

## **RFQ: CALL FOR ARTISTS**

Cross Street Revitalization Memorial

Project Working Title: *Mani Forti: A Journey of Love Progress & Promise*

DEADLINE FOR RESPONSES: Wednesday, May 6, 2026

For more information about this project, see: <http://manifortinorthend.com> and <https://www.rosekennedygreenway.org/cross-street-revitalization-memorial-rfq/>

*A long-term public art commission to create a memorial at the historic gateway of Cross and Hanover Street in Boston's North End that honors the contributions of Italian immigrants while uplifting the neighborhood's broader role as a place of arrival, labor, and community-building.*

### *Summary*

#### ABOUT

The North End Italian Immigration Memorial Committee (IAMC) seeks an artist or artist-led team to create a long-term public memorial honoring the contributions of Italian immigrants to the North End, the City of Boston, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the United States of America. The IAMC's working title for the fundraising, design, and construction of the project is *Mani Forti: A Journey of Love Progress & Promise*. The proposed memorial location is on the Cross Street Plaza, at the intersection of Cross Street and Hanover Street, along the Freedom Trail and adjacent to the Rose Kennedy Greenway. The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy is supporting the administration of this project. The selected artist or artist team will be commissioned to design, fabricate, and install a long-term memorial that will be subject to review and approval by the Boston Art Commission and other necessary stakeholders.

This Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is the first phase of a two-phase artist selection process. Through this RFQ, the project partners seek to identify up to

three (3) Artist Finalists whose experience, artistic practice, and approach align with the goals and scale of the project. Selected finalists will be invited to participate in a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP) phase, during which they will be financially compensated to develop full design proposals informed by site research and community engagement.

#### INTENT

The intent of the project is to create a long-term public artwork that honors the contributions of Italian immigrants while reflecting the North End's longstanding role as a place of arrival, labor, and community-building for many immigrant populations in Boston. Situated at a key threshold to the neighborhood, the memorial is envisioned as a civic gesture of welcome, an opening that acknowledges where people came from, the work they did, and the lives they built, and the communities that continue to grow here.

Labor is central to this project: not only as an economic activity, but as a lived and relational force that shapes family life, public institutions, cultural practices, and the physical fabric of the neighborhood. The memorial seeks to recognize Italian contributions to labor in its many forms, from skilled trades and craft, domestic and care labor, food systems and maritime work, public service, faith-based and educational labor, and the informal economies that sustain daily life. Both visible and invisible forms of labor are understood as foundational to belonging and civic participation. While grounded in the specific history of Italian immigration, the memorial welcomes all to the North End. By centering labor as a shared condition across generations and communities, the project aims to create a point of connection between past and present, honoring a particular immigrant history while opening space for other immigrant experiences that have similarly shaped Boston.

IAMC envisions a memorial that focuses not on the journey alone, but on settlement, continuity, and stewardship, and the long work of making a home, building places of belonging, caring for one another, and contributing to civic life over time. Rather than prescribing specific imagery or narrative scenes, the project invites artists to think propositionally about how a memorial can function as a gateway, a welcoming presence that affirms the dignity of work and the value of collective effort within the public realm. Through this commission, the project partners seek an artist or artist team whose practice demonstrates care, responsibility, and an understanding of creative labor as connected to other forms of skilled, embodied work, creating a memorial that is rooted in place, attentive to time, cultural vitality, and open to multiple readings while uplifting the contributions of Italian-Americans over time and place.

## CONTEXT

In December of 2021, Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair of House Committee on Ways & Means filed House bill [H4269](#). This bill included language “..for the Cross street revitalization including a North End Italian immigrant memorial (the memorial) on the corner of Cross and Hanover street coordinated through the Freedom Trail Foundation, Inc. and the Boston Arts commission”. Following the passage of this legislation, a volunteer committee entitled the North End Italian Immigration Memorial Committee (IAMC) was formed. Composed of local Italian American community leaders, the Committee was established to support a transparent, public-facing process for the creation of the memorial. The memorial will be developed in accordance with the City of Boston Public Art Policy and will follow the review and approval processes of the Boston Art Commission and other relevant authorities.

