



Concept Paper NYC Mural Arts Project (NYC MAP)

Overview

New York City Mural Arts Project (NYC MAP) is a collaboration between behavioral health organizations, artists, mental health consumers, and the community. Through this collaboration, the behavioral health organizations recruit the mental health consumers and provide the space for weekly workshops between artists and mental health consumers that are used to generating themes for the mural that will be created by the artist.

Successful outcomes for NYC MAP require a wide array of partnerships for each mural created in any community. Therefore, every year, NYC MAP partners with different behavioral health organizations in different neighborhoods and hires artists or partners with art-based organizations.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) is considering several partnership arrangements and governance structures for the contract that results from the RFP. Proposals would be accepted from appropriately qualified administrative organizations, arts-based organizations, or behavioral health organizations. DOHMH anticipates awarding one contract to a vendor that would function as the prime contractor. Regardless of the type of contractor, it is expected that **in each year** the contractor will select, through a competitive process, a minimum of 3 different behavioral health organizations, 3 different artists, and 3 different communities in which to site murals. The contractor would be expected to have both established linkages in these areas, as well as the capacity to continue to develop new linkages over the course of the contract term. All organizations selected for the murals would be subject to DOHMH's prior approval as subcontractors.

Purpose of the Proposed RFP

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) proposes to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to operate the New York City Mural Arts Project (MAP). The vendor will manage all aspects of the project including but not limited to hiring artists, partnering with behavioral health organizations, partnering with communities, developing community engagement events, mural installation and managing the NYC MAP website and social media presence.

In New York City, one in five adults experience a mental health disorder in any given year. Research shows that stigma of mental illness has serious negative effects on an individual's hope and on his/her sense of self-esteem. Stigma also increases the severity of psychiatric symptoms and decreases treatment adherence. People's attitudes and beliefs about mental illness are often shaped by projections made from interactions, stereotypes about mental illness, and media reporting. When these are expressed negatively, they lead to exclusion, isolation, discrimination, exploitation and increase the cycle of stigma and suffering associated



with mental illness. Similarly, communities can contribute to cohesion and resilience around issues of mental health from an individual and community support perspective.

Started in 2016, NYC MAP is modeled after the Philadelphia Mural Arts Porch Light project. NYC MAP is a community-driven, place-based initiative that brings together mental health consumers, behavioral health organizations, families, friends and the broader community to produce high-quality public murals together with the community. Artists and behavioral health organizations work together through art to create and educate about mental illness and its perceptions by building interpersonal ties and social networks with the aim to reduce stigma, improve community cohesion, and transform the built environment.

Goals & Objectives

The New York City Mural Arts Project seeks to:

1. Improve **individual health** through engagement in weekly workshops and community engagement activities that enhances resilience and recovery (i.e. social skills, self-expression, esteem building, problem-solving, abstract thinking, or skills related to making art); and have impact on stigma and stress.
2. Improve **community health** (i.e. family support, social support network, and neighborhood community) through engaging the community in all phases of the mural making process, thus stimulating narratives of cultural and community connection, beauty, resilience, and hope.
3. Improve **public health** through increased awareness about mental health and wellness, and mobilize the community to find meaning and shared purpose, including action for social change.
4. Improve community resiliency and social cohesion where the murals are placed

Program Information

Programming for each calendar year occurs between October through June. October should be the beginning of workshop activities and June for mural installation. For a period of about nine months, artists conduct weekly art workshops with mental health consumers. At these workshops, the artists teach about different art mediums, guide participants in developing meaningful themes, and help participants use their new or enhanced skills to create a collaborative mural that represents their mental health experiences. Members of the community, especially those living where the murals will be installed, are outreached and invited to participate in all phases of the mural making process.

More specifically, NYC MAP uses a three-phased process: *Discover*, *Design*, and *Deploy*. Through this process, NYC MAP collaborates with artists and behavioral health organizations to conduct art workshops and community engagement events, which allows for the community to participate throughout the mural-making process.

