



**GUIDELINES GOVERNING PROPOSALS FOR TEMPORARY PUBLIC ARTWORK, PERFORMANCES  
AND/OR CULTURAL ACTIVATIONS ON CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY PROPERTY**

**Issued May 13, 2026 (Updated May 15, 2026)**

**Please read and verify your proposal meets these guidelines before submitting a complete proposal.**

The Chicago Transit Authority (“CTA”) seeks to select artwork and performance events that appeal to CTA riders, represent the communities that CTA serves, and help to create more welcoming, inclusive and safe spaces for riders and employees. The CTA also considers the potential of the artwork and/or activations to build ridership based on expected attendance and level of CTA rider interest in the event.

The CTA will consider proposals for temporary cultural activations, including performing arts, public art installations, or events on CTA property according to the guidelines described and outlined below:

1. **DEFINITION**

Temporary public artwork includes murals, paintings, sculptures, signage, or mosaics and other ephemeral artwork consisting of direct application of paint or other easily removable/reversible media applied to CTA-owned property such as viaduct walls, embankment walls, track structure column bases, and other similar locations.

Temporary performing arts include music and performances such as acting, dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, juggling, pantomime, magic, oration, rapping, comedy performances, or reciting; and demonstrations of crafts that take place on CTA-owned property such as stations or adjacent plazas.

Temporary installations and performances will be permitted in unpaid or paid areas of CTA properties. Performances are not permitted on rail or bus vehicles or on platform structures. Sales of goods will not be permitted on CTA property.

2. **ADMINISTRATION**

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 to comply with all contractual obligations, including compliance with applicable CTA safety, liability, and insurance requirements.

### 3. PROPOSALS

The entity submitting a proposal for a temporary activation (“Applicant”) must submit an application to CTA via [transitchicago.com](http://transitchicago.com) and must include:

1. Current photograph or Google Earth image of the proposed location.  
Currently =, CTA will only be accepting proposals for the identified stations in the paid and/or unpaid areas of CTA property. No proposal will be awarded for activations on rail or bus vehicles or on platform structures:
  - a. 95<sup>th</sup> Street Red Line Station
  - b. Damen Green Line Station
  - c. Damen Pink Line Station
  - d. Kimball Brown Line Station
  
2. For temporary public artwork
  - a. A drawing or digital image of the proposed artwork with a written description
  - b. A description of materials to be used (durable panel/substrates; paint; wheat-paste; product name of paint; technical specifications of materials; base coat; topcoat)
  - c. Dimensions of the artwork
  - d. Duration of exhibition
  - e. Description of artwork connection to community within or near proposed location
  
3. For temporary performance or cultural activation
  - a. A description of the performance including number of performers
  - b. A description of set up including dimension and type of equipment to be provided by performers
  - c. A description of support from CTA, such as voltage requirements for musical instruments, etc.
  - d. Duration including start and end times and date(s) of performance art or activation



- e. Description of performance art or activation connection to community within or near proposed location
4. All proposals must include a detailed summary of anticipated costs to cover the presentation of event(s) requested to be reimbursed by CTA
5. The proposed duration of the work (cannot exceed one (1) calendar year).
6. At the discretion of the CTA, some applications may require an EXIT PROPOSAL for the removal of the artwork at the conclusion of the mutually agreed upon exhibition period. The cost of artwork removal, if applicable, should be identified in the proposal, otherwise will be the responsibility of the Applicant.

And any other details or supporting information requested by CTA.

**Guidelines for temporary public artwork:**

- Materials and material protection must consider the CTA environment and CTA passengers
- Direct painting to brick or concrete surfaces is not permitted
- Murals fabricated of paint; wheat-paste, mixed media collage to be applied to substrate panels and sealed with anti-graffiti coating for durability
- Suggested artwork panels/materials include but are not limited to marine-grade plywood; other waterproof plywood fabricated with waterproof glue and high-quality veneers
- Suggested anti-graffiti coatings include but are not limited to: products (such as Rainguard Vandlguard water-based coating or MuralGuard urethane-based coating) designed specifically to protect painted wood and plywood murals

**Guidelines for temporary performance art:**

No performance may:

- Generate any sound exceeding 80 decibels when measured from a distance of 10 feet; or
- Block or impede riders' ability to access the station or impede safe and efficient train service operations.

4. **PROPOSAL PROCESS AND EVALUATION**



Interested artists and performers should submit a completed web form on [transitchicago.com/art/activations](https://transitchicago.com/art/activations) by the application deadline. No responses will be accepted after the deadline. Proposals will be evaluated by a committee of stakeholders (which may include both CTA staff and external evaluators).

There will be a formal question and answer process whereby interested parties can submit written questions to [activations@transitchicago.com](mailto:activations@transitchicago.com) and CTA will post answers at [transitchicago.com/art/activations](https://transitchicago.com/art/activations).

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Strong artistic quality
- Relation to the location, environment, or neighborhood
- Provide an improved and more attractive transit experience
- Encourage a safer, more welcoming and inclusive transit environment
- Feasibility of duration, dates, and activation in relation to heavy ridership times, special events, and potential impact on the station environment and service
- Visual:
  - Fabricated of safe, durable materials and processes
  - Require minimal maintenance
- Performance:
  - Performances that prioritize the safety and well-being of the performers and audience

The committee, or a designee, may reach out to the proposer with questions to better understand the proposal.

