

Call to Artists: DEADLINE – MONDAY, September 1, 2025

Tohono Chul 40th Anniversary Mural Project

Request for Artists to Participate in the Selection Process

August 1, 2025

Introduction to the Mural Project

With generous support from the Town of Oro Valley, Tohono Chul is seeking an experienced artist for the design and execution of a large indoor mural that honors its 40-year history, reinforces its mission, and celebrates the unique beauty and arts of the Sonoran Desert region. This project will dramatically expand the art experience at Tohono Chul and take advantage of a premium venue: the Pavilion – a grand, 4,744-square-foot flexible space that hosts public and private events. One of the newest structures in the gardens, the Pavilion was opened in 2019 and has a large, highly visible wall. The addition of a versatile, timeless, and mood driven mural will transform the space into a daily destination for guests, raise awareness of Tohono Chul's mission, and become a major attraction for out-of-town visitors.

About Tohono Chul

Tohono Chul is a vibrant 49-acre non-profit public garden and nature preserve located in Oro Valley, Arizona, which celebrates the nature, art, and culture of the Sonoran Desert region. A beloved destination for both residents and global visitors, it has been recognized as "One of the World's Ten Best Botanical Gardens" by Travel + Leisure Magazine.

As Tohono Chul marks its 40th anniversary in 2025, we are proud to be Oro Valley's largest and oldest art space. Since our founding in 1985, we have conceived, created, and administered one of the most active exhibition schedules in Arizona, working with the largest number of Arizona artists and exhibiting more artwork from those artists than any other exhibition venue or organization in the state, showing over 3,000 artists in nearly 1,000 exhibits. Each project reflects the Park's mission of serving as a community oasis where reverence for the cultural and natural ecology of the Sonoran Desert region inspires responsible stewardship so that future generations may thrive.

Mural Budget and Timeline

The mural budget is not to exceed \$20,000, this includes all costs to execute the mural to the full extent outlined in the "Mural Site Information." These costs include but are not limited to artist fees, labor, supplies, professional liability insurance, equipment rental, etc. Under a separate budget, Tohono Chul will provide project management services, screening of the pavilion during installation, lighting, marketing, and promotion of the preview, opening reception, and public opening day.

The artist must oversee the installation of the mural during the designated period from January 5 – 30, 2026. Artwork must be completed by January 30, 2026. (Please note, installation dates are not flexible, and artist must be available during this time frame.)

Mural Site Information

The mural will be in the Pavilion, a large space with 4,744 square-foot interior. The mural will be painted on the largest wall approximately 1,200 sq ft. The roofline is slightly curved with four perpendicular beams bisecting the wall. The wall surface is lightly textured elastomeric stucco coating and includes tile along the bottom 24 ¼" of wall. Prior to mural installation, Tohono Chul's facilities department will prep and paint the tile portion giving the wall a more uniform look. The mural will not be exposed to direct sunlight. See the image below and the building schematic at the end of this document.



Selection Process

Stage 1: Qualification | Deadline: September 1, 2025

The call is open to all professional artists. Artists from southern Arizona are strongly encouraged to apply. Artists shall submit a qualifications package to exhibits@tohonochul.org and write "Attn: Mural Project" in the subject line of the email. Alternatively, artists may submit images and other requested materials on a flash drive to the address below. Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Qualification Package requirements:

- Contact information: Name, address, email address, and phone number
- Artist statement/mural approach (as a word document or in the body of the email)
- Up to 10 images of completed murals, concepts, or painted works with project descriptions
- Resume or CV including a biography
- References (minimum of 2)

- Acknowledgement stating that the artist can meet the project timeline and budget, including being on-site during January 5 – 30, 2026 installation.

Questions about the submission process? Please contact the Exhibits Program at Tohono Chul – exhibits@tohonochul.org , 520-742-6455 x. 218 or x. 217.

Stage 2: Shortlisted Candidates | September 8 – October 10

Tohono Chul will shortlist up to three candidates and provide a \$300 stipend to develop a preliminary concept for the mural, a detailed budget, and schedule of the mural installation. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to tour the site and become knowledgeable about Tohono Chul's history before producing and submitting a concept. A selection committee will evaluate the concepts. An in-person interview with the artist may be requested.

Submission requirements for this stage:

- Conceptual mural design in digital or hand drawn format
- Detailed budget for the mural, including all costs (labor, supplies, etc.)
- Preliminary installation schedule and timeline

The following will be considered in the selection process:

- Artist met the requirements outlined in the request for proposals
- Attention to the mission of Tohono Chul
- Evidence of ability to create large-scale, distinctive work
- Demonstrated ability to maintain project timelines and budgets
- Originality and creativity

Stage 3: Contract with Preferred Artist

Tohono Chul will prepare a contract with the preferred artist to refine the project scope, timeline, budget, and deliverables; clarify intellectual property, licensing, and reproduction rights; outline installation logistics and maintenance; and ensure mutual agreement through legal and administrative review.

Stage 4: Notice to Proceed and Mural Installation

A formal notice to proceed will be issued once the contract is fully executed, at which point the artist may begin preparatory work, with project initiation scheduled according to the agreed timeline. During installation, Tohono Chul will have one "preview" event with the artist when he/she is actively painting the mural.

Stage 5: Mural Reveal & Opening Events

An opening reception will be held on February 14, 2026 along with a public unveiling on February 15, 2026 to celebrate the completed mural, providing an opportunity to honor the artist, engage the community, and highlight the significance of the work within the broader mission and vision of the organization.

Project Timeline

- September 1: Deadline for Qualification Stage Submissions
- September 1 – 3: Qualifications reviewed / Shortlisted Candidates notified
- September 8 – October 10: Top 3 semifinalists visit the site and develop mural concepts inspired by Tohono Chul
- October 10: Deadline for stage 2 submission
- Mid – late October: Possible in-person interviews
- Late October: Artist selected and contracted
- November and December: Artist refines mural concept, develops detailed installation schedule, purchases materials, and prepares mural for installation. Tohono Chul reviews and approves final mural artwork
- January 5: Mural installation begins. Please note, installation dates are not flexible, and artist must be available during this time frame
- January 30: Mural complete
- February 14: Mural revealed to the public

MURAL PROJECT | *submission checklist:*

___ Images of completed mural projects (no more than 10 images). Each image file must be “renamed” with the artist’s last name, first name, title of work.

___ Descriptions of completed mural projects (submitted in a Word document or in the body of the email).

___ Artist contact information, biography, resume or CV (with 2 references), artist statement, acknowledgment that artist can meet the project timeline & budget (submitted in a Word document or in the body of the email).

Deadline for qualification submissions: **September 1, 2025**

Site visits & mural concept development: **September 8 – October 10, 2025**

Deadline for stage 2 submissions: **October 10, 2025**

Possible Interviews: **mid – late October**

Selection Panel Review: **late October**

Artist Notification Date: **late October**

Mural Installation: **January 5 – 30, 2026**

Email submissions to:

exhibits@tohonochul.org, include “Attn: Mural Project” in subject line of email

Mail or Drop Off submissions to:

“Attn: Exhibits Department - Mural Project”

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