investments made over the last two decades. The recently completed Midway Modernization Program (MMP) included the reopening of the Midway Central Market, an expanded passenger security checkpoint and passenger bridge over Cicero Avenue, and enhancements to the terminal parking structure, and resulted in increased efficiency and enhanced passenger experience.

Building on this momentum, the Midway Restroom Renovation project continues the legacy of investment. This project invites artists to help transform the passenger experience - pairing modernized facilities with meaningful human connection through art and storytelling that celebrate inclusion and embody the local communities, sustainability and overall identity of Midway International Airport.

ARTWORK SITE OPPORTUNITIES

The two site opportunities for public art at MDW include: **Site CM3**, with an allocated project budget of \$170,000, and **Site BC2**, with an allocated project budget of \$155,000. (See "BUDGET" section below for more information.)

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

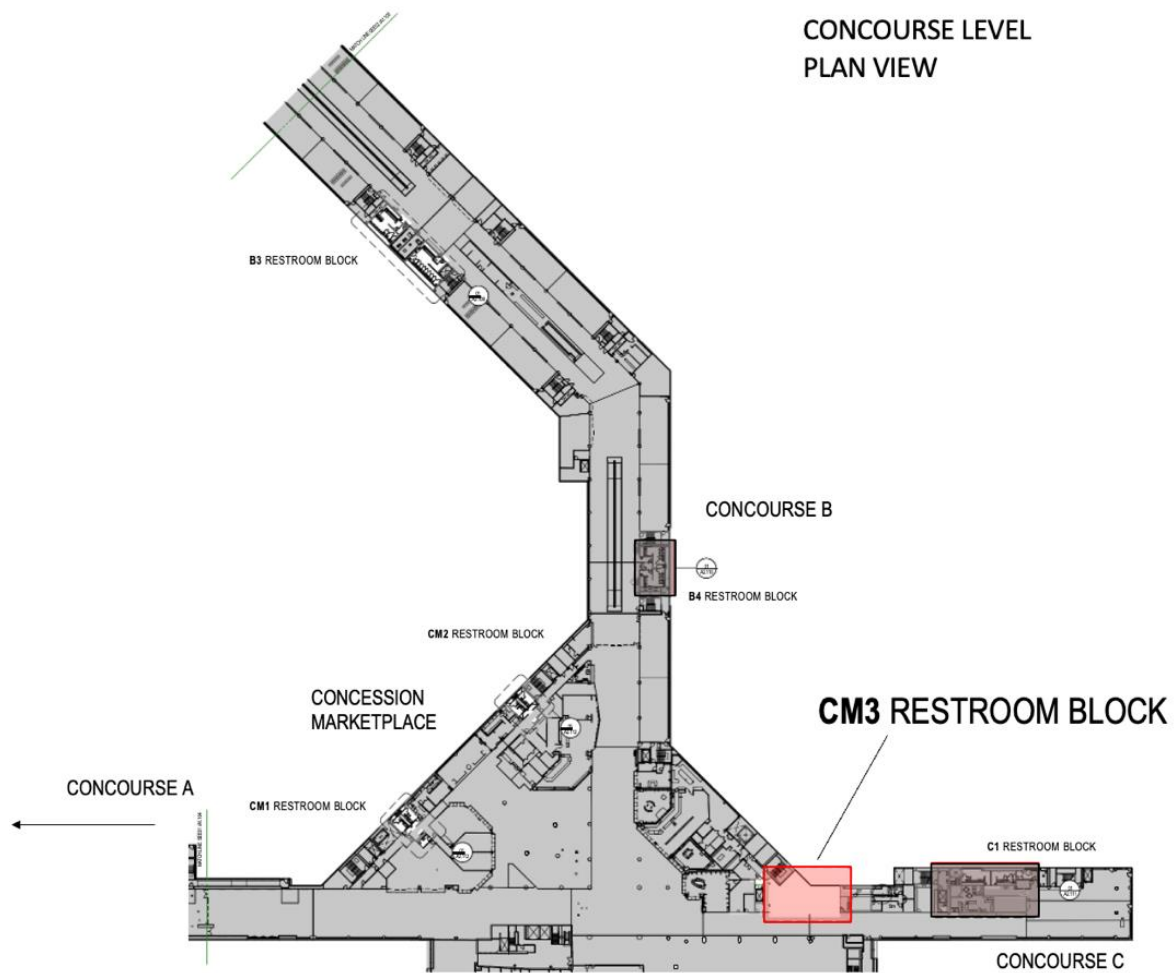
SITE CM3:

