

The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary Artist in Residence Program Request for Qualifications

The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary (PDE) is pleased to announce a Request for Qualifications for a pilot [Artist in Residence \(AIR\) program](#) from January 2025-Spring 2026. This pilot will address critical water quality challenges and was developed in response to President Biden's Executive Order (EO) on Arts and Humanities (EO 14084 Promoting the Arts, the Humanities, and Museum and Library Services, October 5, 2022). The AIR pilot is a partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), select [National Estuary Programs](#), and [Urban Waters Federal Partnership locations](#) (UWFP). The Delaware River UWFP location is one of 6 participating in the pilot project.

PDE is seeking to support four (4) artists with a passion for creativity who are eager to enhance our mission through publicly engaged art. Ideal candidates will align with our values, including a commitment to environmental stewardship; science-based initiatives; collaboration with community members, partners, and local leaders; and a focus on equity and justice. This residency is open to all forms of art including visual, literary, and performance.

About Partnership of the Delaware Estuary

PDE is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to lead collaborative, science-based efforts to improve the Delaware River and Bay, which covers portions of Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. This diverse natural resource not only provides clean drinking water for millions of people but also supports a thriving industrial region that contributes an impressive \$12 billion to our local economy each year. Beyond its economic importance, the estuary offers abundant recreational opportunities—whether you enjoy hiking scenic trails, fishing, observing wildlife, or paddling through serene creeks, there's something for everyone to appreciate. It is the home to a wide range of plants and animals who are dependent upon a healthy environment for their survival.

PDE's passionate team is committed to exploring every corner of this ecosystem, doing hands-on work in the region's marshes and waterways to make exciting discoveries. Through science-based initiatives, we work to prevent pollution, protect wetlands, and restore essential species like mussels and oysters.

We collaborate with a diverse network of partners—including government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and community members—to nurture the waters that sustain our communities. Through festivals, workshops, river cleanups, and various other events, we cultivate a sense of appreciation, ownership, and stewardship for the entire estuary.

PDE is host of the Delaware Estuary Program, one of 28 National Estuary Programs designated by Congress, who work tirelessly to enhance the health of estuaries across the coastal United States. In addition, PDE coordinates the Delaware River location of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership (UWFP) program that includes the cities of Camden, Philadelphia, Chester, and Wilmington. This location is one of 21 in the country and was established in 2012. The UWFP exists to reconnect urban communities, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, with their

waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies. UWFP also collaborates with community-led revitalization efforts to improve our Nation's water systems and promote their economic, environmental and social benefits.

Our efforts to create clean waters, healthy habitats, and strong communities in the watershed are met with several challenges that include stormwater management, erosion and flood control, safeguarding source water, restoring lost habitats, and enhancing the overall health of our region's waterways. PDE's work also focuses on protecting community investments, pursuing environmental justice, and promoting public access to these vital resources. Given the vast reach of the Delaware Estuary and the array of environmental and social issues we encounter, effective restoration requires both a broad strategic approach and targeted on-the-ground initiatives. Balancing this work is essential for meaningful progress.

Project Summary:

The Delaware Estuary pilot Artist in Residency program is offering part-time support for four (4) artists – one from each of the Urban Waters cities (Wilmington, Camden, Chester and Philadelphia) - to work within each community from January 2025 through June 2026 to develop and create a final project that **must have a relationship to water quality and climate change**. PDE staff will oversee coordination between each artist and the community partners and implementation across the four cities. The art will be developed in conjunction with input received from the community members and partners in each city, allowing each art piece to be unique and reflect the priorities of that community.

Project Goals:

- Create community-focused artwork that reflects a connection to each city, enhancing the Urban Waters Federal Partnership's initiatives for climate resilience and clean water through the integration of art and culture.
- Showcase the interconnectedness of the Delaware Estuary and the city that each artist represents.
- Celebrate and amplify the unique identity of each Urban Water's city.
- Engage diverse new audiences, while also creating opportunities to promote the artwork across the region.

Program components:

Community Engagement: Continuous community involvement will be a core aspect of this residency. Artists will collaborate with PDE to develop a plan for engaging community members, partners, and local leaders throughout their artistic process.

