

ALLEY

ART

PROJECT

THE ROCKWELL MUSEUM  
MURAL RESOURCES

# MURAL MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT

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Mural paints, materials, supplies and equipment are an instrumental expense that needs to be considered for every public art project. The expenses add up quickly! A mural project may cost more than you expect. To ensure the longevity and integrity of your mural project, it is essential to budget and plan for quality paints, wall and site preparations, as well as a protective clear coat.

## *Wall Preparations:*

It's important to build a relationship with the business/property owner of the building wall you plan to paint. Communication about all mural steps helps to ensure a successful project! Having a clean and freshly primed wall is essential prior to painting a mural.

- Power wash the wall you intend to paint – removes any dirt, grime or particles that are likely to cause paint to crack and crumble over time
- Sand, scrape or buff wall sections to remove flakey paint and particles
- Repair any defects in the wall surface, patch holes
- Paint the wall with a coat of primer

## *Paint:*

The type and quality of paint matters!

Nova Color Artists Acrylic Paint (CA company) - <https://novacolorpaint.com/>

- Non-toxic, water-based permanent paint
- Use for indoor and outdoor murals
- Quick drying and flexibility for mixing colors
- Compatible with Sherwin-Williams paint
- Vibrant colors, durable against fading and cracking over time
- Metallics, fluorescents, gel mediums and varnishes available
- Resource: [Choosing the Best Paint for Mural Art Painting](#) – 2022

Golden Artist Colors (NY company) - <https://www.goldenpaints.com/>

- Non-toxic, water-based permanent paint
- Use for indoor and outdoor murals
- Quick drying and flexibility for mixing colors
- Compatible with Sherwin-Williams paint
- Vibrant colors, durable against fading and cracking over time
- Many artists prefer Golden brand bright white color
- Iridescent, florescent, gel mediums, varnishes and topcoats available
- [Golden Paint Seconds Program](#) – paint donation program for artists and arts organizations

### Store Paints

- Sherwin-Williams paint brand is recommended and most compatible with other mural paint brands
- Make sure to purchase exterior paint for outdoor murals
- Consider the fumes when using local hardware store paints, especially for indoor spaces

### Spray Paint

- [Montana Cans](#) spray paint brand is high quality and recommended for creating murals
- Spray can tips create different effects and line qualities
- Consider the fumes when using spray paint – suggest wearing a respirator

### Polytab/Parachute Cloth Material

- [Polytab](#) is a non-woven fabric material that makes an excellent canvas for murals
- Apply mural paints directly to surface of material, and then adhere to wall using acrylic gel medium
- Allows artists to work on details in their own studio/indoor space prior to painting on-site

### What to do with leftover paints?

- Resource: [Paint waste disposal tips and best practices](#)
- Donate paints to a local artist or organization

## *Building Wall Material*

It is important to assess the building materials, structure and architectural landscape of the space. Some building materials are more conducive for painting murals than others, and some materials will not work.

- Wood, concrete, drywall, stucco and brick are all good building wall materials for a mural. However, consulting with a masonry or construction expert is suggested.
- Consider the water absorption of the building materials. Underpasses and bridges are not ideal for murals that are intended to last a long time. Water runoff deteriorates the paint.
- Artificial and plastic composite materials may not hold up over time and may not be compatible with mural paints.

## *Clear Coat:*

### Indoor Murals

- Suggest a water-based polyurethane for latex paint that is clear and permanent
- Gloss finish will darken slightly after drying
- Semi-gloss finish may be slightly hazy depending on application
- A thin application using paint brushes with soft bristles is recommended – paint rollers are not recommended because of the thickness and texture of application

### Outdoor Murals

- Suggest an anti-graffiti clear coat that is water-based and permanent

- [Ecological Coatings](#) brand – located in Clifton Park, NY
  - Two-part solvent mixture that is highly toxic to apply – wear protective gear during application process; a respirator and safety glasses are recommended
  - Non-stick properties, excellent chemical resistance
  - Graffiti removal product available – non-toxic
  - Apply a thin coat using a paint brush, a roller or sprayer application is not recommended
  