- **Location:** Concourse level, between Concession Marketplace and Concourse C
 - Art in this location is the first thing passengers will see upon entering the Concourse from the TSA security checkpoint. The selected artwork will offer a welcoming arrival experience and communicate a sense of place.
- **Art budget:** \$170,000
- **Art opportunities:** One (1)
 - A single artist or artist team ("Artist") will be commissioned for site-specific artwork addressing the specified area
- **Approximate Dimensions:** ~10'-10" H x ~18'-0" W
- **Media:** 2-dimensional mosaic mural; integrated with vertical wall surface as wall finish
- **Anticipated timelines (approximate):**
 - **Site construction:** 4/16/2027 - 10/1/2027
 - **Art installation:** April – May 2028

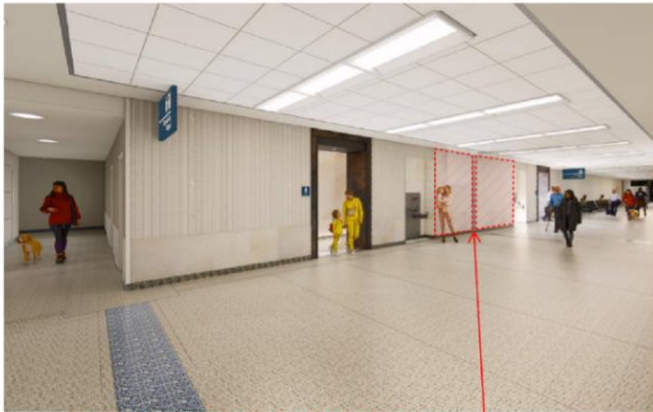
- **Additional considerations:**

- All wall construction and parameters for artwork are final. Artist to utilize the full area allocated for the artwork. Any additional work or changes beyond this point will be the responsibility of the Artist and covered under the Artist's budget.
- The commissioned Artist will be responsible for:
 - Coordinating with Architect of Record (AOR), Construction Manager (CM), and Contractor to verify artwork does not affect or cover 10' – 6" expansion joint or affect facility operations.
 - Confirming all artwork dimensions and coordinating with CDA CM, the Contractor and AOR to verify final dimensions prior to fabrication and installation.

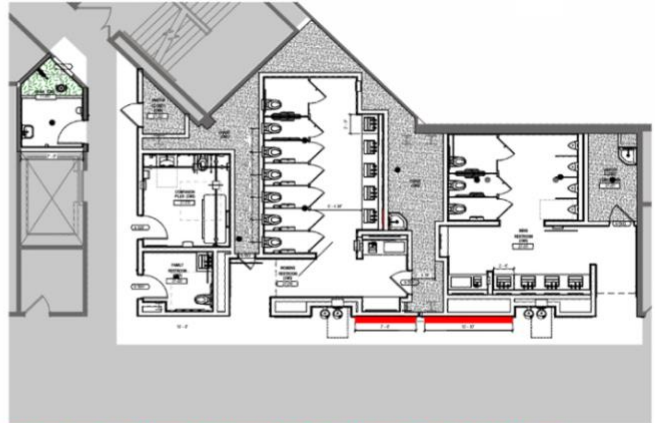
- **Site CM3 images:**



[Continued on next page]

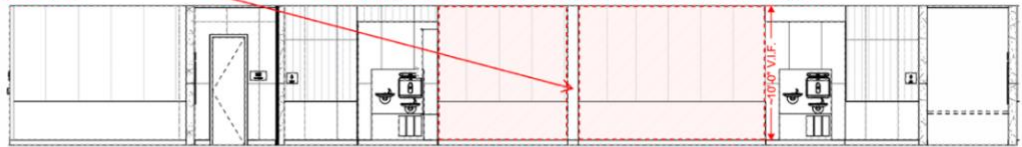
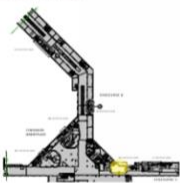


ARTIST TO COORDINATE WITH AOR, CM, AND CONTRACTOR TO VERIFY ARTWORK DOES NOT AFFECT EXPANSION JOINT. EXPANSION JOINT TO NOT BE COVERED BY ART, TYP.