## PARTNERS

This project is led by the North End Italian Immigration Memorial Committee (IAMC) and is administered by the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, reviewed by the Boston Art Commission (BAC), and supported by the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture (MOAC) and reviewed by the Boston Art Commission (BAC).

## *Opportunity*

### SITE OVERVIEW

Acting as the gateway and welcome to the neighborhood of the North End, the memorial will be sited at Cross Street Plaza, located at the intersection of Cross Street and Hanover Street, adjacent to the Rose Kennedy Greenway and along the Freedom Trail. The site is highly visible, pedestrian-oriented, and embedded within a dense historic and infrastructural environment. A successful artist/artist team will be prepared to address complex utilities, creative engineering needs, and evolving site requirements and conditions.

Final site parameters, utilities, subsurface conditions, and technical constraints will be shared with finalists during Phase II (RFP). The selected artist will be expected to respond thoughtfully to the site's civic prominence, material conditions, and surrounding public uses.

### SITE CONTEXT

The site sits at a literal and symbolic threshold between neighborhood life, regional infrastructure, and national narratives of history and tourism. As an entry point to the North End of Boston, it functions simultaneously as a place of passage, gathering, and orientation, making it an ideal location for a memorial that addresses arrival, settlement, and shared civic space.

### SCOPE OF WORK

#### **Artist Responsibility**

In addition to the full scope of responsibilities to be outlined in the final artwork creation contract, the selected artist or artist team will be responsible for the following:

- Develop and refine the artistic concept and design for the memorial in accordance with the City of Boston Public Art Policy and all applicable review requirements and participate in required design reviews, presentations, and approvals with the Boston Art Commission and other City entities.
- Work collaboratively with the North End Italian Immigration Memorial Committee (IAMC) and stakeholders throughout the design, review, fabrication, and installation phases.
- Oversee and coordinate all aspects of fabrication and installation of the artwork, including scheduling, materials coordination, and on-site execution, in collaboration with project partners and contractors as required.
- Be available, as reasonably requested, for media, press, and marketing interviews during the project timeline, and to attend an opening event and related public programming on dates agreed upon in the artwork creation contract.

#### **North End Italian Immigration Memorial Committee Responsibilities**

The IAMC will be responsible for fundraising and project management.

#### **Greenway Conservancy Responsibilities**

The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy will serve as a fiscal agent and provide administrative support.

## **Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture Responsibilities**

The Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture will provide technical assistance, coordination, and communications support.

## **Boston Art Commission Responsibilities**

The Boston Art Commission will review the project in accordance with the City of Boston Public Art Policy.

## **BUDGET**

**Artist Finalist Honorarium:** Up to three (3) Artist Finalists or Artist Finalist Teams will each receive an honorarium of \$5,000. This honorarium is intended to compensate finalists for the labor involved in research, concept development, preliminary design, budgeting, and participation in presentations and interviews.

**Selected Artist:** The total project budget will be ~ **\$1M**, inclusive of all artist fees and project-related costs. This budget is intended to cover, but is not limited to:

- Artist fee (including; concept and design, engagement efforts, participation in required meetings, reviews, public presentations, and agreed-upon programming)
- Artist Selection Honorariums
- Site preparation, scoping and feasibility
- Project management
- Engineering
- Fabrication and materials
- Installation and equipment rental
- Insurance and permitting-related costs
- Documentation (photo/video), as required

The final production budget and benchmarked payment schedule is in accordance with the Boston Art Commission review and approval process and will be outlined in a signed artwork creation contract between the selected artist(s) and the project's fiscal agent.

