

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Urban Matters Pilot Program - Teaching Artist

RFP Issued: January 24, 2014

RFP Due: February 14, 2014 at Noon

Goal of the RFP

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) seeks an experienced digital visual media Teaching Artist (TA) to conduct a project-based summer residency with high school age Pittsburgh youth for its Urban Matters Pilot Program (UM). (See “Exhibit A” for program description and guidelines). The TA will be responsible for working with URA staff, a community partner organization, the UM project coordinator and other program stakeholders.

Background Information

The URA is the City of Pittsburgh’s economic development agency. Our goals are to create jobs, increase the City’s tax base and improve the vitality of businesses and neighborhoods, and the City’s livability as a whole. The URA offers a variety of programs and financing products that range from assisting low-income clients to achieve homeownership to reclaiming brownfields for new development and helping communities reinvent themselves.

Program Description

Urban Matters is an arts- and design-based program for youths, ages 14-18, who live in Pittsburgh’s distressed neighborhoods. It was developed to teach them how to examine and communicate URA and other key civic processes in order to gain an understanding for themselves, and to be able to communicate these processes to their peers, community residents and other stakeholders. The goals are to:

1. Demystify urban policy and planning issues that impact their communities; and
2. Increase participation in decision-making processes that shape their communities.

Urban Matters is a pilot program of a larger URA initiative aimed to empower residents in low-income communities and historically underserved populations to participate in policy-making, planning, design, and development activities in their respective neighborhoods.

Youth program participants will make site visits and conduct interviews while working with URA staff and other partners to produce a visual representation of what they learn to their peers, community groups and other stakeholders. The TA will be hired as an independent contractor with the URA to work directly with students. The final product will be a form of visual digital media such as a video, brochure, poster, website, etc. The UM pilot will include three months of preplanning work once a community partner is selected, up to eight weeks of in-class work with project participants, and the remaining time will be allocated for project completion and final project presentation preparation.

Methodology: Center of Urban Pedagogy

Urban Matters will adopt much of the civic engagement methodology created by the Center of Urban Pedagogy (CUP), a Brooklyn, NY based non-profit organization. Through its Urban Investigations program, CUP engages young people between 14 and 18 years of age in after-school and summer programs, asking the basic question about how the city works and then answering it over the course of a summer or semester. From CUP:

“[Students] gain the skills to investigate their own communities. They gain access to the decision-makers that affect the world around them, and engage in active citizenship. Students learn how to creatively communicate their ideas through design. Project-based learning allows students to shine in multiple ways: from interviewing to illustration, from audio production to writing. Students see the city as the product of a decision-making landscape and are empowered to participate in it. The products that students create with a visual artist find real audiences and impact communities outside of the school, in arts and social justice fields.”

The CUP will conduct a mandatory one-day workshop for the selected TA and other project participants. You can visit the CUP website for more information about its methodology at www.welcometocup.org/projects/urbaninvestigations.

Philosophy – Transformative Arts Education

Students will be given a topic to explore in order to establish its relevance to their lives and to reflect on the material they’ve gathered about the topic through interviews and site visits. They can then fashion a final product that documents what they’ve learned

to share with their communities. These activities require students to be both active and engaged learners.

Active learning requires students to participate in dialogue and action. Engaged learning requires students to apply knowledge to real world situations, practice personal reflection and begin to share what they've learned with others. Transformative arts education is an important tool for UM because it can provide positive, life-enhancing experiences, skills and direction to youths who have been marginalized in society because of poverty and racial and ethnic discrimination. The UM program strives to use culturally responsive pedagogy that maximizes learning in and through the arts, actively accessing and developing student voices, and provide leadership for every student. It seeks to become a strong community engagement program that builds leadership capacity and value, and draws upon community resources to inform, support and enhance ongoing civic engagement and artistic expression for youth in distressed neighborhoods.

Process: Design Thinking - Reframing Challenges into Opportunities

The UM program seeks to integrate many of the principles associated with Design Thinking as a process through which the TA and students tackle their chosen topic. The Design Thinking process provides a platform for addressing challenges in an experimental, yet collaborative and optimistic way. The Design Thinking process will also be used to develop the curriculum and set up the classroom space for the TA and students.

Design Process for Design Thinking

1. Discovery – We have a challenge, how do we approach it?
2. Interpretation – We learned something, how do we interpret it?
3. Ideation – We see opportunities, how do we create?
4. Experimentation – We have an idea, how do we build it?
5. Evolution – We tried something new, how do we evolve it?