- [Graffiti Removal](#) – located in Los Angeles, CA
  - Mural Shield – two coats recommended, ingredient base is conservation grade resin, solvent-based coating, developed specifically for murals, is considered a preservation product, best applied using a sprayer
  - World’s Best Graffiti Coating (WBGC) – two coats recommended be applied over Mural Shield coat, wax based, satin finish
  - Non-toxic
  - Mixture developed by [Social & Public Art Resource Center \(SPARC\)](#)
  
- [Modern Masters](#) –
  - Water-based polyurethane, crystal clear finish
  - Can be applied with brush or roller, two coats recommended

### *Other Painting Supplies to Consider:*

- Buckets
- Paint brushes, paint rollers
- Dish soap – cleaning brushes
- Conditioner for paint brushes – helps to keep them intact
- Painter’s tape
- Frog tape – use this tape to avoid peeling sections of the painted design, less sticky and effective
- Carpenter pencils, lumber crayons – outlining your design
- Chalk line tool
- Paper towels
- Drop clothes
- Ladders

### *Lift:*

Renting a lift may be necessary for your mural project depending on the height of the wall. Follow all safety procedures and guidelines when operating a lift.

#### All Terrain Scissor Lift

- Stable platform base to stand on
- Accommodates several people working at once
- May feel more secure than other types of lifts for artists, community members and/or students

### Boom/Bucket Lift

- Accommodates one – two people at a time
- Limited space to move and work
- Can operate at high heights for painting upper building levels

### *Water Source:*

It is important to have a water source available to you while you paint. Talking with the business/property owner ahead of time to arrange for access to a sink or faucet is essential.

### *Projector:*

Many artists prefer to use a projector to project the design of the mural on the building wall to outline the design. This is a good method to accurately transfer the design with attention to scale, composition, details and overall layout.

- Projecting and outlining the image needs to take place at night for outdoor murals, or in a dark space for indoor murals
- Consider borrowing a projector if you do not own one
- A projector is nice to have, but it is not always necessary, many artists free hand the outlining of the design
- The architecture of the wall may impact the ability to project an image without obscuring it (i.e., curved wall)

### *Hydration:*

Staying hydrated and drinking plenty of water is vital when painting a mural, especially during the summer months. When working with students and/or community volunteers, make sure you provide water for everyone.

# IDENTIFYING A MURAL ARTIST

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Identifying and selecting an artist for a project is a thoughtful process that can take time. Consider the project vision and theme to align with the artist you are seeking. Including community members, city officials and organizations in the process allows for creative input. Creating a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is a great process to connect with artists and provide an equitable opportunity for artists in the community and outside the region.

Here are some mural networks and mural program resources that might be beneficial to assist in connecting with artists and other professionals in the field.

## [Americans for the Arts - Public Art Network](#)

- Americans for the Arts Public Art Network (PAN) develops professional services for the broad array of individuals and organizations engaged in the diverse field of public art. PAN is the only professional network in the United States dedicated to advancing public art programs and projects through advocacy, policy, and information resources to further art and design in our built environment.

## [WALL/THERAPY](#) in Rochester, NY

- WALL/THERAPY is an art and community intervention project, using public murals as a means to transform the urban landscape, inspire, and build community. The program is recognized worldwide with people from 2000+ cities in 104+ countries have visited the WALL/THERAPY site to learn more.

## [Mural Arts Philadelphia](#)

- Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For over 35 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative process, rooted in the traditions of mural-making, to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives. Core programs include Art Education, Environmental Justice, Porch Light, and Restorative Justice.

## [Albright-Knox Art Gallery Public Art Initiative](#) in Buffalo, NY

- The Public Art Initiative was born in 2013 out of a partnership between the Buffalo AKG Art Museum and Erie County, soon after joined by the City of Buffalo. More than 40 murals, installations, residencies, and works of sculpture have been created. The initiative seeks to empower artists, inspire viewers, and strengthen a sense of our shared landscape with art that reflects the beauty and vitality of the many communities that shape it.

