

Arts Activation – Q&A

Questions CTA received have been edited and consolidated for clarity and brevity.

Performances

Can the DJ booth at the Red Line 95th Station be used for a DJ set?

The DJ booth at the 95th Street Red Line Station is not available for use via this program. The DJ booth is an artwork titled "*AESOP: An Extended Song of Our People*", by Theaster Gates, commissioned and owned by the Chicago Transit Authority since 2019. The DJ booth's programming and DJ performances are currently under contract by the Authority in accordance with Mr. Gates' artistic vision. CTA will not accept proposals for DJ performances at the 95th Street Red Line Station.

What types of sound amplification and audio equipment are permitted within designated activation areas?

Please review the [Program Guidelines](#) for more detailed information about types of activations that are allowed, limitations, restrictions, and terms and conditions.

How many events do you imagine allowing for one group/project? Is CTA particularly interested in recurring live performance concepts, or primarily one-time activations/installations?

An activation can be a one-time event or a series of events. CTA is also open to continuous installations of temporary visual arts as long as the proposal falls within the allotted timeframe of 1 year or less and budget of \$50,000 or less.

For temporary performing arts what is the expected time and length of performance? What is the expected schedule of performances? Will it be on weekdays/weekends? What time of day would they be?

Performance length, timing, and scheduling are intentionally flexible and will be determined in collaboration between the selected artist and the CTA. Artists should propose performances of a duration appropriate to their work. Key performance dates and times, including weekday/weekend and daytime/evening scheduling will be identified collaboratively during project development with selected performers.

Artwork & Design

What kind of artwork is CTA looking to have at these stations?

CTA does not have a specific subject matter in mind for artwork. Please see the [Program Guidelines](#) for restrictions on what artwork CTA will not consider for the program.

Does the CTA prefer traditional projects such as hand painted murals?

Temporary public artwork that CTA would accept includes murals, paintings, sculptures, signage, or mosaics and other ephemeral artwork. All artwork must be applied to removable / reversible substrates or pedestals and meet CTA structural engineering and safety reviews.

What are the dimensions that the CTA desires for this project?

Dimensions are at the discretion of the artist. Applicants should provide the anticipated dimensions of their proposed work, which will be reviewed by CTA. If an artist is selected, the dimensions may be refined in collaboration with CTA if modifications are needed.

Do you accept oil paintings on wood?

Oil paintings on wood are not accepted.

Do you allow the usage of projector/projection on the wall as long as the voltage requirements match with what the CTA station can offer? Can video or projection run 24/7?

Projected artwork is eligible under the definition of temporary public artwork. Applicants should describe any voltage requirements for their equipment in their proposals. CTA will work with selected artists to coordinate the logistics of installations and determine hours for the projection to run given the specific circumstances.

Can we have panels mounted on the walls or should they be free standing?

All installations on panels must be designed as mountable to a CTA property wall or fence. Materials for mounting panels should be included in artists' proposals. Design and materials proposed for mounting and installation of temporary artwork shall be coordinated / finalized between the artist and CTA. All artwork installations are subject to review and approval by CTA Engineering and Safety regulations.

Is the CTA open to the idea of including ephemeral walls or artwork?

Yes.

I'm interested in proposing a crochet installation including live crocheting events.

Does this fall under the guidelines as a sculptural activation?

Installation of completed crochet works would fall under the guidelines of temporary public artwork. Visual artwork must be fabricated of safe, durable materials. An activation featuring the fabrication of artwork would qualify as a performance and the proposal should include the required information for performances.

Can CTA provide materials (e.g., metal from railcars) for my installation or assist in collecting materials from the community for my artwork?

CTA cannot provide any materials for the creation of the artwork and will not be able to aid artists in gathering materials for artwork.

Station-Specific Questions

Is there Wi-fi at the stations?

No.

Are we expected to find an area at the station to have our activation, or will there be an area assigned to us at the specific station?