## *Process*

### ELIGIBILITY

- This project is open to professional artists or artist-led teams working across all media. Artists working outside of traditional memorial or sculptural practices are welcome to apply. Teams may include up to five (5) individuals.
- Artists must be at least 18 years of age and available to participate throughout the project timeline, including community engagement, review milestones, and coordination with project partners.
- Experience working in the public realm and/or successfully navigating large-scale, complex, and/or civically-engaged projects is strongly encouraged and preferred.
- Artists from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, age groups, affinity groups, and racial and ethnic identities are encouraged to apply. Applicants should demonstrate awareness of, and sensitivity to, the cultures, histories, and lived conditions of Boston's communities.
- Artists must be able to legally accept payment for work performed in the United States. Payments to artist finalists will be made via check or ACH electronic payment.

If this poses a barrier for you, please reach out to Emely Chavarria, Curatorial Coordinator, for more information: [echavarria@rosekennedygreenway.org](mailto:echavarria@rosekennedygreenway.org). Include "Cross Street Revitalization Memorial RFQ" in the subject line.

## SELECTION PROCESS

### **Phase I – Request for Qualifications (RFQ) Review**

Once the application period closes, all submissions will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility. All complete and eligible applications will be shared with the Artist Selection Panel, composed of representatives from the North End Italian Immigration Memorial Committee (IAMC), the Freedom Trail, the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture (MOAC), the Boston Art Commission (BAC), the Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS), and a cultural organization representative.

The Artist Selection Panel will review qualifications materials and select up to three (3) Artist Finalists to advance to Phase II. All applicants will be notified of their application status following this review, barring any alterations to the anticipated schedule.

### **Phase II – Request for Proposals (RFP) Review**

Up to three (3) Artist Finalists will be invited to develop proposals for the memorial, including a written project narrative, preliminary design concepts, budget, schedule, and approach to community engagement and long-term stewardship. Each finalist will receive an honorarium of \$5,000 upon submission of a complete proposal. All finalists will be invited to present their proposals to the Artist Selection Panel and participate in interviews and discussion. Following these presentations, the Artist Selection Panel will convene to identify a recommended artist or artist team.

The Artist Selection Panel's recommendation, along with a summary of evaluation considerations, will be presented to the Boston Art Commission for final artist selection approval in accordance with the City of Boston Public Art Policy.

### **Phase III – Design Development, Fabrication, and Installation**

The selected artist or artist team will work with the Italian American Committee to

present artist selection, preliminary and final designs to the Boston Art Commission for the required approvals from the City of Boston, in accordance with the City's Public Art Policy. The commissioned artist or artist team will be responsible for the design development, fabrication, and installation of the memorial. The artist(s) will work in collaboration with the IAMC and other stakeholders to ensure the project is delivered on schedule, within budget, and in compliance with all applicable necessary safety aspects, approvals, and permitting requirements in coordination with the Boston Art Commission.

#### SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals and qualifications will be evaluated using the following weighted criteria:

**Portfolio and Past Work (60%):** Demonstrating a cultural practice that is sustained and rigorous which shares a unique perspective on creative thought, approach, and process, with particular attention to experience delivering long-term, large-scale, and/civically engaged public artworks.

**Narrative Responses (40%):** Strength, clarity, and thoughtfulness of written responses to the narrative questions.

Within this weighting, reviewers will prioritize demonstrations of:

**Creativity:** Sustained originality, curiosity, and conceptual strength in the artist's practice, taking into consideration how the artist takes intellectual and creative risks in ways that are thoughtful, grounded, and responsive to the public realm. Creativity should be evident not only in form and aesthetics, but in how ideas are developed, researched, and translated into shared civic experience.

**Feasibility & Stewardship:** Track record of delivery and completion complex, large-scale projects, works, and/or exhibitions on time and within budget with attention to durability, maintenance, and long-term public stewardship.

**Site-Responsiveness:** Ability to create work that meaningfully responds to and engages with the social, historical, and spatial contexts of a site and its surrounding public realm and connects this to broader context.

**Participation:** Experience in facilitating creative processes that foster and cultivate convening, participation, engagement, and interaction to create expansive stories and uplift intersectional perspectives and solidarity.

**Civic Vision & Public Impact:** The artist's vision should demonstrate a clear understanding of the memorial's civic significance to Boston and its role within the City's public art collection in alignment with the Boston Art Commission's mission to commission and steward innovative, transformative public artworks that meaningfully engage communities, contribute to the vitality of the urban environment, and are grounded in a strong and coherent artistic vision.