## [University at Buffalo Arts Collaboratory](#)

- Buffalo has an impressive and lively tradition of outdoor public art, particularly street art, with over 130 murals and artworks located throughout the city.

### [Ithaca Murals](#)

- Ithaca Murals is a network of people transforming gray walls into beautiful, meaningful works of art that tell the stories of the diverse people who live in Ithaca, NY. The program welcomes everyone to be involved, while prioritizing the leadership of people of color, under-employed and working-class people, people with jail experience, women, LGBTQ+ community members, youth, and anyone who is passionate about justice. There are over 200 murals and the number of murals is continuing to grow.

### [Groundswell](#) in New York City

- Groundswell is a NYC-based organization that brings together youth, artists, and community organizations to use art as a tool for social change, for a more just and equitable world. In 1996, a group of New York City artists, educators, and activists founded Groundswell with the belief that collaborative art-making combines personal expression with the strength of community activism—and produces unique and powerful outcomes. 25 later, 500 murals have been completed.

### [Living Walls](#) in Atlanta, GA

- Living Walls is a team of curators, producers, project managers, storytellers, and artist liaisons with over 10 years of experience curating and producing murals, installations, immersive experiences, community gatherings, and conversations. They have produced work in Birmingham, Miami, New Orleans, and Paris, and continue to expand their reach.

### [NYC Mural Arts Project](#) (NYCMAP)

- The New York City Mural Arts Project uses a collaborative mural-making process to discuss mental health and foster new relationships in New York City's communities. They work with community-based organizations, artists, people living with a mental health condition, and the community at large to promote mental health awareness and break down stigmas associated with mental illness. NYCMAP is a program of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

### [Murals DC](#)

- With nearly 150 murals in every ward of the city, MuralsDC has made a definitive impact on the city's public landscape. Murals not only help to revitalize corridors, they can increase the marketability of property and promote tourism. Walking and biking tours of MuralsDC murals are requested and led each year with hundreds of people who want to learn the historical and symbolic elements expressed through the artwork.

### [P.A.I.N.T.S.](#) in Washington, DC

- P.A.I.N.T.S. (Providing Artists with Inspiration in Non-Traditional Settings) is a Washington, DC-based non-profit organization that is committed to providing interactive, hands-on STEM+Arts based educational programs, activities and opportunities, primarily directed toward youth and young adults in underserved communities.

[ArtWorks](#) in Cincinnati, OH

- ArtWorks is an award-winning Greater Cincinnati nonprofit that creates community-based public art that provides career opportunities for artists of all ages. The organization collaborates with community organizations and residents, businesses, governments, foundations and nonprofits to build creative works of art that bolster the region's global reputation as an arts destination. ArtWorks employs professional artists who inspire and mentor diverse teams of youth, ages 14-21, helping them build 21st century career-readiness skills. These teams have completed more than 14,000 public and private art projects in its 26 years, including more than 230 permanent outdoor murals.

[Indy Arts Council](#) in Indianapolis, IN

- The Arts Council of Indianapolis envisions a city where public art is essential to creating inspiring places, living in cohesive neighborhoods, and helping culture thrive.

[Art Spaces](#) in Terre Haute, IN

- Art Spaces is providing public art and the design of public places to enhance economic growth, enrich cultural experiences and build a legacy for future generations. The mission of Art Spaces is to provide public art and the design of public places to enhance economic growth, enrich cultural experiences and build a legacy that reflects the diversity of the Wabash Valley. Since 2005 they have installed 21 public sculptures throughout the downtown, in city parks, on college campuses and in other locations throughout the city.

[RedCan Graffiti Jam](#) in Eagle Butte, SD

- Established in 1988 in Eagle Butte, South Dakota, the nonprofit Cheyenne River Youth Project is an essential community development organization on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation. We are from Cheyenne River for Cheyenne River — an authentic grassroots initiative designed to meet the specific needs of our community through innovative youth programming, vital family services, and educational public events and activities.