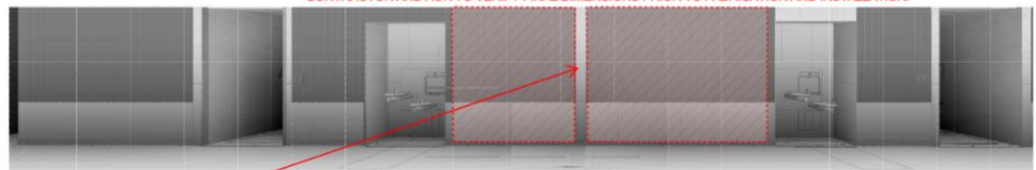


ALL WALL CONSTRUCTION AND ARTIST PARAMETERS ARE FINAL. ARTIST TO UTILIZE THE FULL AREA ALLOCATED FOR THE ARTWORK. ANY ADDITIONAL WORK OR CHANGES BEYOND THIS POINT WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ARTIST AND COVERED UNDER THE ARTIST'S BUDGET

CM3



ARTIST TO CONFIRM ALL ARTWORK DIMENSIONS AND COORDINATE WITH CDA CM. THE CONTRACTOR AND AOR TO VERIFY FINAL DIMENSIONS PRIOR TO FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION.



ARTIST TO COORDINATE WITH AOR, CM, AND CONTRACTOR TO VERIFY ARTWORK DOES NOT AFFECT EXPANSION JOINT. EXPANSION JOINT TO NOT BE COVERED BY ART, TYP.

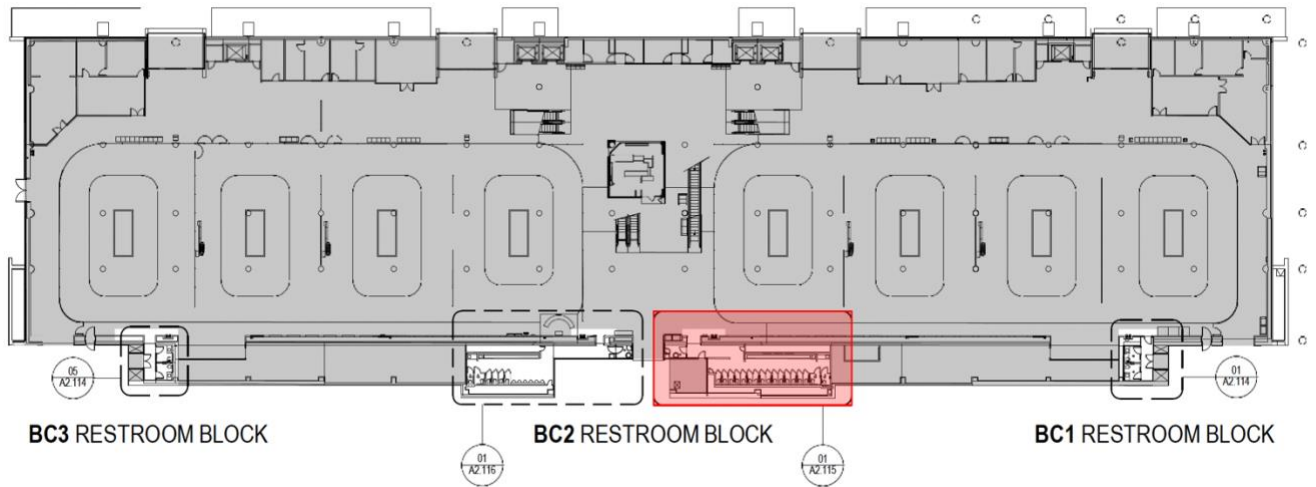
SITE BC2:

- **Location:** Baggage Claim, adjacent to Carousel 5
 - Art in this location will engage passengers during their wait at the baggage carousels and as they enter/leave the Baggage Claim area.
- **Art budget:** \$155,000
- **Art opportunities:** One (1)
 - A single artist or artist team ("Artist") will be commissioned for site-specific artwork addressing the specified area
- **Approximate Dimensions:** ~6'-0" H x ~48'-0" W
- **Media:** 2-dimensional, anchored to existing wall
 - **Editor's note** (posted 5/21/26): A previous version of this RFQ misstated the media for site BC2 as "2-dimensional mosaic mural; integrated with vertical wall surface as wall finish". This has been corrected to "2-dimensional, anchored to existing wall".
- **Anticipated timelines (approximate):**
 - **Site construction:** 4/16/2027 - 10/1/2027
 - **Art installation:** April – May 2028
- **Additional considerations:**
 - All wall construction and parameters for artwork are final. Artist to utilize the full area allocated for the artwork. Any additional work or changes beyond this point will be the responsibility of the Artist and covered under the Artist's budget.

