



June 8, 2016

Dear Colleagues:

It is with great pride that Americans for the Arts Public Art Network releases the newly adopted Best Practices for Public Art Projects, developed by the Public Art Network (PAN) Advisory Council. Over the past five years, our PAN Advisory Council has worked to build consensus on these best practices with public art leaders and Americans for the Arts members, and we're pleased to share them.

The Best Practices are designed to be implemented on a national level and are intended to guide public art administrators and practitioners in developing, drafting, and executing public art projects large and small. We encourage all those working in the public art field to adopt these Best Practices and to rely on them to provide clear standards for administrators, artists, and other public art professionals.

The PAN Council, which consists of advisors elected from the membership of the Public Art Network, provides feedback to Americans for the Arts on the current state of the public art field and works to develop services and resources for our members. The Council determined that the field needed a strong foundation of best practices for creating public art projects and programs.

PAN is the only professional network in the United States dedicated to advancing public art programs and projects through advocacy, policy, and information resources to further art and design in our communities. I encourage you to participate with our Public Art Network and learn from—and connect with—your colleagues.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Lynch
President and CEO

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

Proposed Best Practices for Public Art Projects

Throughout the United States, agencies and organizations have been using art to expand constituents' experience of the public realm. With so many entities involved in managing public art projects in varying manners, the Public Art Network (PAN) [Council](#) and [Americans for the Arts](#) (AFTA) established these Best Practices out of a desire to establish a baseline for public art practices. The starting place, or baseline stage, must provide general principles that are equally relevant and agreeable to administrators, artists and other public art professionals. Once established, the baseline will provide a framework for more in-depth conversations to tease out the more complex underlying issues.

This more detailed exchange will clarify instances where different players in the public art field have diverse interests or specific pressures dictating their particular viewpoint. By parsing and articulating these diverse perspectives, the baseline principles will be annotated to provide a multi-dimensional look at public art practices.

These Best Practices are specifically drafted with discourse in mind. It is true that enforcement at this point can only be achieved through peer opinion, but Best Practices Standards will be a great resource for both developing and maturing programs. Administrators, artists and other public art professionals will be able to point to clear Best Practice Standards that have been developed and approved on a



national level designed specifically to assist in the development, drafting and execution of public art policy at the local level.

In sum, our goals are:

1. To approve Best Practices recognized as the national standard by AFTA/PAN.
2. Disseminate the approved Best Practices through AFTA's outreach and [supportive communication](#) from Robert L. Lynch, President and CEO of AFTA.
3. Programs that adopt and follow these Best Practices will be recognized by AFTA/PAN.
4. A committee comprised of PAN Council members and general members shall meet regularly to discuss and draft annotated language to accompany these Best Practices.
5. Communications to AFTA/PAN membership regarding amendments and developments in the Best Practices will be regularly disseminated to the AFTA membership and public art community.

DEFINED TERMS

Administrator: includes public art administrators, public art program representatives, art consultants, developers and any other person or team working on behalf of a commissioning body or entity.

Agreement: includes any written agreement pertaining to the planning, design, development, fabrication, delivery and/or installation of an Artwork, including but not limited to letters of intent (LOIs), memoranda of understanding (MOUs), commission agreements, contracts and construction agreements.

Artist: includes individual artists as well as artist teams.

Artwork: unless otherwise restricted by the language of the particular statement, and excluding ancillary deliverables such as budgets and maintenance manuals, “Artwork” includes any permanent and/or temporary work as defined in the scope of work of an Agreement.

BEST PRACTICES FOR PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

1. Administrators should clearly represent the scope and budget of project in Calls for Artists and communications.
2. Artists should truthfully represent their role and the nature of past work when presenting portfolios.
3. Artists should design to available budgets and propose what they can realistically deliver within budget, especially during design competitions.
4. Administrators/Consultants should not ask Artists to appropriate or use designs proposed by other Artists in a competition (e.g. cherry pick from

- among other competitors). Nor should Artists use other Artists' ideas or concepts proposed during a competition.
5. Any organization or entity commissioning Artwork should pay Artists for design proposals.
 6. Administrators should ensure a legal and fair process for developing projects and selecting Artists.
 7. All organizations and entities commissioning Artwork should consider their process for developing projects and selecting Artists in light of the principles in Americans for the Arts [Statement on Cultural Equity](#).
 8. As reasonably possible and consistent with existing privacy policies and legal requirements, Agencies should protect Artists' private information.
 9. Arts professionals should be involved in the Artist selection process.
 10. Administrators/Consultants should not receive money from Artists being considered or awarded a project.
 11. To avoid actual conflict or the appearance of impropriety, real or perceived conflicts of interest should be disclosed, and impacted decision-makers should abstain from involvement in the process.
 12. All projects should have a written Agreement that includes a clear articulation of: scope of work, budget and schedule. *
 13. All parties should have time to read and understand agreements prior to signing, and may seek legal and/or business counsel.
 14. Agreements should clearly articulate the process by which project changes are approved and any changes should always be made in writing.
 15. If substantial redesign of a contracted artwork or an entirely new proposal is requested, due to no fault of the Artist, the Artist should be compensated.
 16. Realistic life span of an Artwork should be mutually agreed by all parties and written into the Agreement.
 17. Artists should choose appropriate materials for artwork based on the

expected life. Care should be taken when integrating components into the Artwork that are not warranted for the minimum warranty period required in the Agreement. Attention should be paid to integrated components that may void underlying warranties.

18. Artist warranties should not exceed two years.
19. With regard to manufacturer warranties for integrated components, Artists should be required to only pass along those warranties provided by the manufacturer.
20. Where reasonable, obtainable insurance is required by law, municipal policy and/or in an Agreement, Administrators should work with Artists to assess the true cost of this insurance so that Artists can budget. As only licensed professionals can obtain professional liability and/or errors and omission progressive insurance, Artists who are not licensed professionals should have this requirement waived. However, Agreements may require licensed sub-contractors carry professional liability or errors and omissions insurance.
21. Administrators should not ask Artists to take on unreasonable or inappropriate liability.
22. Artists should have Agreements with their subcontractors, and include all relevant requirements of the prime contract in the sub-contract Agreement.*
23. Project payment schedule should meet the cash flow needs of the Artwork schedule of deliverables.
24. Artists should retain copyright to their Artwork. However, Artists should expect to grant license to the contracting agency or ultimate owner for reasonable use of images of the Artwork for publicity, educational, and reasonable promotional purposes upon which the parties agree.
25. Artists and commissioning bodies and/or owners should provide reciprocal credit for their respective roles in commissioned Artworks.
26. Maintenance and conservation plans should be discussed and mutually agreed upon and Artists should prepare a detailed and feasible

maintenance and conservation plan.

27. Commissioning bodies and/or ultimate owners should have collection management policies in place and notify Artists of these policies.
28. If an Artwork is damaged, Administrators should make a good faith effort to consult the Artist about repairs. Administrators are not obligated to work with Artists to make repairs, but should use best conservation practices.
29. If Visual Artist Rights Act (VARA) rights are waived, Agreements should nonetheless provide that, in the event of damage, alteration, or destruction of an Artwork that is not remedied to Artist's satisfaction, or relocation without Artist's approval, if the Artist believes the Artwork no longer represents his/her work, the Artist should have the right to remove his/her name from the Artwork.

*Look at the PAN [resources](#) available on the Americans for the Arts website for sample documents.