Design Thinking also encourages students to critically analyze societal structures and their place within those structures. In doing so, students have an opportunity to explore inequities within economic and cultural systems, and use their knowledge to affect change and practice active citizenry.

For additional information about Design Thinking, visit: IDEO's Toolkit for Educators at: <http://designthinkingforeducators.com/>

RFP Timeline and Contacts

RFP Issued: January 24, 2014

RFP Information Session: February 6, 2014 from 6-7 PM
URA, 200 Ross Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219; 13th floor

RFP Due: Friday, February 14, 2014 at Noon

*Applicant Notification: Friday, February 28, 2014

Primary Contact: Karen Abrams - 412-255-6425; kabrams@ura.org

Inquiries Contact: LeTaj Tinker - 412-255-6689; ltinker@ura.org

Addenda Contact: If the applicant has an interest in or an intention of submitting a proposal, please contact LeTaj Tinker at ltinker@ura.org to ensure receipt of any changes that are made to this RFP. This in no way obligates the applicant to formally respond to the RFP.

*Applicant Selection: Only the selected applicant will be contacted. The selected applicant will be notified of their status by Friday, February 28, 2014.

Following this, the selected applicant will be required to attend an all day workshop on Wednesday, March 5, 2014.

Teaching Artist Role

The TA will work as an independent contractor with the URA for approximately seven months, beginning in early March 2014 and ending in late September 2014. From March to mid-June, the TA will work collaboratively with URA staff, the UM project coordinator and partner organization to develop curriculum and student activities. From mid-June to early August, the TA will lead in-class instruction as well as site visits and interviews. From August to September, the TA will manage the production/execution of the final project product, with the support of URA staff and the project coordinator. Duties and responsibilities of the TA are outlined below:

- Design curriculum for UM project in conjunction with URA, project coordinator and partner organization;
- Conduct background research for UM project;

- Assist Project Coordinator and URA with budgeting;
- Plan and lead in-class activities;
- Train students to conduct, evaluate and document research;
- Escort students on site visits (with partner organization administrator);
- Shape and manage the execution of final product;
- Provide monthly reports on non-instructional and in-class activities; and
- Submit a final project evaluation.

Applicants are not required to know urban planning and policy, or decision-making processes of the URA or other government agencies. The TA will learn much of this with the students, outside of some preliminary research to design curriculum and lesson plans.

For a list of project coordinator, partner organization and URA duties and responsibilities see “Exhibit B”.

Proposed Timeframe

In-class Instructional Time with Youth Participants

- June 23, 2014 through August 8, 2014 (up to 7 weeks - 100 hours)
- Up to 20 hours per week
- Up to 4 days per week

Non-Instructional Time

- March 3, 2014 – June 23, 2014 (16 weeks up to 100 hours)
 - Project collaborative curriculum building
 - Lesson planning
 - Topic research
- June 23, 2014- August 8, 2014 (7 weeks up to 50 hours)
 - Updating in-class activities as needed
 - Begin work on final project product
- August 8, 2014 – September 30, 2014 (4 weeks up to 50 hours)
 - Finalize final project product work
 - Presentation planning

Compensation

The TA will receive \$8,500 for approximately 35 weeks of work (up to 300 hours) upon submission of monthly reports.

Detailed breakdown of anticipated payment release dates are as follows:

- April 1 – training and curriculum design \$750;

- May 1 – training and in-class activities development \$750;
- June 1 – materials and supplies search + acquisition \$750 (a separate budget for materials and supplies will be provided);
- July 1 – in-class instruction -\$2125;
- August 1 – in-class instruction - \$2125;
- September 1 – work on final product - \$1000; and
- October – upon completion of final product - \$1000.

The TA will receive a 1099 from the URA.

RFP Selection Criteria

The URA is seeking a wide range of qualities from each applicant. The ideal candidate will meet most of the following qualifications:

- A strong commitment to Urban Matters work and to social justice;
- Previous or current work with distressed communities, communities of color, traditionally under-represented groups;
- Excellent verbal and interpersonal skills, and the ability to effectively communicate with people of varied backgrounds;
- Experience working with high school students, specifically youths ages 14-18;
- Experience and/or interest in arts education;
- Experience and/or interest in Transformative Arts Education and Design Thinking;
- Access and use necessary technology and software to work independently;
- Research and documentation skills; and
- An interest in establishing a long-term relationship with the URA for future projects, programs and events related to Urban Matters and other like-URA programming.