**Professional References:** Quality of responses from professional references. References will be contacted only for artists advancing to the final phase of Artist Selection.

**Labor & Lived Experience:** Ability to situate labor as a shared and lived condition that connects creative practice to the everyday work of building, sustaining, and caring. Reviewers will consider how the artist understands their own creative labor in relation to other forms of skilled, embodied work, and how labor is articulated as

central to identity, belonging, economics, and civic life in the present moment.

## TIMELINE

### *Phase I: Request for Qualifications (RFQ)*

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
Wednesday, March 25, 2026	Call for Artists Released	<a href="#">Portal here</a>
Wednesday, April 15, 2026	Information session for interested applicants	Submit any questions via email before 12 PM on Tuesday, April 14, 2026
Wednesday, May 6, 2026	Submission deadline	Complete proposals due via submission platform
May 7 – May 21, 2026	Artist Selection Panel reviews and convenes	Working Group reviews and evaluates proposals
Week of May 25, 2026	Applicant Interviews	Conducted at the discretion of Artist Selection Panel
Week of June 1, 2026	All applicants notified of status	Finalists selected

### *Phase 2: Request for Proposals (RFP)*

<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
Week of June 1, 2026	RFP Issued to Finalists	Invitational
Summer 2026	Proposal Development & Community Engagement	Finalists develop proposals alongside community engagement activities, including interviews, research, meetings, site visits, and public-facing touchpoints

August 2026	Artist Selection Panel reviews and convenes	Makes recommendation for selection in preparation for the Boston Art Commission meeting
September 2026	Boston Art Commission Artist Selection Presentation	Finalists selected

**Subsequent phases, including contracting, design development, fabrication, and installation, will proceed following artist selection and will be in accordance with construction timeline of site and Boston Art Commission review process.**

*Application Requirements*

Only one application per artist or artist team will be accepted. If you are applying as a team, one artist should be designated as the lead applicant and main point of contact for the application process. All applications will be submitted and reviewed on SlideRoom. All materials are required unless otherwise noted.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Artist’s or lead applicant’s name, pronouns, address, phone, and email address. If applying as an artist team, please provide the name(s) and email addresses of the other artist(s) on your team.

ARTIST BIO

Tell us about who you are and why you make (maximum 250 words per individual).

ARTIST CV

A current résumé or curriculum vitae for each artist or team member (maximum two pages per individual).

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Tell us about your practice, approach to public art, and experience with civic work (maximum 500 words).

## NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Applicants should respond to the following questions. Responses should reflect the artist's practice, experience, and approach. Artists should not propose specific design concepts at this stage.

1. Tell us about your connection to Boston/the New England region? How have the city's histories of immigration, labor, or civic life shaped your work or way of thinking? How do you envision this artwork contributing to this or expanding how people understand these places?
2. This memorial is imagined as a welcoming gesture that connects the past to contemporary civic life. How does your practice engage belonging, solidarity, and common ground across different experiences and perspectives?
3. How do you understand the responsibility of the artist in civic life? Does this perspective shape your approach to fabrication, production, collaboration, and public engagement?

## EXAMPLES OF PAST WORK

5-10 examples of relevant completed projects, including captions with project title, location, year completed, materials, and brief descriptions. Experience with long-term, large-scale, or civically engaged projects is strongly encouraged.

## PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Names, emails, and phone numbers for two professional references familiar with the applicant's creative practice. References will be contacted only for artists advancing to the final phase.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about eligibility, how to apply, or other aspects of the Open Call RFQ, please send your questions via writing to Emely Chavarria ([echavarria@rosekennedygreenway.org](mailto:echavarria@rosekennedygreenway.org)), Curatorial Coordinator, The Greenway, by Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 12 PM EST. Please include "Cross Street RFQ" in the subject line. No calls, please. All questions asked and answered during this period will be compiled in an updated FAQ document to be made available to all applicants on the website on Friday, April 17 at 5 PM EST.