[Social & Public Art Resource Center](#) (SPARC) in Los Angeles, CA

- SPARC's mission is to produce, preserve, and promote activist and socially relevant artwork; to devise and innovate excellent art pieces through participatory processes; and ultimately, to foster artistic collaborations that empower communities who face marginalization or discrimination. SPARC was founded in 1976 by Chicana muralist and Distinguished UCLA Professor Judith F. Baca, Filmmaker/Director Donna Deitch, and Artist/Teacher Christina Schlesinger.

# MURAL PROJECT BUDGETING

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A mural or other public art project is an investment for your community. Murals are vibrant masterpieces that enhance the visual cultural landscape of your neighborhood, while also complimenting the existing architecture of the space. Accurately budgeting for a project is important to ensure that you are being inclusive, considering all the aspects of what goes into a project, planning for maintenance and being mindful of community partnerships.

A mural project can range in cost from approximately \$5,000 for a small project to \$40,000+ for a larger project. These figures are estimates based on typical mural and public art projects. Your actual cost will depend on the scale and scope of your specific project.

## *Seeking Grants & Funding*

Applying for a local, state or national grant is a great way to help fund a project. Consider grants administered by your local arts council or other local grants organizations. State and federal grants can offer more funding, but often have a more intensive and longer application process. Sponsorship and individual donors is another option to consider.

## *Contracting with a Professional Artist*

It is essential to pay artists fair and deserving wages for their work. An artist does more than paint the mural design onsite. When you hire an artist for a project, consider their time investment for all aspects of the project. Many artists will charge a rate per square foot of a mural, such as \$25 - \$50 per square foot. When estimating an artist honorarium, consider these aspects of their work:

- Conceptual and design planning
- Meetings with you and other community partners
- Drafting a proposal for a mural design
  - If you request a proposal for a design, it is important to pay the artist for their design work, even if you end up not following through with their proposal or project.
- Creating changes to the mural design proposal, or submitting revisions to the design during the approval process
- Mural preparations, such as outlining, mixing paints, creating stencils, working with community members, teaching, etc.
- Time painting onsite
  - It typically takes an artist one – three weeks to paint a mural, depending on the scale and scope of the design.
  - Daily set-up and clean-up can add a couple of hours of work per day
- Social media posts to inform the community of the project
- Clear protective coat
- Does the artist honorarium include paints and supplies? Or does the coordinating agency provide the materials for the project?
- Artist transportation, mileage reimbursement, meal stipend and lodging

## *Equipment & Materials*

The cost of renting and purchasing equipment can be some of the largest expenses of a project. Consider the cost of these items:

- Lift rental
- Projector
- Ladders
- Paints and a clear protective coat
- Project supplies
- Signage & printed materials
- Giveaway items – t-shirts, buttons, pins, stickers, etc.

## *Community Collaboration*

It requires community collaboration to create a community public art project. It is important to work closely with the schools, local businesses, city officials and community members in your region. Community input, feedback and investment is vital for the success of your project. Many community agencies will often offer in-kind services if they support the vision and intention of your project.

## *Liability and Insurance*

Determine the liability and insurance requirements for your project. Coordinate with the organizations and businesses you are collaborating with. It is important for artists you contract with to have their own insurance or health insurance.

## *Mural Preparations*

Preparing for a mural or public art installation on a business wall or on a property site requires work to ensure the integrity and longevity of the final project. Consider the cost of a contractor or working with a business owner to power wash, clean and prime a building wall.

## *Documentation*

The documentation of your project is an important aspect to consider for record-keeping and for sharing about your project with the community. Professional videography and photography can be valuable, and a significant expense that you will want to consider for your project.

Social media is a great way to share about your public art project(s) and network with other community organizations and professional artists. Make sure to allocate time for uploading and editing content.

## *Mural Maintenance*

Completing a mural project is an incredibly rewarding experience. However, the work does not end when the project ends. Maintaining murals is ongoing and needs to be factored into the budget and

vision of the project. Consider the permanency of your project. How long do you anticipate it staying intact? Murals do not last forever. They crack, crumble and fade over time.

- Consider contracting with the artist to maintain the mural regularly - annually, or every few years. Sometimes it is not possible for the original artist to touch up the project because of distance. In this case, consider hiring a local artist to touch up the design. Communication with the original artist is respectful when touch-up work needs to be done. It can be instrumental in ensuring you are using the correct materials and colors.
- Consider establishing a preservation fund for your project to have the means to continue to maintain it for many years.

