

# The 2018 City Church Art Competition

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*By bringing art outside the traditional context of museums and galleries, public art benefits the community and its visitors by increasing access to art and providing artists with opportunities to expand their artistic practice and market. The City Church Art Competition (CCAC) has a commitment to work with both emerging and established artists to produce high quality, innovative, and creative art projects and exhibitions in public spaces in Gary, Indiana.*

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## About City Church

In 75 years, City Church experienced exceptional growth and decline, mirroring that of Gary and urban America in the 20th Century. When construction finished in 1926, City Church was one of the first million-dollar churches in the country. Renowned Chicago architecture firm Granger & Bollenbacher designed a structure that would reflect Gary's emergence as a major city: a 27,000 square-foot community anchor replete with educational and commercial space, a basketball court, and a 1,000-person theater--all of which combined to make City Church more than simply a religious institution, but a social, recreational, and educational hub in Gary's downtown.

The driving force behind the new church was its pastor, Dr. William Grant Seaman. Seaman envisioned a church to countervail the distractions of the dance halls, bordellos, and saloons of Gary's vice district, located a few blocks south. Indeed, City Church organized basketball tournaments, hosted visiting lecturers, and implemented a bible study program with the city's schools which reached 5,000 pupils. Perhaps too progressive for his time, however, Seaman sought to leverage City Church to unite the disparate cultures who had arrived in Gary to work in the steel mill. Among his many forays into inclusion, Seaman hosted joint services with black and immigrant congregations, much to the dismay of the conservative church board. In 1929, three years after City Church was completed, Seaman was transferred to a church in Ohio and never returned to Gary.

Despite Seaman's dismissal and the onset of the Great Depression, City Church emerged from the post-war Christian awakening as the largest Methodist congregation in the Midwest, with more than 3,000 paying members in 1952. Its rise was short-lived, however. A confluence of suburbanization, deindustrialization, and white flight saw City Church's membership plummet to a mere 300 congregants in 1975. Meanwhile, deferred maintenance on the aging structure was

too costly for the shrinking congregation. Efforts to share tenancy with an African-American Methodist church floundered, and eventually the church was shuttered for good.

For over 40 years, City Church has weathered the elements. A series of freeze-thawing has loosened the limestone facade, while a fire in 1997 destroyed the roof. In 2017, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation awarded the Gary Redevelopment Commission seed funding to stabilize City Church to develop a ruins garden park.

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## Competition Overview

The **City Church Art Competition (CCAC)** gives artists an opportunity to create the first art installation to contribute to the City Church Ruin Garden Project. The **Gary Redevelopment Commission (GRC)**, after winning the **Knight Cities Challenge**, earmarked funding for the CCAC.

Because City Church's structural condition is precarious, the winning proposal will be installed in an appropriate temporary location in Downtown Gary, as determined by the artist and the GRC. Once City Church is stabilized, the artwork will be permanently installed in the ruins garden.

Projects may be multi-disciplinary, multi-media, and/or collaborative. They may involve movement, sound, light, technology, and/or be multi-sensory, as long as it does not pose a threat to public safety. Prior to final funding the project must adhere to all relevant city permitting processes and ordinances.

One award will be given in the amount of **\$10,000**.

Categories are defined as follows:

- Murals must be an original work of art that is hand-created and applied directly onto a portable surface (for example, plywood panels). It may be comprised of paint or a variety of mixed media, including three-dimensional elements, which are graded for exterior use, and harmoniously integrated into the physical structure.
- Sculptures can take a wide range of forms, sizes, and materials. They can be visual, functional, or interactive.

- Open-concept can include elements of mural and/or sculpture art in addition to landscape, architectural, community art, digital new media, light, sound, etc.

To submit a proposal for consideration, applicants must create a user profile and log in to the Public Art Competition application at:

**<https://legacyfdngrants.communityforce.com>**

The competition is designed to encourage innovative and experimental public projects by local and regional artists. Artists are encouraged to investigate the physical, social, and psychological nature of the environment throughout Gary, developing a final product that engages neighborhoods, community groups, and local businesses.

