

SWARTHMORE TOWN CENTER Request For Qualifications for Mural Artists

RFQ Activated: May 1, 2024

Application deadline: May 31, 2024

Submission Address: murals@swarthmoretowncenter.com

Call Summary

Artists are invited to submit qualifications to paint an outdoor mural in their own unique style and design that reflects the mission of the Swarthmore CO-OP (the mural location), as well as the character and unique attributes of the Swarthmore community. The purpose of this project is to help make Swarthmore a truly enjoyable place to walk where people can experience art daily. It is intended to enhance our sense of community as well as attract visitors to strengthen our local economy.

Background

Swarthmore is a small town with about 6,000 residents located 10 miles south of Philadelphia and has a compact and active downtown. Swarthmore College is adjacent to the downtown area and plays a big part in the life of the town, as does the Arboretum which is located on the Swarthmore College campus.

Swarthmore is known for its active and engaged residents. The weekly Farmers Market is a popular gathering spot on Saturday mornings, and the Swarthmore CO-OP is one of the oldest food co-ops in the country. The Horticultural Society tends the many spectacular gardens in town and the Friends of the Arts sponsors monthly art exhibitions in Borough Hall. The library, located in the Town Center, has the highest per capita circulation rate of all public libraries in Delaware County. The Park Avenue Community Center offers a performing arts venue and multiple programs for residents. Music, the arts, and crafts are highly appreciated by residents, many of whom are talented musicians and artisans.

Swarthmore can be described as:

- A small town that is quaint, friendly, and welcoming.
- A place where craft is at the center of everything you'll discover — art, music, food, drink, horticulture.
- A place where green living is celebrated and supported in all its forms.
- A place where kids feel safe, and families thrive.
- A place where generations of residents mix and mingle.
- A place with outdoor events and festivals where neighbors, friends, and visitors come together.

The Swarthmore CO-OP

The Swarthmore CO-OP, location of the mural, is a community-owned food cooperative market that's open to everyone. The CO-OP has a rich history dating back to 1932, and it is an integral part of the community and town center. Shopping at the CO-OP is part of the town culture--you can't shop at the CO-OP without running into neighbors and friends. The Delco Times has named the Swarthmore CO-OP the best local market in the area for the past five years.

The CO-OP is a full-service market, including a meat and seafood counter, a delicatessen with foods prepared by a chef, extended produce and grocery departments, and a variety of local cheeses beer, wine, and specialty products. Just like its founding members, the CO-OP is committed to providing the Swarthmore community with fresh and quality products, while supporting the local economy. The CO-OP's tag line is FRESH, FRIENDLY, LOCAL. For more information on the Swarthmore CO-OP, go [here](#).

The CO-OP is proud to:

- Ensure a compelling shopping experience, in which customers feel welcomed and gain a sense of community.
- Create a positive work environment staffed by engaged employees.
- Anchor the Swarthmore business district.
- Build connections with surrounding communities.
- Provide opportunities for community engagement, education, and outreach.
- Strengthen the local food system.
- Inspire confidence of members and shoppers in the CO-OP's high levels of integrity, accountability, and transparency.

A recent brainstorming session with the CO-OP Board of Directors generated the following themes, which would be desirable in a mural: local nature, horticulture, green, vibrant, vegetation, trees, fruit, and gardens, which border the entrance to the building and space directly across the street. The Board also thought that a mural could possibly reflect the store's interior activity, perhaps by utilizing the tromp l'oeil style, and creating a false window into the building.

Another idea for consideration is to create a fun photo op space on the small wall adjacent to Myers Avenue, which is visible from the metro train line, and could identify the business to passing commuters.

Project Commission

The mural location is on the wall on Lincoln Way between Dartmouth Avenue and Myers Avenue, centrally located downtown. The deadline to submit a proposal and qualifications is May 31, 2024. The Selection Committee will select up to three semi-finalists who will receive a stipend of \$500.00 to prepare design concepts to be submitted in mid-August. One finalist will then be selected in early October by the Selection Committee, to complete, design and install the mural. The completion date for the mural is projected to be Spring 2025.

The artist's commission is for design and execution of the mural. Additionally, the Selection Committee would like the artist to share their design concept and methodology at a community event and be present at the unveiling of the mural. The artist will be responsible for materials, rental equipment, insurance, and travel and lodging expenses.