# MURAL/PUBLIC ART PROJECT TIMELINE

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A mural or public art project often takes longer than you think. There are many planning, approval and communication steps that need to be taken into consideration, as well as the artist's time to develop a strong design. Community input and collaboration is another important element that takes time to coordinate. A typical mural project can take anywhere from a couple of months to three years to implement.

## *Project Idea & Concept*

Initiating a new project takes time and investment. It is suggested to reach out to organizations, city officials and businesses in your community to discuss your ideas and vision. The City of Corning has a Public Art Committee that oversees the public art landscape in the region and is in the process of developing public art initiatives in the community.

## *Project Location*

Determining the site of your mural project or installation is a key step in your project timeline. Research and connect with the city officials, local businesses, schools and organizations to understand the site requirements and development partnerships. Encouraging others to support your vision and getting “buy-in” is essential!

- Is the building or property on a historic site? Historic sites may require extra approval processes and applications, or may not be allowed. Sites that are listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) have special preservation restrictions and guidelines.
- Are there other murals or public art installations that already exist in the space you are considering? Think about the architectural landscape of the area.
- Do you need to consult with city officials? The City of Corning has a Public Art Committee that oversees the development, vision and implementation of public art projects in the community.

## *Applying for a Grant*

When seeking a grant for a project, consider the timeline of the grant and application deadlines. Often, grants will need to be submitted a year or more in advance for a project. Local grants may have a shorter timeline.

## *Artist Selection Process*

Identifying and selecting an artist for a project is a thoughtful process that can take time. Including community members, city officials and organizations in the process allow for creative input. Creating a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is a great process to connect with artists and provide an equitable opportunity for artists in the community and outside the region.

An RFQ process takes time. Consider the application timeline. How long do artists have to apply? Several weeks or months is suggested. What is the review process, and who is involved? Consider the time for communications between applicants, developing an artist contract and coordinating details with the selected artist.

### *Approval Process for the City of Corning, NY*

After the design is completed, there are multiple agencies that require review and approval of the project. For the City of Corning, NY, the agencies that are involved in this process include:

- Corning's Gaffer District's Preservation & Design Workplan Group and Market Street Restoration - Approval undergoes through rigorous consideration by this group. Edits and adjustments are sometimes suggested, and this can take several weeks and numerous rounds. The [Gaffer District](#) (GD) works closely with the City of Corning in the management of maintenance, landscaping, snow removal and oversight of art and decorative elements in the GD.
- Codes Officer of the City of Corning - The mural proposal is submitted to the Codes Officer for input in determination that it is not a sign or advertising.
- Business or property owner – The design needs to be approved by the site owner to ensure they are in agreement with the design that will be painted or installed on their building.

### *Site Preparations*

Preparing the building or property site for the project can take several weeks or months to complete. Each project is unique. The amount of prep work involved will depend on the condition of the building, contractor availability, business owners schedule and operations and artist's project needs. It is also important to ensure you have the appropriate insurance and liability protections in place.

### *Painting*

The actual painting of a mural project does not take very long. Artist's can typically complete a mural project within one to three weeks. For larger projects, more time may be needed. If everything is prepared in advance, the painting process will go smoothly.

Consider community or student volunteers to help paint. Coordinating the schedule and logistics in advance is another planning aspect to add to your timeline.

### *Community Celebration & Ribbon Cutting*

Celebrate the completion of a project with the community to recognize the artist(s) and inform people of the new public art addition in the local landscape.

### *Clear Protective Coat, Plaques and Signage*

Make sure to factor in the time it takes to apply a clear protective coat over the mural. This will help to protect the mural in case it is vandalized. Involving the community in the creative process makes people more invested, and in return, many people in the community will protect the spaces they care about.

Printing and installing a plaque or other signage materials may require a review and approval process.

### *Project Maintenance*

Plan for maintaining the mural for the future. This may require budgeting in advance for ongoing annual maintenance to keep the mural in good condition.