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## Eligibility Requirements and Guidelines

- Applicants must be over 18 years of age
- Art installation must be transportable and/or able to be deconstructed for relocation
- Art installation must be able to withstand the elements for at least 3 years
- Final product must demonstrate consideration of the diversity of Gary's residents and visitors
- Competitive proposals will incorporate a theme that connects to City Church's past and future potential
  - While much of the history of City Church involves religion and politics, this is a publicly-funded art project for the public at large. Proposals may address difficult themes, but please remain mindful of context and audience.

### Competitive Projects:

- Competitive applications for CCAC will identify clear plans for collaboration with a Community-Based Organization (CBO), or otherwise engage the Gary community in concept development, execution, or post installation.

### *Notes on Design:*

- Political, religious, and commercial messages and icons are not allowed; nor are blatant or direct advertising and corporate logos.
- Content that is damaging to the integrity of a third party is not allowed.
- Sharp edges, or other physical hazards, are discouraged.
- There are currently no electricity sources on site, although there may be in the future. If the artwork requires electricity, artists should plan for it to be self-generated using solar, wind, or some other source.
- Water features are not allowed.
- Sound elements must be natural (not requiring electricity) and respectful of/acceptable to the surrounding environment.
- The creation of berms or the partial shaping of existing soil/substrate (that results in height differences – from ground level -- of less than 2 feet created by hand or with very small hand-powered equipment) is acceptable.

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## **Selection Process**

### **PHASE 1: Artist Submissions**

#### **All qualification materials must be submitted to**

**<https://legacyfdngrants.communityforce.com> no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 1, 2018.**

1. Five (5) images of relevant work for viewing. **1024 px x 768 px @ 72 dpi** is optimal image size. File size should be under 1MB. Images over 1.5MB will be blocked. Saving as jpg is recommended.
2. Applicant information and statement of interest. The selection team will look for an explanation of the art concept with in relation to a general theme of City Church, as well as a description of the proposal's plan to engage the community in concept, execution, or beyond installation.
3. Name and contact information of 3 professional references.

### **PHASE 2: Qualification Review – Select artists to create formal proposals**

1. A selection committee will review all submissions and determine finalists. Finalists will then develop a project narrative, schematic drawings, draft proposal of artwork to be completed, and present an accurate budget and timeline for the proposed project. All implementation and installation costs are the responsibility of the artist.

## **PHASE 3: Public Review and Voting**

1. Proposals will be exhibited online for public review, comment, and voting
2. The Selection Committee will formally adjudicate finalist project proposal, consistent with online vote totals, and commission the art.

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## **Selection Criteria**

### **Qualification Review:**

- Demonstrates a history of high quality, creative, and innovative work
- Strength and clarity of the artist's statement
- Use of themes in relation to the City Church
- Inclusive ideas for community involvement

### **Proposal Review:**

- Exhibits the ability to create a feasible project, taking into consideration budget constraints, public safety, and public involvement
- Art installation is designed to be dismantled/transported to different locations
- Subject matter must demonstrate connection to a City Church theme or, more broadly, the City of Gary

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## **Commissioning and Payment Schedule**

Winning artists will be required to sign a standardized contract outlining the Commission Agreement. Payments will be made in two installment: 50% of total award upon signing of Commission Agreement, 50% of total award upon completed installation of public art project.

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## **Timeline**

Qualifications are due by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 1, 2018** to <https://legacyfdngrants.communityforce.com>.

### **PHASE 1: RFQ Submissions**

Friday, June 1, 2018 - *Deadline for Artists' Submissions of Qualifications*

## **PHASE 2: Review**

Monday, June 11, 2018 - *Notification of finalists*

June 11–July 13, 2018 - *Preparation of proposals*

Friday, July 13, 2018 - *Submit proposals*

## **PHASE 3: Voting**

July 20, 2018 - *Public voting begins*

July 20–August 6, 2018 – *Voting period*

Mid-August 2018 – *Winner announced*

## **PHASE 4: Installation and Exhibition**

September 1, 2018–June 1, 2019

*All projects must be complete and installed by June 1, 2019. Artists are encouraged to complete and install their project in Fall 2018, if possible.*

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## **Contact Information**

If you have a question concerning the City Church Art Competition, please contact Alex Koerner, Assistant Planner, at [akoerner@ci.gary.in.us](mailto:akoerner@ci.gary.in.us) or at 219-886-1531.