The review committee will review all responses and first eliminate all responses deemed ineligible. The evaluation committee will evaluate the remaining responses and will recommend a proposal(s). Once evaluations are completed, the Chief Infrastructure Officer and Chief Planning and Innovation Officer, or a designee, will notify the proposer as to whether CTA desires to discuss the proposed activation further.

Final selection of proposals and/or artists may require an interview (in person or virtually). The CTA reserves the right to require interviews from any or all of the finalists in contention for negotiations or award of this contract. Failure of a finalist to report for an interview will be cause to dismiss that finalist from further consideration. The CTA, however, shall not be obligated to interview any finalist or conduct negotiations with any finalist. The interview may take place in person or via telephone conference call



CTA reserves the right to refuse to consider any proposal, reject any proposal received at any time, and engage no proposers. The CTA reserves the right to request changes in a proposal or negotiate terms and conditions in its sole discretion.

#### 5. RESTRICTIONS

**The CTA will not consider nor feature temporary public artwork or temporary performance art / cultural activations that:**

- Offer consumables as giveaways or for sale
- Demean, disparage, defame, or disrespect an individual, group of individuals, business, or organizations
- Are vulgar, indecent, profane, graphic violence displayed, or nudity or sexual conduct as defined in 720 ILCS 5/11-21(a).
- Incite or encourage violence, unlawful or illegal behavior or activities that are detrimental to the maintenance and safe operation of the CTA system
- Promote firearms or firearms-related products
- Images, text, or performance that include Gang references: colors/symbols/messaging
- Offer “Adult”-oriented goods or services
- Solely promote the consumption of alcohol and/or cannabis
- Images, text, or performance that overtly promote or oppose a political party or which are otherwise overtly political in nature
- Images, text, or performance that overtly promote or oppose a religion or which are otherwise overtly religious in nature
- Contain slogans
- Contain images, text, or performance which are protected by copyright, trademark or service mark held by third parties and which the proposer does not have the right to license to CTA, or which otherwise infringe any copyright, trademark or service mark
- Are in any way injurious to CTA and its mission, or otherwise adverse or disparaging to the interests of the CTA or public transportation generally
- Club meetings, recognition luncheons, spaghetti dinners, schools and institutions offering specialized classes, churches, individual restaurants, nightclubs, or bar events and similar are not eligible
- Service organizations, membership organizations, impact organizations, and foundations whose primary function is on fundraising or similar activities are not eligible
- Artists already in the 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.

- CTA employees and their relatives are ineligible.

## 6. LIMITATIONS

### **The Chicago Transit Authority:**

1. Shall not repair or prepare walls, locations for artwork or performances. Locations are “As Is”
2. Shall require performances and events to comply with local noise ordinances
3. Shall retain the right but not obligation to maintain the artwork
4. The Authority has sole discretion to remove artwork or cancel performances at any time and for any reason, including but not limited to safety, emergencies, deterioration, vandalism, or any other operational needs, or to make or issue directions during any live performances, including requests to adjust volume level.
5. Any costs above and beyond the agreed upon contract amount will be the sole responsibility of the applicant.
6. Shall receive a license to utilize media of the artwork or performance for its own purposes
7. Shall receive all other rights to be described in an agreement to be entered into between the CTA and the proposer.

If you meet the above criteria and are interested in proposing an activation, please visit [transitchicago.com/art/activations](https://transitchicago.com/art/activations) for more information.



**2026 APPLICATION – COMMUNITY ARTS ACTIVATION PROGRAM**

Name of Organization/Performance Group or Artist:

Type of Organization (Individual / Non-Profit / For-Profit LLC / etc.):

Name of Contact Person:

Email:

Telephone:

Mailing Address:

City / State / Zip:

Proposed Station for Temporary Artwork / Performance (select location):

- 95<sup>th</sup> Street Red Line Station
- Damen Green Line Station
- Damen Pink Line Station
- Kimball Brown Line Station

Description of Proposed Location for Artwork / Performance:

Description of Proposed Artwork / Performance:

Biography of the artist(s):

Subject Matter:

Photograph and Google Earth image of Proposed Location:

**Artwork**

Media:

Dimensions:

Duration of exhibition:

A Drawing or Digital Image of the Proposed Artwork:



### **Performing arts**

Instruments or theatrical properties (i.e., hand props, set props, dance props) / setup requirements for performance:

Number of performances / proposed schedule:

Space requirements for performance:

Describe how you will prioritize the safety and well-being of the performers and audience:

Please describe why you selected the proposed station for the Artwork / Performance and the arts connection to the community (Applications may also submit a letter(s) of support from Local Elected Officials and community organizations):

Please describe any support needed from CTA, such as voltage requirements for musical instruments, etc.:

Please provide an estimated budget requested to be reimbursed by CTA for the activation including a breakdown of material and labor costs. If you are proposing more than one event, please provide a per event cost breakdown.

**If my proposal is accepted, I will be required to show proof of insurance or intent to purchase insurance as required by CTA; the details will be provided in the form agreement.**

**I acknowledge any rights granted by CTA in connection with this program are subordinate to CTA's obligations to its passengers, the employees and the general public, and I will be required to indemnify CTA and enter into other obligations as provided in an agreement with the CTA.**

**I acknowledge that my proposal may be subject to public disclosure by CTA.**