Project Description

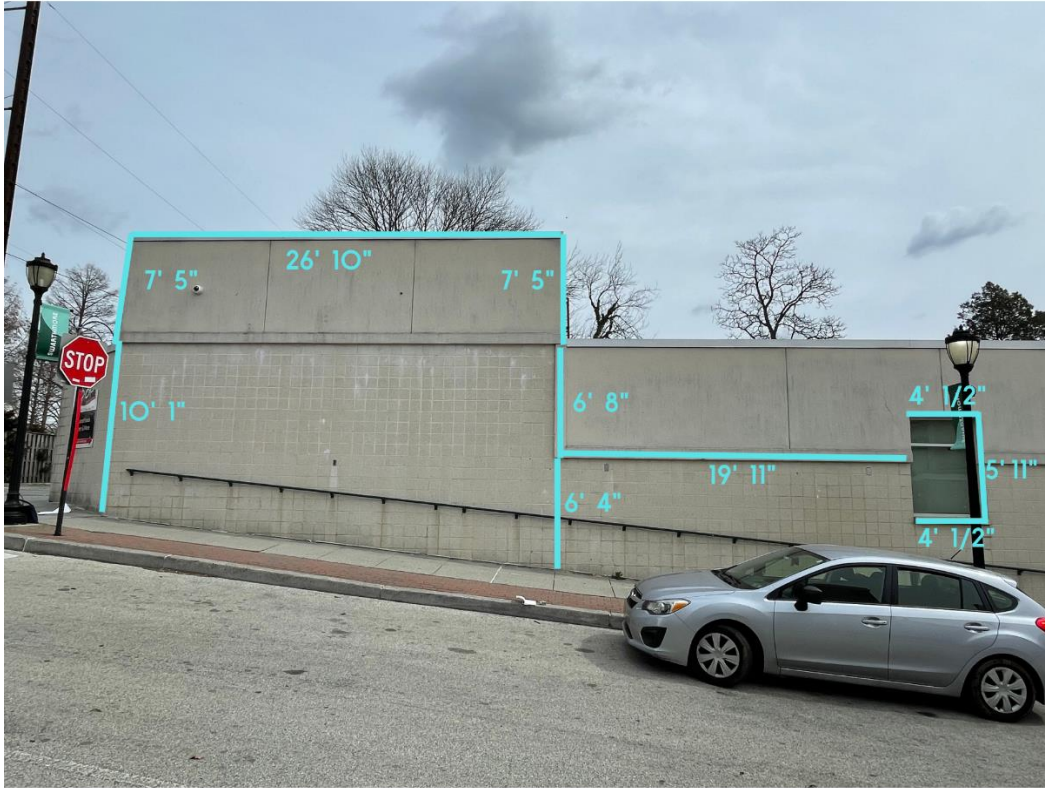
The project is a 1,200 square foot (approximate dimension) outdoor mural on the Lincoln Avenue wall of an existing building at 341 Dartmouth Avenue in Swarthmore, PA 19081 (as displayed below). The project area includes a smaller angled wall and another long flat wall with two windows that extends to an awning. So that the mural does not stop abruptly at the awning, the artist could use paint or other devices to ease the transition.

The building is two stories tall and is faced with cement blocks. The wall has a western exposure and receives direct sunlight in the afternoon. This necessitates the use of paints and a protective coating that will ensure the integrity of the mural colors over the years. There is easy access to the wall and there is open ground around the building.

To explore the location of the mural and its surroundings, please go to this bookmark in [Google Maps](#).







Application requirements

Applications are to be submitted by e-mail to murals@swarthmoretowncenter.com in the recommended format so the selection committee may evaluate them in an objective manner. Entries that do not meet submission requirements will not be considered. All entries should be submitted in a digital form. All images and document files must be compiled into one PDF document. File size should not exceed 25MB.

Required information and materials to be submitted must include:

- Letter of interest (approx. 500 words), including applicant's legal name, and contact information. Describe your approach to developing imagery.
- Artist Bio, Resume or CV.
- Images of previous mural work and/or work in similar scope/scale showing proficiency for mural work. Artists are allowed to apply in teams. For each mural, provide:
 - Client's name and contact information
 - Mural cost
 - Duration to complete and installation date
 - Methods on how each mural was executed (paint system, mural substrate—masonry, cementous board or canvas

NOTE: This is not a request for proposals. Artists are not required to submit a mural design or concept until selected.

Selection Process

The selection process has two steps:

1. Selection of Semi-Finalists:

The first step includes a committee review of the applications. Up to three semi-finalists will be chosen from the submitted applications. Each semi-finalist will receive \$500.00 to create a detailed design concept for the mural. (A schematic with exact dimensions of the project space will be provided.)

The selection criteria for semi-finalists are as follows:

- Creativity and innovation
- Integration with the mission of the CO-OP and character of Swarthmore Town Center
- Mural experience
- Skill and craftsmanship

2. Submission of Final Design by Semi-Finalists:

The second step is the submission of the detailed design concept, including the projected cost, by each semi-finalist. The Selection Committee will review these submissions and one

finalist will then be selected to receive the commission. The selected artist will then finalize their design and provide up to two iterations to respond to comments.

The selection criteria for the design are:

- Creativity and innovation
- Integration with the mission of the CO-OP and character of Swarthmore Town Center
- Positive emotional impact of the design
- Community response

Timeline

May 1, 2024: Release RFQ for artists

May 31, 2024, 5:00 pm: Deadline for submissions

July 1, 2024: Semi-finalists announced

August 23, 2024: Semi-finalists detailed original design concepts due

September 26, 2024: Presentation to CO-OP Board of Directors by Selection Committee

October 1, 2024: Announcement of the selected artist and design concept

October 2024: Discussions with selected artist to tweak design, if needed

Spring 2025: Installation period of mural, followed by a public celebration and dedication

Additional Information

If you need additional information about Swarthmore or the project, please send an email to murals@swarthmoretowncenter.com.