



Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce & Special Service Area #33

Request for Proposals

WICKER PARK FEST – ARTS AREA 2026

The Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce and Special Service Area #33 are accepting proposals for the Arts Area at the 2026 Wicker Park Fest, which is celebrating its 22nd year! This Arts Area is intended to enhance the Wicker Park Fest experience and contribute to the rich and vibrant neighborhood art scene. Artists are invited to propose highly compelling, professional quality visual artwork and/or interactive installations, or other engaging works of art that are free-standing or self-sustained and can be exhibited during fest hours.

Selected artists are eligible for stipends not to exceed **\$10,000**.

The festival will take place the weekend of Friday, July 24th through Sunday, July 26th.

Deadline to Apply: Thursday, April 30, 2026 by midnight



ABOUT THE ARTS AREA

Every year during Wicker Park Fest, a special section of Milwaukee Ave is designated for high quality works of art and installation. All funding for and curation of the WPF Arts Area is provided by WPB SSA #33, the Special Service Area for Wicker Park Bucktown, which includes the entire stretch of Milwaukee Ave used for Wicker Park Fest. Expected details for the 2026 Arts Area are as follows:

- The site is likely to be located near the intersection of Milwaukee Ave/Wolcott St/Wood St but will be determined closer to Fest dates by the festival production team and communicated to selected exhibitors in advance of installation.
- Exhibitors will not be able to select the exact location within the festival grounds or Arts Area and should create proposals that can be installed anywhere in the festival footprint.
- The Arts Area is outdoors in a crowded public event including loud music and other excessive noise, so proposed artworks should not try to compete with the festival environment.
- Weather is unpredictable and the Arts Area is subject to the same potential extremes, as is the rest of the street fest. Artworks should be able to withstand potentially disruptive weather.
- All Art Area work should be durable, sturdy, and invite minimal unintended tampering.

Fest hours are 5:00pm - 10:00pm Friday (7/24), and noon - 10:00pm Saturday (7/25) and Sunday (7/26)



PROPOSAL & ARTWORK REQUIREMENTS

The Arts Committee of SSA #33 is seeking highly compelling, professional quality visual artwork, sculpture, and/or interactive installations to be exhibited at the Arts Area of Wicker Park Fest. Proposed artworks should be visually interesting and engaging, as well as accessible and appropriate for a large, diverse demographic. Additional specifications, requirements, and limitations include:

- Total artwork dimensions should not exceed 20 ft by 30 ft and may not be more than 12 ft tall.
- Individual objects and sculptural elements can be no more than 400 sq ft.
- All artwork components must be self-sustained, sturdy, durable, self-supporting and pose no risk to the public or create unintended obstacles or hazards to pedestrians.

- Objects, installations, and sculptures must be free-standing and must not require connection or support from the surrounding structures or built environment.
- Any active programming should cover a minimum of 6 hours and maximum of 10 hours each day during the festival hours (with shorter hours Friday).

Priority may be given to artists who have exhibited at the Wicker Park Fest Arts Area or similar spaces and events in the past. Performance art and happenings will only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The following will not be considered:

- Additional staging or musical acts on top of regular festival programming.
- Advertising or booths for selling work (please apply as a vendor).
- Hazardous materials and open fires.
- Proposals that do not adhere to the requirements above or budget limits below.

BUDGET & STIPEND

The budget for the Arts Area is provided by SSA #33 and intended for artist stipends and all production, fabrication, and transportation costs. No additional funding will be available. **Proposals must limit their total budget to \$10,000 or less.** Stipends will be paid out 50% upon selection and 50% after the Fest. Typical stipend requests have averaged \$5,000 in past years.

HOW TO APPLY

To be considered, artists should submit the following as a **single PDF** or similar file no later than **11:59pm on THURSDAY, APRIL 30:**

- Description of project (250 words or less)
- Drawings, renderings, or photographs of proposed artwork
- Artwork dimensions and specifications; including approximate size of footprint/space needed to include the work, any space around the work needed to interact with the piece(s), and special logistical requests such as power outlet access for electricity (with specific details i.e. “one 110V 20 amp outlet)
- A project timeline for festival weekend with detailed load in/out schedule, installation plans, garbage disposal, and any relevant programming
- Three examples of previous relevant work (photos, website, social media, or URL are acceptable)
- Artist statement/bio and CV for artist(s)/exhibitor(s) involved in the project
- Budget and stipend request detailing expected costs (not to exceed \$10,000)
- Current W-9 (can be included as an email attachment)
- Current Certificate of Insurance (can be included as an email attachment)

Completed applications should be emailed to ssa33@wickerparkbucktown.com with the subject line “WPFest 2026 Arts Submission – {Your Name}”

Select applicants will be notified in May and could potentially be invited to present at a meeting in June to address any potential concerns with the Arts Committee, Chamber staff and/or production partners.

CONTACT

Inquiries and questions may be directed to ssa33@wickerparkbucktown.com.

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ARTIST REQUIREMENTS & OTHER EXPECTATIONS

Selected exhibitor(s) must maintain and manage all programming and/or installation for their designated space for the duration of the festival. All load-in and set-up must occur on Friday morning and be fully completed by the start of the festival at 5:00pm. Break-down and load-out must begin no later than 10:00pm Sunday night and be clear of event site by 2:00am on Monday morning. Exhibitors must provide their own crew for load-in, load-out, and project supervision in addition to transportation of all materials to and from the festival. Exhibitors are responsible for all clean-up and removing materials from the site after the festival.

No Chamber/SSA staff, event staff, vendors, security, or contracted help is available to assist the artist during the festival. Festival security will be present overnight to oversee the festival grounds, but exhibitors must be willing to take full responsibility for the safety of their own property and performers.

Any exhibitor that violates or challenges the responsibilities and expectations listed above or does not work politely and professionally with our team or contractors will not be considered for involvement in future iterations of Wicker Park Fest. Violation of any requirements will be considered a breach of agreement and may result in the exhibitor becoming ineligible for the full funding disbursement after the festival is over.



ABOUT THE FEST

Wicker Park Fest is one of the largest and longest running annual neighborhood street festivals in Chicago, in its **22nd year**. Organized by the Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce, Wicker Park Fest includes over 50 bands split between multiple stages, the best food and drinks from around Chicago, and features hundreds of local vendors, stores, and artisans. The Fest expects more than 90,000 attendees over the weekend, providing a robust and diverse audience for participating artists.

Wicker Park Fest is free to the public with a \$10 suggested donation at the gate. Milwaukee Avenue will be closed to car traffic from approximately North Avenue to Paulina Street to accommodate the Fest and pedestrians may enter to access local establishments or their homes at any time regardless of donation to the event.



