



# LOOBY COMMUNITY CENTER, THEATER, AND LIBRARY MURAL PROJECT

## REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

### Submission Deadline, August 31, 2023

#### Metro Nashville Office of Arts and Culture

Metro Nashville Arts Commission or “Metro Arts” is the office of Arts & Culture for the city of Nashville and Davidson County. We believe that arts drive a more vibrant and equitable community. We strive to ensure that all Nashvillians have access to a creative life through community investments, artist and organizational training, public art, and direct programs that involve residents in all forms of arts and culture.

#### Cultural Equity Commitment

Metro Arts’ cultural equity commitment embodies the values, beliefs, policies, and practices that ensure that all people can fulfill their rights of cultural expression and belonging, participation, learning, and livelihood within the arts ecosystem. This includes specific commitment to people who have been historically underrepresented in mainstream arts funding, discourse, leadership, and resource allocation; including, but not limited to, people of color, people of all ages, differently abled people, LGBTQ people, women, and the socio-economically disadvantaged. Our full commitment to equity is available here and deeply influences all aspects of our work.

#### Call Summary

Metro Arts is issuing a local Call to Artists for an artist or artist team to design a mural that celebrates and honors the life and legacy of Civil Rights activist, Z. Alexander Looby for the west facing wall of the Looby Community Center, Theater and Library in North Nashville (2301 Rosa L. Parks Boulevard). The selected artist will prepare a proposal for a painted mural for review and approval. The final artwork will be painted on Polytab and installed by an installer contracted by Metro Arts. The selected artist or artist team will be expected to lead at least two (2) community engagements with residents and stakeholders to inform the design for the mural.

This public art project is an initiative that came through the second phase of the Mayor’s Participatory Budgeting program for community development.

The artist’s budget is \$60,000. This is for design, painting, materials, workspace, community engagement, and project oversight. The purchase of Polytab Mural Cloth, wall preparation, and installation of the mural will be managed and paid for by Metro Arts out of a separate budget.

## Deadline

All submissions of qualifications must be submitted through the Metro Arts Submittable (<https://mnac.submittable.com/submit>) page by: August 31, 2023 by 11:59 p.m. (CST).

## Artist/Artist Team Eligibility

Submissions will be accepted from professional artists working or living in Davidson County or its adjoining counties (Cheatham, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, and Wilson counties).

Professional artists are defined in the Public Art Guidelines:

Professional artist – An artist of least 18 years of age with the following qualifications demonstrated in the submitted artist resume:

1. at least two years of visual art exhibition history, or
2. at least two years of commissioned visual or public art.

Note: Exhibitions, commissions or public art created during or as part of an artist's undergraduate education shall not count towards these criteria. Architects, landscape architects and other design professionals are not considered professional artists under this definition, unless they meet the criteria.

## Artist Teams

At least one of the artists on the team must live or work in Davidson County or its adjoining counties (Cheatham, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, or Wilson counties).

1. Two or more professional artists working collaboratively on a public art project. Qualifications for each team member must be demonstrated in submitted artist resumes.
2. A collaborative team led by a professional artist. Team may include design professionals or consultants. Qualifications for each team member must be demonstrated in submitted artist resumes.

Employees of the Metro Nashville Arts Commission or the Metro Nashville Government are ineligible to apply. Family and household members of Metro Arts employees are also ineligible. Members of the Metro Nashville Arts Commission or Public Art Committee are ineligible for public art commissions or projects. Artists may reference section VII of the [Public Art Guidelines](#).

## Budget

The project budget allocates \$60,000 for the mural for the Looby Recreation Center, Theater and Library. This budget must cover design, painting, materials including UV resistant paint (except for the Polytab Mural Cloth), workspace, community engagement, and project oversight. The purchase of the Polytab Mural Cloth, wall preparation, and installation of the mural will be managed and paid by Metro Arts out of a separate budget.

The selected artist will be responsible for designing the mural including:

- Develop a Concept Proposal, including a plan to engage the community in the development of the project.
- Facilitate community engagement (at least two engagement opportunities) and incorporate this work into the final design.

- Review installation plans and be present when the contractor is installing the artwork.
- Work cooperatively and maintain effective communication with all parties involved in the project.
- Participate, as requested, in community outreach and attending dedication events.
- Participate in conversations regarding how the mural can be a catalyst for programming and learning.

## Project Description

As a result of the Participatory Budgeting Process the North Nashville community is requesting a mural inspired by Z. Alexander Looby's life and accomplishments, his pursuit of justice, and his enduring national legacy.