Prerequisites

- Teaching experience leading project-based residencies with youths ages 14-18
- Currently working as a professional artist
- Reliable transportation and willingness to travel throughout the City of Pittsburgh
- Access to computer and internet
 - Ability to use email, open attachments, etc.
 - Ability to accurately complete word processed documents associated with Urban Matters, including lesson plans and evaluations
 - Ability to contact URA staff, project coordinator, partner organization via cell phone
- Ability to commit sufficient time to the program from March – September 2014

Proposal Submission

The proposal should be sent digitally to Karen Abrams, manager, Diversity and Community Affairs, at kabrams@ura.org, or one (1) hard copy of the proposal may be submitted to:

Karen Abrams
Manager, Diversity and Community Affairs
Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh
200 Ross Street, 12th Floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Inquiries

All inquiries related to this RFP are to be directed, in writing, to LeTaj Tinker, Urban Matters Program intern, at ltinker@ura.org.

Closing Date

All responses must be received on or before Friday, February 14, 2014, at Noon.

Submission Requirements

Please complete and sign the Applicant Acknowledgement Form found in "Exhibit C".

Proposal Format

Please respond according to the following sections, clearly marking them accordingly.

RFP Summary Page

Please include applicant's name and contact information.

Experience and Profile

Provide a brief profile or yourself; this can include a curriculum vitae or resume.

Portfolio

Please include examples of your artistic work; this may include slides, photographs, creative writing examples, links to websites and/or videos, DVDs, etc.

Examples of Lesson Planning and Curriculum Development

References

Provide three (3) references and for each include the reference's name, title, address and direct telephone number.

Other Information

Please provide any other information which you believe is pertinent to the URA's consideration of the applicant, as the UM Teaching Artist. Please limit applicant response to no more than two (2) pages.

Background Checks and Clearances

Each applicant is required at his or her own expense to submit a Federal Criminal History Background Check. Information on how to obtain the Federal Criminal History Background Check is below:

[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/background_checks_\(act_114\)/7493/federal_criminal_history_background_checks/601327](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/background_checks_(act_114)/7493/federal_criminal_history_background_checks/601327)

Each applicant is also required at his or her own expense to submit a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance and a Criminal Record Check under Pennsylvania Acts 33 and 34. Copies of applications for both are attached. (See "Exhibit D" and "Exhibit E" for copies of applications.)

If you have clearances, not older than one year, or proof that you have applied or reapplied for clearances, please include them in your response.

Selection Process

A selection committee made up of URA staff and members of the UM advisory group will review each proposal submitted and shall recommend a short list of applicants to be interviewed based upon their response to this Request for Proposals. The selection committee will then make a recommendation to the Urban Redevelopment Authority Board of Directors.

Final selection of the applicant shall be made by the Urban Redevelopment Authority Board of Directors.

The URA intends to make a decision based upon information in the response to the RFP submitted by the applicant, performance in previous undertakings, and other pertinent factors.

The selected applicant will be chosen on the basis of the applicant's qualifications and experience.

During the selection process, the URA reserves the right, where it may serve the URA's best interest, to request additional information or clarifications from applicants, or to allow corrections of errors or omissions. At the discretion of the URA, individuals submitting proposals may be requested to make oral presentations as part of the selection process.

Legal Information

URA shall have the right to verify the accuracy of all information submitted and to make such investigation, as it deems necessary, to determine the ability of a proposer to perform the obligations in the response.

URA reserves the right to reject any response where the available evidence or information does not satisfy it that the proposer is qualified to carry out properly the obligations of the response, is a person or firm of good reputation or character for strict, complete and faithful performance of business obligations, or if the proposer refuses to cooperate with and assist URA in the making of such investigation.

Miscellaneous

1. All proposals will be retained by URA. Rejected proposals will not be returned.
2. The applicant will not discriminate against or segregate any person or group of persons on any unlawful basis.
3. The URA shall be the sole judge as to which proposals best meet the selection criteria. The URA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received, to waive any submission requirements contained within this RFP or to waive any irregularities in any submitted proposal.

Attached Exhibits

- A. [Urban Matters Program Guidelines](#)
- B. [Duties and Responsibilities](#)
- C. [Urban Matters Acknowledgment Form](#)
- D. [Child Abuse History Clearance](#)
- E. [Criminal Record Check](#)