- The commissioned Artist will be responsible for:
 - Coordinating with Architect of Record (AOR), Construction Manager (CM), and Contractor to verify artwork does not affect facility operations.
 - Confirming all artwork dimensions and coordinating with CDA CM, the Contractor and AOR to verify final dimensions prior to fabrication and installation.

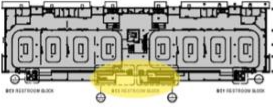
- **Site BC2 Images:**

BAGGAGE CLAIM LEVEL - OVERALL PLAN

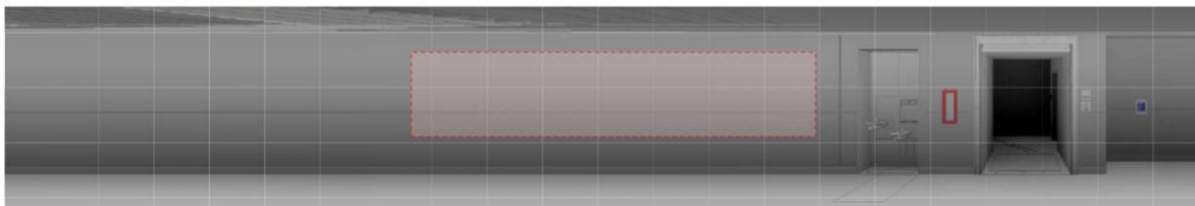
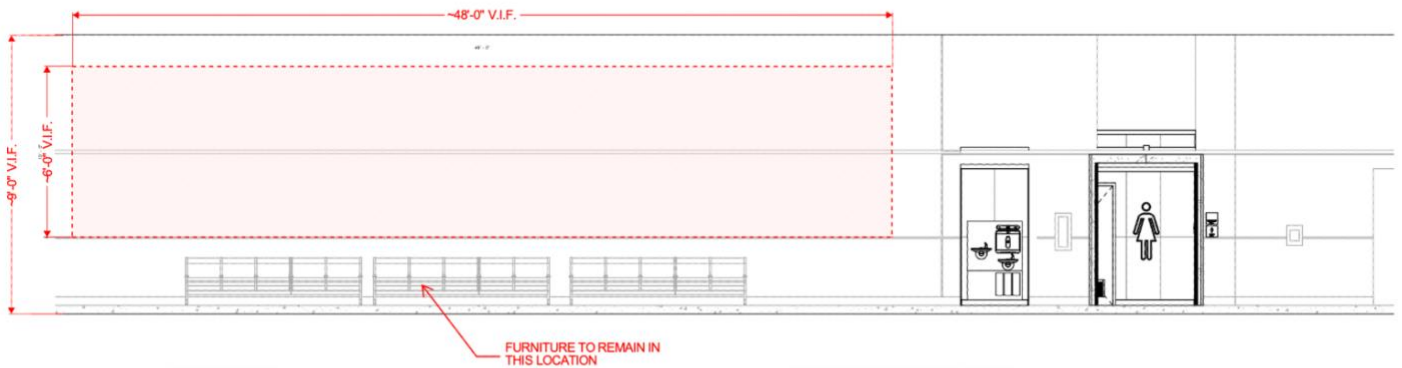
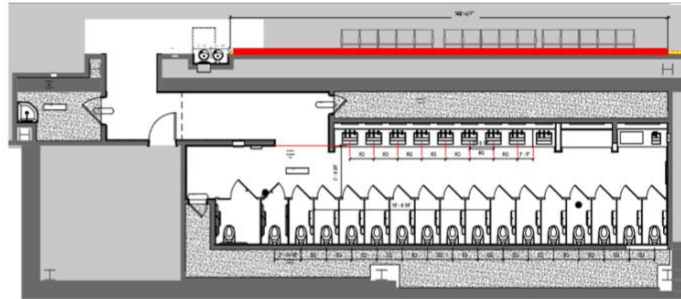


[Continued on next page]

BC2 W



THE EXISTING WALL AT THIS LOCATION WILL REMAIN AS IS. THE ARTIST MAY EITHER APPLY ARTWORK DIRECTLY TO THE EXISTING SURFACE OR COVER THE COST OF ANY DESIRED MODIFICATIONS. ANY MODIFICATIONS TO BASE BUILDING TO SUPPORT ARTWORK TO BE CAPTURED IN PROPOSAL.