Applications should detail the specific area of the station in which the activation is being proposed. If selected, CTA will collaborate with applicants to ensure the proposed space is suitable and adjust as needed.

Is it possible to indicate a station preference in the application? Does CTA make final station assignments, or do applicants select?

Applicants must indicate their station preference in the application. CTA will review proposals specific to each station. Station layouts vary and all identified stations are located within different Chicago communities.

Are there photos of the interiors of the different stations? I am interested in proposing a visual artwork, but I cannot seem to find photos of the interior spaces.

CTA encourages prospective applicants to visit stations to get a better understanding of the space.

Can you specify which areas of the Kimball station are available to activate?

Murals / 2D art can be activated on the northeast corner of the building facing Lawrence Avenue, or the yellow brick wall on Kimball Avenue.

Can you please share exactly where within the Damen Pink Line Station the project would be temporarily placed?

Projects at Damen Pink could take place in the unpaid area of the station or the plaza area adjacent to the station, depending on the specific proposal.

Are there certain areas you're looking to fill or is it up to the artist's vision and is it one artist/organization per station or per area within that station? Is there a specific description you're looking for?

The proposal and artistic vision are entirely up to the artist or organization, who should develop a concept for one of the four approved stations of their choosing. If an artist is selected, CTA will work with the artist to refine specific elements as necessary.

Are GFCI (120V / 15A circuit) outlets standard at CTA stations?

Yes, GFCI outlets are standard at the four stations that are part of this program. They are safety outlets.

Should there be a protective covering on artwork such a plexiglass box?

CTA encourages artwork that can be integrated into station areas without requiring protective coverings. Any material protection is at the discretion of the artist and should be described in the application. Materials and material protection must consider the CTA environment and CTA passengers.

Timeline & Budget

Is there currently an application deadline or anticipated review timeline?

Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. CT on Wednesday, July 1, 2026. Proposals will be evaluated by a committee of stakeholders and CTA will notify selected participants in late July.

How long would the project be on view?

The proposed exhibition period for the project will be up to 12 months. The project cannot exceed one (1) year.

What is the timeline of the art activations? Do they need to occur throughout the whole year?

Please provide a proposed schedule for the activations. They do not need to take place throughout the year but should be completed within a 1-year period or less.

Is this a paid opportunity for artists who are selected?

Organizations, artists, or performers can apply for up to \$50,000 in funding for temporary artwork or performances in 2026. A project budget must be submitted as part of the application.

What are the parameters as to how the budget can be used?

An artist or an organization may propose any materials, labor, or direct costs to be incurred through creating the performance or associated deliverables.

What factors determine how the budget is allocated?

A maximum of \$50,000 is available per selected artist/organization. Eligible costs include materials, labor, direct costs, and an artist fee. Applicants should provide an estimated budget requested to be reimbursed by CTA for the activation including a breakdown of material and labor costs. If an artist is proposing more than one event, please provide a per event cost breakdown.

Can you please provide further information about the timeframe for potential performances? Are there preferred activation periods? What are the earliest and latest dates a performance could occur?

The anticipated timeline for program commencement is Fall/Winter 2026. The contract term will be for a 1-year period. Within the one-year contract timeframe, the scheduling is flexible. Interested applicants include a proposed performance schedule in their application. Final dates for selected proposals will be determined in coordination with CTA.

The guidelines indicate that the applicant is responsible for all administrative duties related to design. Are design fees, specifically fees paid to a CTA-designated design partner, reimbursable within the \$50,000 grant amount?

The Art Activations program does not have a designated design partner. Production of artwork is the responsibility of the artist. Eligible costs include materials, labor, and direct costs.

My project would be fairly low cost in terms of materials but would take a lot of time. Could I be financially compensated for my labor?

An artist or organization may propose any direct costs to be incurred by it in creating the performance or associated deliverables as well as an artist fee in the estimated budget.