The selected artist will create a design that can be painted onto Polytab Mural Cloth. Metro Arts will work with a local art handler to install the mural once painted.

## Community Outreach

The selected artist or artist team will be expected to lead at least two (2) community engagements with residents and stakeholders. Meetings and engagements must be approved by Metro Arts staff and staff at the Community Center, Theater and Library to effectively engage the community in the design concept for the mural and/or engage citizens in the public art process in meaningful and responsive ways. These entities can help promote and coordinate these events. Artists are encouraged to contribute their own research approaches to help identify assets and needs in the community in collaboration with the design team.

## Project Goals

- Celebrate the work of Z. Alexander Looby and his legacy of fighting for Civil Rights in Nashville.
- Welcome visitors to the Looby Community Center, Theater and Library.
- Foster collective memory and give meaning to place by recalling local and regional history.
- Strengthen community pride and identity.
- Reflect Metro Arts' commitment, as outlined in the [Public Art Community Investment Plan](#), to shared civic spaces that are open to everyone and dedicated to the community's vision, identity, and purposes.
- Reflect Metro Arts' commitment to cultural equity as outlined [here](#).

## Metro Public Art Goals

- Create opportunities for deeper cultural and civic participation.
- Drive the support and development of vibrant, creative neighborhoods.
- Strengthen the public art ecosystem in Nashville.
- Prioritize projects in areas that are underserved with public art.
- Commission public art at park and recreation facilities, strengthening their role as welcoming and functional places for gathering.

## Background of Site

Located under a single roof, the Looby Community Center, Z. Alexander Looby Theater, and Looby Branch Library were dedicated on December 8, 1976. Metro officials and friends of the late Dr.

Zephaniah Alexander Looby gathered to dedicate the new facility to the memory of the former Metro Councilman and civil rights leader.

Today, the library hosts story time, tech help programs, chair yoga, sports talk and many other programs to engage people of all ages in addition to assisting library visitors with finding books and research. The interior of the library has recently been renovated.

The Community Center has a weight room, gymnasium, and programs a full schedule of pickle ball, basketball, swimming, and other activities. After school programming is popular and well-attended.

The Z. Alexander Looby Theater hosts productions by The Metro Parks Theater and Music Departments including Youth Ensemble Productions, Centennial Youth Ballet Spring Dance Concert, and the "jam-band" End-of-Session Concerts. Partnership organizations also host events at the theater including The Nashville Shakespeare Festival, the Tennessee Women's Theater Project, and the Circle Players.

### Z. Alexander Looby

From 1943 to 1945, Z. Alexander Looby lead the James C. Napier Bar Association. In 1946, after the Columbia Race Riot he started working for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People along with Maurice Weaver, and Thurgood Marshall to represent the African Americans charged with murder. Looby's legal defense helped acquit twenty-three of the defendants. Following this work, he traversed the state of Tennessee with other Black lawyers, arguing against Jim Crow and discrimination. Looby is credited with desegregating the Nashville airport dining room and the city's public golf courses.

Soon after the momentous U.S. Supreme Court decision of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954), Looby filed a suit against the local public schools on behalf of A. Z. Kelly, a barber whose son Robert had been denied access to a nearby white school. During the sit-in demonstrations and civil rights marches of the 1960s, Looby and other Black attorneys provided money and legal services for local college students who were arrested and jailed. On April 19, 1960, his Meharry Boulevard home was destroyed by dynamite. He and his wife, Grace, escaped, unharmed.

