



MuralsDC Frequently Asked Questions

How do I go about donating a wall?

An owner of a residential building with four or more units, property used for commercial purposes or for public space can apply to participate in the MuralsDC program by contacting murals.dc@dc.gov, Nancee.lyons@dc.gov or by calling the DC Department of Public Works at 202-673-6833 and requesting an application. If your wall fits the criteria for the program, you will be required to sign an Authorization and Release form, which can be found at <https://dpw.dc.gov/node/444382>. If the wall to be painted abuts adjacent property, you will need to get that owner's permission.

How does MuralsDC determine if my wall fits the criteria?

Once you have made your request and submitted a photo of your property, MuralsDC will visit your site and determine if it's a fit based on a number of factors, including: the visibility of the wall by vehicular/pedestrian traffic, the size of the wall, the condition of the wall itself and the ability of the artist to access the wall.

Can I recommend someone else's wall for a mural?

MuralsDC only accepts requests from the actual property owner as they are the only person who can agree to participate in the program. Locating the owner of commercial property is not always easy as he or she is not likely to be found at that location. If there is property in your neighborhood you think would make a great home for a mural, consider working with your local Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner (ANC) or Business Interest District (BID) who may have a relationship or knows how to reach out to the owner. Simply providing the address of a building you would like to nominate is not sufficient for MuralsDC to move forward.

What is the property owner's financial obligation?

MuralsDC is a free program and covers all cost for the development and installation of the mural. It does not fund the cost to repair a damaged wall or lights to illuminate the art work. Any additional property enhancement would have to be funded by the property owner. MuralsDC funds are paid directly to the artist and is solely for the development of the art work.

Once my site has been selected for a mural, what happens next?

When MuralsDC is considering a location for a mural, we attend the ANC meeting for that Single Member District (SMD) to announce the owner's request. We also invite residents to provide input that may help the selected artist form design concepts, via an electronic survey form. Finally, we sit down with the property owner to discuss any ideas they have for a design and, occasionally, present them with a portfolio of artists from which they can choose. At that point, the artist is contacted and we begin the process to bring them on board.

Does the owner have a say in what the mural will look like?

Absolutely. The owner has the first and last word. MuralsDC will find out if the owner has any thoughts in mind in terms of what he or she would like to see on their wall. We encourage the owner to consider ideas that speak to their particular neighborhood, which the entire community can embrace.

What is the design process?

MuralsDC will provide the owner's input and community feedback to the artist. The artist may want to also meet with the owner or speak with them over the phone to get a better idea of what type of mural the owner would like to see. Depending on the design, some artists may want to speak to additional people in connection with the property, but all artists will do additional research to ensure their design

accurately reflects any historical or folklore information provided by the community and/or owner. Based on this information, the artist will then present up to three sketches from which the owner can select.

Does the community or ANC commissioner have to approve the mural before it can be painted?

The property owner has full say in what is painted on his or her wall. It does not have to be approved by anyone in government or the community but a dissenting community leader can impact the process. The goal is to create a concept that is likely to be embraced by all.

When will the work begin?

Murals are typically painted between June and October of each year. Usually all work would begin as soon as the artist's payment is processed and when he or she can begin. This can take anywhere from three to six weeks after a design has been approved.

How long does it take for a mural to be complete?

A mural can take anywhere from five days to several weeks. The duration of the work is dependent on various factors including the size of the wall, the detail of the design, the artist's schedule, the weather, and equipment.

How is the mural painted?

An artist will typically paint using ladders, a lift truck or scaffolding. He or she may begin by projecting the sketch on the wall and painting the outline of the mural. This will be done at night and will take several hours. The artist may have several artists or apprentices assisting him.

What if I don't like the sketches the artist provides?

Typically the artist is working from concepts provided by the owner and/or the community and so most owners are pleased to see their ideas brought to life. However, the owner may ask for amendments to the sketch he or she likes best. A final sketch will be presented to the owner prior to the work being executed. MuralsDC selects some of the best muralists

How are artists selected for the program? Can I use my own artist?

MuralsDC issues a Call for Artists every spring in search of artists whose portfolios demonstrate extensive experience and artistic range creating large scale, outdoor projects on brick and concrete surfaces employing both aerosol spray paint and acrylic paint as a medium. We select a number of artists to be placed in reserve in the event they are selected by the owner. The artists who are selected are awarded grant funds that will cover the artist's supplies, equipment, time and travel expenses, if necessary.

Does the owner get to choose the artist?

The owner may be matched with an artist automatically or provided a portfolio of artists from which to choose if the program's coordinators deem this to be feasible.

Can I provide my own design?

MuralsDC artists are hired for their creative insight and abilities. They do their best to interpret design concepts using their own unique vision and style. Working with MuralsDC is not like commissioning a work of art. In this case, the property owner pays the artist to paint exactly what he or she would like. MuralsDC is absolutely free to property owners and endeavors to give artists the opportunity to explore their creativity.

How is the mural maintained after it is installed? What happens if it gets tagged?

Regular maintenance on the property should be carried out by the owner as usual. MuralsDC can apply a special graffiti-prevention coating to your wall with property owner approval. Keep in mind, this must be buffed off if the wall is ever repainted. Further, MuralsDC will make every effort to remove any graffiti markings that appear on the wall of the mural as soon as we are notified, and it is possible, for the life of the project.

For more information, contact murals.dc@dc.gov