Artist Mentorship: PDE will identify and provide an artist mentor to work with the selected artists throughout development and implementation of their project concepts.

Exploratory Phase (Four Months): During the initial phase, the artist will collaborate with PDE and their pre-selected local partner community organization to gain insight into projects and initiatives focused on water quality, watershed ecosystems, air quality, urban heat, and community resilience against climate change and sea level rise. At the end of this phase, the artists will propose their creative project to the PDE team.

Implementation Phase (8-10 Months): Once proposals are approved, the artists will collaborate with PDE to bring their creative projects to fruition. These publicly accessible initiatives are designed to boost local engagement, increase awareness of our waterways, and foster community involvement in tackling critical water challenges.

Partner Organizations: Each city will have a partner organization that will assist by serving as a point of connection between the selected artist and the community.

Compensation

A stipend of \$30,000 will be provided to each artist for compensation, materials, travel, studio/home workspace rental, cost of local engagement and events to produce and communicate the artwork, promotion directly related to the project, and shipping. An additional \$21,482 is available to be used to cover additional supplies between the 4 artists for community meetings and art installation.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

- Artists must be:
 - Eligible to work in the United States
 - 18 years of age or older
 - Reside in or have strong ties to one of the four UW Delaware River Locations (Wilmington, Camden, Chester and Philadelphia)
 - Able to commit to 18-month residency with PDE from January 2025 to May 2026
 - Experienced in creating community-engaged and/or public art
 - Experience working in and with communities
 - Interested in the environment and sustainability
 - Able to independently travel within the estuary
 - Experienced with managing budgets and implementation of creative projects
- PDE prefers artists with:
 - A strong understanding and appreciation of the Delaware River Watershed and estuary and the specific city where the artist will create their art
 - Experience working on creative projects with diverse group/s

Selection Process:

- **Response to this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is due December 15, 2024, at 11:59p.m.**
- Applications will be reviewed by representatives of PDE, UWFP Delaware River Partners, and the partner community organizations.
- Selected candidates will be interviewed and selected by PDE staff.

Project Timeline:

November – December 2024	Accepting Applications
January 2025	Review submitted RFQs. PDE, UWFP Delaware River Location Partners, and selected community organizations select artists to interview
January 2025	Interviews conducted by project team, and artists selected
January 2025	Artists selected are announced and contracts signed
January 2025 - May 2025	Onboarding and exploratory phase
June 2025 - April 2026	Implementation Phase
May 2026	Unveiling of art projects in the cities through community engagement and press events

RFQ Application Procedure:

Submit portfolio of three to five (3-5) digital work samples of your artwork

- Video/audio/digital images work samples should be labeled as last name, first name, and number. For example: Smith_Jane_01.
- Images should be saved as JPEGs, GIFs, or PNGs at 72 dpi with 1200 pixels as the widest dimension.
- Videos should be saved as MP4 or AVI files (up to 250MB), and audio files should be saved as MP3 (up to 30MB). Video and audio files should be no longer than 2 minutes in length.
- Samples should be of work that is no more than 3-5 years old.

Submit the following information as A SINGLE Word/ PDF document:

- **Title your document** as last name_first name; for example: Smith_Jane_.
- **Artist Info.:** Name, Address, Phone, Email, Website, how you heard about the RFQ.

- **Statement of Interest:** Include related experience, artistic ambitions, how you have engaged with your community on past art initiatives, and a description of your initial vision for the project.
- **Resume or Bio** (two-page maximum and include all key collaborators if artist team).
- **Image/video/audio identification sheet:** These must correspond to the numbers of your submitted images. **List your images as:** Title. Year. Materials. Dimensions. Location (if applicable). Project Budget (if applicable).

General application guidelines

- Submit what you believe is your strongest work, in the context of this opportunity.
- Incomplete or illegible submissions may be disqualified; it is the applicant's responsibility to verify the completeness of their application.
- The application deadline for submission is **December 15, 2024, at 11:59 p.m.**
- Please submit all required materials to Eve Quinones at equinones@delawareestuary.org. You may reach out to Eve if you have questions about the application process.