Are there any constraints that would prevent projects from starting in Fall 2026? Additionally, is it possible for projects to be scheduled to begin in Spring 2027, or are activations generally expected to begin within a specific window following selection?

The start date for activations will depend on the timing of contracts and coordination between CTA and selected artists on the details of their activation. CTA may accommodate multiple dates for activations depending on a variety of factors including staff resources to ensure successful programming.

Are there any blackout periods (e.g., rush hours, major events, or winter maintenance) that we should be aware of when planning performance scheduling?

Applicants should provide a proposed event schedule. If selected, artists will work closely with CTA staff to ensure selected dates and time periods are amenable.

Is equipment purchased to produce the CTA deliverables reimbursable, or are reimbursable costs limited to labor and per-event rentals? Can funding be used to compensate performers?

The Artist may propose any direct costs to be incurred in creating the performance or associated deliverables as well as an artist fee. Any equipment cost would typically be for rentals and not purchase of new equipment.

Is Intersection the designated design partner for this program? If so, will selected artists work directly with Intersection to translate their concepts into final designs, or is the artist responsible for providing production-ready files independently?

The Art Activations program does not have a designated design partner. Production of artwork is the responsibility of the artist.

We're trying to understand how timing may affect production planning. For example. If activations occur during colder months, would we need to account for additional considerations to ensure performer and production team comfort and safety?

Applicants may propose timelines for activations that suit their performance needs and should consider needs for performer production and safety in their proposals.

If CTA allows an elongated activation, do you recommend applicants include the budget for renting (with the help of CTA) a porta potty?

CTA cannot accommodate portable toilets at station locations as part of this program.

Installation & Labor

Will CTA aid with the installation of the project, or will the artist have to pay for assistance to help install the work?

All administrative duties related to the design, installation, maintenance, set-up, tear down, and mechanical needs (electrical capability) will be established by an agreement between the Authority and the entity proposing the activation. The entity proposing the activation must be willing to enter into such an agreement and comply with all contractual

obligations, including compliance with applicable CTA safety, liability, and insurance requirements. CTA personnel will be present to oversee and coordinate installation with artists, but artists should include any labor associated with installation or performance as part of their proposal.

Are the installations going to be displayed at the entrances or are there other options depending on the work?

Installation location will depend on a number of factors including size, material, and the specific station. Applicants can propose a location and if selected, additional coordination with CTA will ensure that the location meets customer flow and safety requirements.

Can we request access to electricity for our installation?

Yes. If electricity is needed, please indicate that in your application.

Application Questions

Do we need to submit as individual artists?

Organizations or individual artists are eligible to apply.

Do you have to be a Chicago resident?

There is no residency requirement for applicants.

Are non-profit organizations eligible to apply?

Yes.

What information are you looking for in response to the "Subject Matter" question in the application?

For visual art, please describe the artwork and provide a drawing or digital image of the proposed artwork.

How many images may be submitted with the application?

You may upload one file with images. File size upload limit is 16MB.

Are there opportunities for preliminary conversations with applicants whose proposals may involve ongoing participatory or theatrical components?

CTA is unable to have preliminary conversations with interested participants.

My organization is interested in applying for the Kimball Station Art Activation opportunity, but we were wondering if we could apply to do both a temporary art piece as well as an event/performance within the same project?

Yes, applicants can apply as separate projects or apply as one project with two components.

There are four train stations listed. For example, if I choose Damen Green Line Station, what type of description are you looking for? How do I go about choosing a particular area? Are certain areas off limits?

Locations for artwork or activations should take into consideration passenger flow and safety and should not block entrances or exists to the station. Final locations will be determined in coordination with CTA, but if the location within the station is flexible, please note that in your application.

I was wondering if my group had a connection to two of the train stops, if we could select both of those as options, or do we need to select one only?

Applicants can apply for multiple locations but must fill out a separate application for each location.

Are applicants permitted to propose activations at multiple eligible stations?