For each mural, these phases are followed:

- Phase 1: Discover

Timeframe: October – December

The artist develops a clear, written curriculum and facilitates art (participants) workshops with a core group of approximately twenty (20) mental health consumers. The artist fosters a non-judgmental environment for participants to share and explore their experiences living with a mental illness. The weekly workshops are hosted at the behavioral health organization's worksite during a time that works best for a large number of the project participants. The artist will also support community engagement activities, such as open studios with NYC MAP and relevant community groups. During this phase, NYC MAP will host 1-2 open studios in collaboration with each artist. The goals of this phase are threefold: *to build trust and stimulate dialogue among participants, to engage the surrounding community, and to identify themes that emerge from dialogues facilitated by the artist.*

- Phase 2: Design

Timeframe: December – April

Using the theme developed in Phase 1 as their foundation, the artist continues to work with participants and also gathers community input, synthesizing people's stories into a cohesive mural design. The artist explores the mural's visual narrative in the weekly workshops, and collaborates with NYC MAP to host four to five (4-5) open studios. The open studios are public events that allow workshop participants, their family and friends, and the larger community to guide the mural design and give valuable input, ensuring the mural is culturally relevant and appropriate for the mural's site location. During phase 2, the artist will submit a mural draft that will be presented at public events for the community design review. The artist must incorporate relevant feedback from community members and stakeholders into the final mural design. Each artist and NYC MAP will facilitate 1-2 community design reviews.

- Phase 3: Deploy

Timeframe: April – June

Once the mural design is approved, the artist translates the final design into a digital image that is printed onto a synthetic non-woven material (Polytab cloth). The artist and a team of assistants will prime the cloth with an acrylic gel and begin to paint the mural sections with acrylic paints. During this phase, each artist will prepare the cloth, using a color by number system, for community paint fests. The paint fest is a large public event that allows anyone interested in the mural to paint sections of the mural. After the mural painting is complete, the artist and his/her team of assistants will install and touch-up the mural on site. Upon completion of the installation, NYC MAP will host a ribbon cutting to celebrate the ideas, creativity, and work of the larger community.



The contractor would be required to have strong community connections, and a strong knowledge of services provided locally by behavioral health organizations, other organizations and city agencies. The contractor would be required to design and install at least three (3) large-scale murals between 1000 ft² and 3500 ft² each year, and the RFP will require proposers to describe how they will identify and partner with art or behavioral health organizations for each year's programming.

The contractor will develop and implement a community engagement strategy, and will form an advisory committee whose primary role will be to contribute diverse, knowledgeable perspectives and provide strategic advice that will support the implementation and enhance the effectiveness of NYC MAP.

The contractor will be expected to engage in a selection process to choose behavioral health partner programs to work with, and subsequently enroll at least 20 mental health consumers ages 16 years and older for each partner site each year. DOHMH expects the contractor to make efforts to promote intergenerational participation in all phases of the project. The contractor will also be expected to hire peers who would be available for all workshops with the artist and the behavioral health consumers.

The contractor will be responsible for identifying, hiring, securing necessary insurance and managing artists/artists each year. The artists/artists will have a significant role in engaging with the behavioral health partner and, more specifically, the participants in the workshops.

The contractor will search and secure walls to install the murals, licensures, and permits. The contractor will have the flexibility to determine the number and size of the murals, with a minimum of three murals each program year (October – June). DOHMH will expect the contractor to use polytab cloth for the making the mural.

Use of HHS Accelerator

To respond to the forthcoming Mural Art Program RFP, vendors must be appropriately qualified in the City's Health and Human Services (HHS) Accelerator System. The HHS Accelerator System is a web-based system maintained by the City of New York for use by its human services Agencies to manage procurement.

Only organizations with approved HHS Accelerator Business Application and Service Applications for one or more of the following service areas will be eligible to propose:

- Recreational Services
- Mental Health Services
- Substance Abuse Services
- Preventive Services
- Rehabilitation/Therapy



- Community Engagement
- Outreach
- Health Education and Supports

To submit a Business and Service application to become eligible to apply for this and other CCS RFPs, please visit <http://www.nyc.gov/hhsaccelerator>.

Anticipated Term of the Contract

It is anticipated that the term of the contract awarded will be 6 years, from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2024, contingent upon availability of funding.

Procurement Timeline

It is anticipated that the RFP issuance date would be in winter 2017, and expected award decisions in spring 2018.

Funding Information

It is anticipated that the available annual funding for the contract awarded from the forthcoming solicitation will be \$500,000. The agency expects to make one award.

Contact Information /Deadline for Questions/Comments

Comments are invited by November 3, 2017. Please email rfp@health.nyc.gov and indicate **Mural Arts Concept Paper** in the subject line of the email. Alternatively, written comments may be sent to the following address:

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