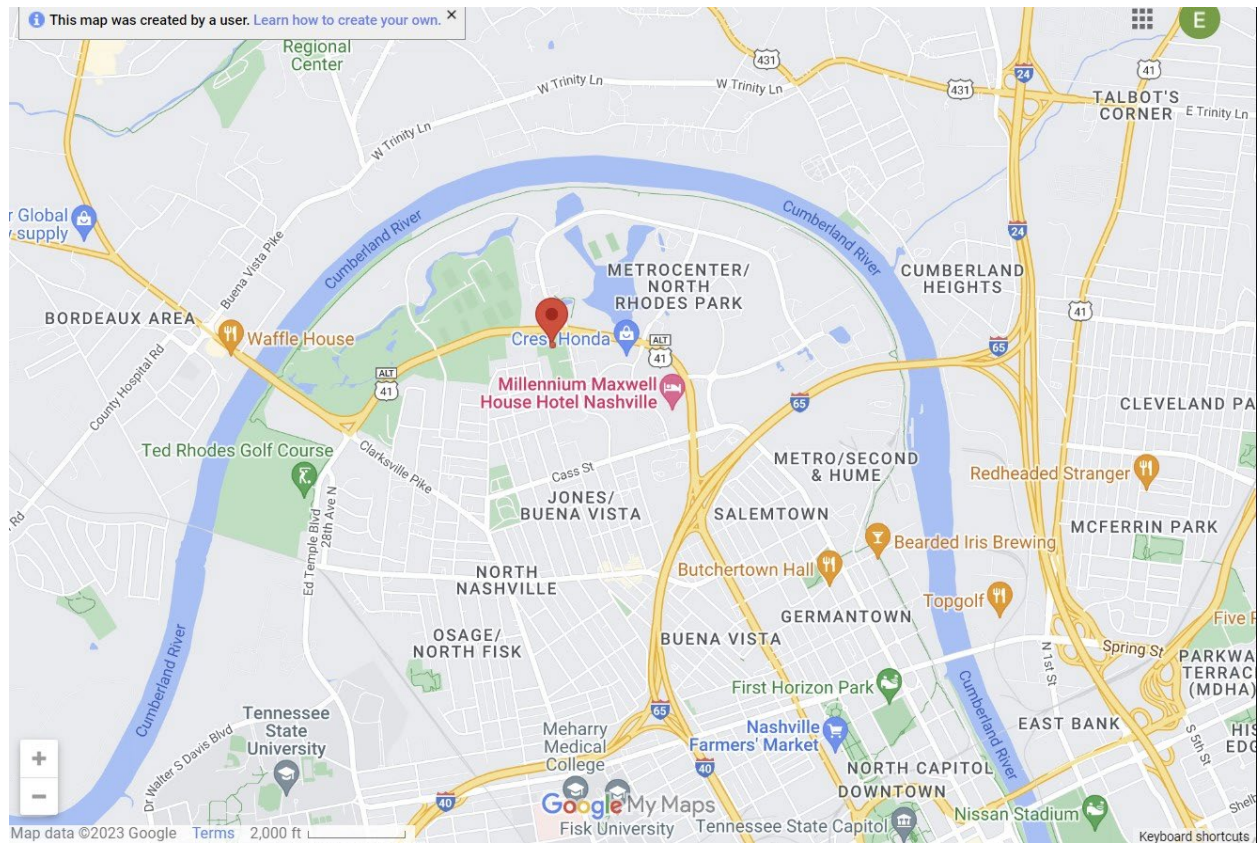
Looby viewed politics as a way to change an oppressive system. In 1951 he and fellow attorney Robert E. Lillard became the first Black people to be elected to the Nashville city council since 1911. In 1962 he lost a bid for a seat on the Tennessee Supreme Court. A year later, Looby became a member of the Metropolitan Charter Commission. In 1971 he retired after serving on the old city council and the new Metropolitan Council for a combined total of twenty years.

Looby died on March 24, 1972. Ten years later, the Nashville Bar Association, whose white members had denied Looby's membership application in the 1950s, posthumously granted a certificate of membership in his name. His contributions to Nashville are recognized in the Z. Alexander Looby Library and Community Center erected by the city on Metro Center Boulevard.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/zephaniah-alexander-looby/>





Location



Front façade of the Looby Recreation Center, Theater and Library



**Mural Site:** Western façade of the Looby Recreation Center, Theater and Library

## Artwork Location

Looby Recreation Center, Theater and Library is in the Buena Vista Heights neighborhood in North Nashville (population 1,489), an area with both an urban and suburban feel. Historic Buena Vista is adjacent to both Salemtown and Germantown just a few blocks north of Downtown Nashville. Dating back to the 1910s, this neighborhood is bounded by Jefferson Street to the south and I-65 to the west and north. There are a lot of restaurants, coffee shops, and parks and the Looby Community Center, Theater and Library are a hub of activity.

The mural site is the wall on the western side of the building, rising above the parking lot with great views from nearby homes. The wall measures 28' high x 96' long. We ask that the mural start 8' above the sidewalk for a total of 1,920 square feet.

## Selection Process

The community selection panel is proposed by Metro Arts staff for the project and recommended to the Public Art Committee (PAC) and the Metro Arts Commission for review and approval. The selection panel for this project will have between five and nine members including at least one visual artist, and may also include a design professional, community representatives, and one member representing the site sponsor. The chairperson of the selection panel will be the Public Art Committee chair or designee, serving as an ex-officio, non-voting panel member. The Metro

Purchasing Agent will assign a Contract Specialist to the project who will serve as a non-voting advisory member of the selection panel and is charged with the responsibility of monitoring the Procurement process.

