CALL FOR ARTISTS
2027 Western Lights Festival
Lighted Art and Temporary Outdoor Installations
Reno, Nevada

Deadline: Monday, November 30, 2026, at 11:00 pm PST
Budget: $35,000 total to fund multiple projects

SUMMARY:
The City of Reno is accepting proposals from artists/artist teams for temporary public art installations throughout downtown Reno for the 2027 Western Lights Festival. The Reno Western Lights Festival is a free open-air festival with the nighttime backdrop of downtown Reno. This project requires light, illumination, and/or lit up elements to be a major component of the proposed artwork. The artwork/installation will be part of multiple works on display for the Western Lights Festival taking place February 18 – 20, 2027. The City is encouraging works that already exist due to budget constraints, but we will accept proposals for new works. We are looking for all types of lighted art, including light shows, projection mapping, interactive pieces, sculptures, or other installation types. Interactive performing arts acts incorporating illuminated costumes, props, wearables, instruments, or performance-based light elements such as dance, theater, movement-based installations, or participatory light activations will also be accepted for consideration.

ARTIST QUALIFICATIONS / ELIGIBILITY:
This is a regional call and request for proposals. Artist must reside within 150 miles of Reno. This project is open to any artist regardless of race, color, creed, gender, gender variance, national origin, age, religion, marital status, political opinion or affiliation, or mental or physical handicap. Artists may apply as a single artist or as a multi-person collaborative group. In the case of a group, please apply under one single application. Artists and teams living and working in Northern Nevada or Northern California and who have experience implementing projects with a similar budget and scope are encouraged to apply.

- Artists aged 18 or older may apply as an individual or a team
- Must be able to independently transport and install work/s
- Eligible applicants must reside in Northern Nevada or Northern California within 150 miles of Reno

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
The City of Reno is seeking artists for temporary outdoor public art installations for the Western Lights Festival in February of 2027. Projects must incorporate lighted elements and/or illumination. The selection committee is looking for proposals for all types of

temporary lighted art, including sculptures or 3D works (works can be either stationed on the ground and/or suspended), light shows, projection mapping, light-integrated performances, or other installation types to install at multiple locations.

The use of bright colors and bright lights that stand out in the urban environment is required. The City is encouraging works that already exist due to budget constraints, but we will accept proposals for new works. The proposed artwork must be durable enough to sustain high winds and winter conditions. Artists are responsible for transportation, installation, and deinstallation of the artwork. There will likely be assistance available to help with installation but if the work requires special equipment to install and deinstall, that will be the responsibility of the artist. Security for the artwork will be provided.

The goals for the project include creating a welcoming and vibrant character for Reno's downtown area, broadening visitors' perspectives of public spaces within the City, and creating an interactive and festive environment for festival attendees.

The City of Reno seeks artists with prior public art experience, specifically in public gatherings including lit up sculptural and projection projects. Final selection of artists/artworks will be made by the Reno Arts & Culture Advisory Board (ACAB), and stakeholders based on qualifications, proposal, and budget.

LOCATIONS:
Selection of location will be done by City of Reno staff, stakeholders, and the Public Art Committee based on the requirements of the artwork including, but not limited to, scale, equipment needs, and accessibility. The focal areas of the Western Lights Festival are City Plaza, West Street Plaza, Locomotion Plaza, Virginia Street, and the Riverwalk between City Plaza and West Street Plaza.

ABOUT THE WESTERN LIGHTS FESTIVAL:
The Western Lights Festival aims to electrify downtown Reno with a vibrant and immersive art experience, free and open to all. Western Lights isn't just a festival—it's an immersive adventure that illuminates the heart of Reno with vibrant art, innovation, and creativity. In partnership with Grand Artique, the City of Reno, and visionary artists, we transform the city's streets into a luminous playground. Stroll through dazzling installations and interactive experiences that showcase Nevada's cultural hub like never before. Come see Reno in a whole new light – for free!

BUDGET:
Artists may ask for up to $6,500 maximum. Artists are asked to include their total budget estimations in their proposal submissions. The selection of the project commission is dependent on funding availability. Budgets must include all services from design through final installation/implementation, including artist fee/s, fabrication, insurance, transportation, travel fees, equipment, and installation. Priority will be given to installations that show the most economical use of funding for the scale and scope of work. In rare cases, the review committee and Arts and Culture staff may counteroffer budget proposal based on available funding.

SELECTION PROCESS & CRITERIA:

- ∉ The ACAB will review applications and select artists/artworks for the festival.

Selection of artists and artwork will be based on the following criteria:

- Letter of interest addressing key points, including past experience relevant to this opportunity and appropriateness of artwork for this event.
- Artwork fits with festival goals and ability to be in a public setting during wintertime for 4+ days.
- Budget (There is limited funding available. Preference will be given to installations that show the most economical use of funding for the scale and scope of work.)

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:
To be submitted via Submittable.
(https://cityofrenoartscultureandevents.submittable.com/submit).

1. *Artist Information:* Completed fields for the primary artist/s address, email, phone number, social media or website (if applicable). You must also include a short artist bio for all team members.
2. *Proposal:* Include a written proposal with a clear description of the artwork, materials used, installation and electrical needs (including any equipment needed for installation), concept/inspiration behind the piece and photo/s or sketches of proposed artworks.
3. *Budget:* Budgets must include all services from design through final installation/implementation, including artist fee/s, fabrication, insurance, transportation, travel fees, equipment, and installation. If the piece is already existing, design and fabrication should not be included.
4. *Letter of Interest:* Address how the applicant's previous experience and current artistic direction will result in a successful public art project for this festival. Include detailed information on how you would approach this project and how it is appropriate for this event.

Estimated timeline:

Proposal submission deadline: Monday, November 30, 2026, at 11:00 pm PST

Mid-November 2026: Committee review

Mid-December 2026: Selection of artists and artists notified

February 18-20, 2027, Western Lights Festival

All questions regarding this request for proposals are to be directed to the Reno Arts & Culture team at publicart@reno.gov