ELIGIBILITY

This opportunity is open nationally to professional artists and artist teams living and working in the United States. Artists and artist teams who have demonstrated a history of completing large-scale public art projects, and/or creating artworks suitable for acquisition and display in an airport facility, are encouraged to submit qualifications.

SELECTION PROCESS

1. Following the RFQ deadline, a Project Advisory Panel comprising visual arts professionals, CDA staff, and project stakeholders will review all submissions.
2. The Panel will select **3 finalists per site**, each of whom will be commissioned to develop a conceptual design proposal for the designated site and budget.
3. Finalists will present their proposals to the Panel, which will select an artist or artist team for each commission.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- **Artistic Excellence:** Quality, originality, and craftsmanship of past work.
- **Relevance:** The artist's ability to create work that is responsive to the site and demonstrates an understanding of place and public engagement.
- **Feasibility:** Ability to execute a large-scale public artwork within budget, schedule, and site conditions.

BUDGET

- COMMISSION FOR ARTWORK (per site):
 - The budget for commission of artwork for site **CM3** is **\$170,000**, inclusive of all costs and fees for the artist to execute the project from design through completion, including but not limited to insurances, design, engineering, fabrication, site preparation, delivery, installation, and related expenses.
 - The budget for commission of artwork for site **BC2** is **\$155,000**, inclusive of all costs and fees for the artist to execute the project from design through completion, including but not limited to insurances, design, engineering, fabrication, site preparation, delivery, installation, and related expenses.
- HONORARIUM:
 - Each finalist will receive a **\$1,500** honorarium to develop a conceptual design proposal for one of the two site opportunities (CM3 or BC2).

SCHEDULE*

* All dates are anticipated, approximate, and subject to change.

Phase	Start	End	Weeks
Request for Qualifications			
RFQ open via CAFÉ online application system APPLY HERE	05/01/26	06/12/26	6
Virtual Artist Info Session View recording HERE	05/20/26	05/20/26	
Review of qualifications	06/22/26	07/17/26	4
Notification of finalists	07/20/26	07/24/26	1
Request for Proposals			
Finalist concept proposal development	07/27/26	09/04/26	6
Finalist concept proposal presentations	09/15/26	09/18/26	1
Notification of commission awardees	09/28/26	10/02/26	1
Commission for Artwork			
Final Design Development of commissioned artworks	10/12/26	04/09/27	26
Fabrication and installation of commissioned artworks	05/10/27	05/10/28	52
Anticipated project completion		May 2028	

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applications must be submitted **digitally via the CAFÉ online application system** at https://artist.callforentry.org/festivals_unique_info.php?ID=15893 and include:

1. **Letter of Interest** (1 page) describing the applicant's connection to the project, relevant experience, and conceptual approach (*required*)
2. **Work Samples:** 6–10 images of past large-scale public art projects (*required*)
3. **Annotated Image List** detailing title, media, year, dimensions, location, budget, timeline, and commissioning entity for each image uploaded to Work Samples (*required*)
4. **Résumé or CV** (1–2 pages per artist; team applications must include one résumé/CV for each team member in a single PDF) (*required*)
5. **Optional Video** (up to 2 minutes) with accompanying 2—3 sentence description (*optional*)
6. **Team Roles** (if applying as a team) outlining responsibilities of each member (*required of teams*)

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

QUESTIONS?

- “Who to Contact for Help”: <https://artist-help.callforentry.org/doc/who-to-contact-for-help>
- For application-specific inquiries:
 - DCASE:
publicart@cityofchicago.org
No phone calls. All questions to DCASE must be submitted via email.
Responses will be shared in an FAQ if multiple applicants ask similar questions.
- For website-specific inquiries:
 - CaFÉ:
<https://artist-help.callforentry.org/>
<https://www.callforentry.org/contact-us/>
303-629-1166
If the CaFÉ website is inaccessible, Contact CaFÉ by phone.
CaFÉ business hours: M-F, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm (MDT)