Applicants can apply for multiple locations but must fill out a separate application for each location.

Can I submit my work sample link if I feel like it by sharing a link(s) on PDF?

Yes, a PDF can be uploaded to the application.

Can links to videos of previous work be included in the application? If so, where would be the best place to add them?

Yes, links to previous work can be added into the “Media” question of the application.

Would you accept the letter from a (retired) former Local Elected Official as a letter of recommendation?

Yes.

What is the definition of a CTA contractor as referenced in the program guidelines? Does this include musicians who have performed at CTA-affiliated events under fee (e.g., Open House Chicago partner sites on CTA property), or only entities under direct contract with the CTA?

CTA contractors are those who have contracts with the CTA.

What are the rules on applying on behalf of artists through an organization? Organizations are encouraged to apply in partnership with artists. Proposals should describe the nature of the collaboration, establishing the artists' participation in the application.

What are the rules regarding applying on behalf of multiple artists? Multiple artists from the same organization?

Artists may apply jointly. Organizations may apply on behalf of multiple artists. Proposals should describe the nature of the collaboration, establishing the artists' participation in the application. If applicants are proposing performances or temporary public artwork at multiple locations, each location should be submitted as a separate application. If an applicant is performing a series of performances or works by multiple artists at a single location, it should be submitted as a single application.

If an organization applied over 10 years ago, is there a statute of limitations?

Past applicants are encouraged to apply. As noted in the [Program Guidelines](#), Artists already in the CTA's permanent art collection are ineligible for this program. Artists who have completed a commission for permanent artwork at a CTA transit station through the CTA Arts in Transit Program or whose artwork (individual or artist-team) is permanently exhibited at a CTA transit facility, employees and contractors of CTA are ineligible. Any artwork, whether commissioned by CTA or part of an Adopt-a-Station or similar program, which remains attached to CTA property for a period of four years or more is defined as a permanent artwork.

Will CTA document arts activations or is that the responsibility of the artist/performer?

CTA will seek to document arts activations and temporary works of art.

Can my artwork include recordings from CTA stations or of CTA vehicles?

If an artist intends to record or film CTA stations or vehicles as part of an activation, it should be described in the proposal. If the artist is selected, CTA staff will coordinate with the artist and CTA's Film Coordinator on the production and use of recorded materials.

Insurance/Licensing Questions

What are the specific limits expected — general liability per-occurrence, equipment / damage coverage, and any umbrella requirement?

Insurance limits will be provided as part of the form agreement after review of the specifics of the proposal and performance.

Is artist-retained primary ownership of multitrack masters and edited deliverables — with a perpetual non-exclusive promotional license to CTA — consistent with the program's intent? Is there a preferred contract form?

Applicable rights and license terms will be provided in the form of agreement upon a decision to move forward with a proposal.

Does CTA hold ASCAP / BMI / SESAC blanket licenses for live performance at the Damen Green Line Station? If not, are applicants expected to secure performance licenses for post-public-domain repertoire? Is licensing for public-performance, mechanical, and synchronization rights reimbursable under the \$50,000 cap?

The Artist is responsible for obtaining any needed licenses for the production. License fees may be proposed as reimbursable inside the \$50,000 cap.

Are proposals permitted to incorporate an existing poem/written works for which the artist holds full rights? We are interested in including a poem already written for an L station as part of the proposed activation and want to confirm this would be permissible under the program's copyright guidelines.

Yes, the proposals are permitted to incorporate an existing work for which the artist holds full rights, subject to the terms and conditions set forth by CTA. As discussed in the [Program Guidelines](#), the proposer must have the right to license any images, text, or performance to CTA. CTA will receive a license to utilize media of the artwork or performance for its own purposes.

Can I use the CTA logo in my artwork or installation?

Use of CTA's logo solely in connection with an activation will be determined in the form of agreement upon a decision to move forward with a proposal.