#### Pre-Application Workshop

Interested artists may attend a virtual Pre-Application Workshop on **Tuesday, August 22, 12:00 p.m. (noon)** We will talk about the opportunity and walk through the application process. The workshop is optional.

Advanced registration for the workshop is required through Zoom: [Register Here](#).

#### Semi-Finalists

The selection panel will conduct a review of all submissions. Following the initial review, the panelists will meet in person to review artist submissions, score them, and determine a list of semifinalists. The selection panel will recommend a list of semi-finalists to the Public Art Committee for review and approval. The semi-finalists will be contacted and invited to join the selection panel for a live video interview. Following the interviews and further discussion and scoring, the selection panel will recommend the final artist for approval to the Public Art Committee and Arts Commission. Award notifications will be made after Arts Commission approval.

#### Selection Criteria

Artists/artist teams will be selected based on the following criteria:

- artist's work samples provide evidence of understanding of design and integrating community participation.
- evidence of an understanding of the project and ability to create an artwork that responds to the goals of the project;
- artist's ability to engage with, connect to, and understand the community for which public artwork is intended;
- a deep understanding of public art design and community engagement processes;
- evidence of commitment to cultural equity in artistic practice and processes;
- evidence of experience successfully working collaboratively on art projects; and
- evidence of ability to be accountable to project partners, schedules, and budgets.

#### Application Narrative Questions (Short Answer)

Please respond to each of the following narrative questions (250 words max per question):

1. How would you describe your artistic practice? What is your creative process?
2. Why is this project of interest to you? What factors do you consider in developing a project like this?
3. Please explain your interest in or connection to North Nashville, Bordeaux and/or Z. Alexander Looby.
4. What role does public art play in adding to community pride and identity?
5. Please explain how you would involve community participation and input into the design, implementation, and/or actualization of the work. Be specific.
6. Please explain how Metro Arts' commitment to cultural equity resonates with your practice and process.



## Project Timeline

The following projected timetable should be used as a working guide for planning purposes. Metro reserves the right to adjust this timetable as required during this Call to Artists process.

Call to Artists Opens	July 21, 2023
Pre-Application Workshop	August 22, 12:00 – 1:00 CST, via Zoom
Submissions Deadline	August 31, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. (CST)
Semi-Finalist Interviews and Finalist Selection	Mid-September 2023
Finalist Approvals and Award	November 2023
Contract Negotiations/Vendor Registration	November 2023
Community Engagement	late November and December 2023
Design Development	December and January 2023
Design Approval	February 2023
Installation	Spring 2024

## Application Requirements & Checklist

The following information must be submitted to be considered:

All Submissions must be submitted via Submittable (<https://mnac.submittable.com/submit>) and are due August 31, 2023 by 11:59 p.m. (CST).

To be considered, artists are required to submit the following materials:

- Artwork Images: Six (6) digital images representative of your artwork. Only one image per file; no composite images. File types accepted: JPG, PNG, GIF, TIFF. Artists are required to include basic specifications of each image (title, media, dimensions, year, and budget).
- Current Artist Résumé or Bio: Artist resume is not to exceed four single-sided pages or 2MB. Resume must demonstrate artistic practice as defined by the Artist Eligibility guidelines above. For artist teams, submit a resume for each team member.
- Completed Submittable Application Form (including the short answer questions)
- References: Three creative references (those who can speak to your work and your experience as an artist).

## Submission Information (Submittable)

Metro Nashville Arts Commission uses Submittable to manage calls to artists. Visit <https://mnac.submittable.com/submit> for this and all other current opportunities. Full submission instructions are available at Submittable. Please read through carefully before submitting. Incomplete submissions will not be reviewed. No submissions will be accepted after the deadline. Technical questions about the online submission process (i.e. image upload, Submittable account set-up, etc.) should be directed to <https://www.submittable.com/help/submitter/>.

## Metro Public Art

The Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission (Metro Arts) is a department of the Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County created in 1978 for the purpose of promoting, preserving, and expanding the cultural and artistic interests of the general public. Metro Arts public art program was established in June 2000, with the passage of a public art ordinance. The ordinance dedicates one percent (1%) of the net proceeds of general obligation bonds issued for



construction projects to fund public art. Metro Arts established Public Art Guidelines and named a Public Art Committee (PAC) as a standing committee to oversee the public art program.

### Resources for Questions

Direct all non-technical questions related to this Call to Artists to: [anne-leslie.owens@nashville.gov](mailto:anne-leslie.owens@nashville.gov) with “Looby Mural Project” in the subject line or call (615) 862-6732. Questions will be taken through August 31, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. noon (CST). Deadline to apply through Submittable is August 31, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. (CST).