



## 2026 Erie Canal Artist-in-Residence

**Position Summary:** In partnership with the New York State Canal Corporation (Canal Corp.), the Erie Canal Museum is seeking two (2) Erie Canal Artists-in-Residence for a period of one (1) year. The Erie Canal Museum is committed to building a diverse and inclusive team. We strongly encourage members of traditionally underrepresented communities to apply.

The Residencies will focus on a year-long creative inquiry into the Erie Canal, reflecting on its past, contemplating its current condition, and considering its future. These Residencies are for Artists who wish to engage with the Canal and adjacent Canalway Trails, Canal Corp. and Museum staff, Canal facilities, New York's Canal communities, and Canal visitors.

The 2026 Residencies will be dedicated to projects that reflect upon the Canal's physical, environmental, and social condition and history; materiality; and context. The Artist's project must directly address the Canal.

Applicants shall propose a specific creative visual project for their Residency. Projects may be journalistic, documentary, representational, or conceptual, and may include and/or be accompanied by text/writing, but must be able to be exhibited in a gallery setting. The subject of the project shall be identified by the applicant, but proposals must be a creative inquiry of the Canal and consider a fuller, more complete account of the Canal's past, present, and future than what has traditionally been told. The applicant shall identify their target audience(s) and how their project will be shared with that audience and with the public-at-large. While studies of Canal communities are encouraged, the Canal and its context must be central to the project. Projects may focus on key areas of the Canal or the entire system. The New York State Canal System includes 524 miles of navigable waterways. Artists should consider that scale when developing their proposal.

For more information about the Erie Canal Museum, visit: [Erie Canal Museum](#). For more information about the New York State Canal Corporation, visit: [Canal Corporation - New York State Canals](#).

**Artist Stipend:** The total funding for each Artist for the one-year Residency is \$10,000, which will be paid in (4) equal quarterly payments.

**Residency Structure:** Two (2) Artists will be selected for Residencies in 2026. The NYS Canal Corporation will facilitate introductions and connections to Canal Corp. staff and access to Canal facilities as needed.

Artists must engage with the public. The two (2) selected Artists will participate in two (2) joint panels discussing their work. One panel will be a brief introduction in early 2026 during a program concluding the 2025 Erie Canal Artist Residencies, and the second one in early 2027 in coordination with an exhibit. Artists must also develop, in collaboration with the AIR partners, at least one (1) additional public-facing event during the course of the Residency for the public to engage with and understand the Artist's process.

While a project must be proposed as part of the application, a final work plan will be required by March 1, 2026. Each Artist's project should include work that can be displayed in a gallery setting.

Artists may incorporate text and other media into their work. It is intended that final products from the Residencies will be used to develop a joint exhibition at the Everson Museum of Art and catalog in early 2027, as well as add to the Erie Canal Museum collection.

In consultation with the Artist, project organizers will retain work(s) from the project, as well as the right to publish, with prior Artist approval, selections from the project.

Throughout the Residency, the Artist, Erie Canal Museum, and Canal Corp., will have regular virtual or in-person check-in meetings to assist in project development.

It is expected that the Residency is a part-time commitment for the Artist.

**Location:** The Artists shall focus on the New York State Canal system which includes the Erie, Oswego, Cayuga-Seneca and Champlain Canals, and the Erie Canalway Trail. A workspace is not included in this Residency.

**Artist Stipend:** The total funding for each Artist for the one-year Residency is \$10,000, which will be paid in (4) equal quarterly payments. Up to an additional \$2,000 per artist is available for reimbursement for production of a final product, which will be displayed at the Everson Museum of Art and added to the Erie Canal Museum collections.

**About the AIR Partners:** The Erie Canal Museum, located in downtown Syracuse, New York, collects and preserves Canal material and provides engaging educational experiences that champion an appreciation and understanding of the Erie Canal's transforming effects on the past, present and future. Established in 1962, the Erie Canal Museum shares 200 years of Erie Canal history through interactive displays, original artifacts, and public programs.

The Canal Corporation runs the New York State Canal System, which includes the Erie, Champlain, Oswego and Cayuga-Seneca Canals. Spanning 524 miles, the waterways link the Hudson River with the Great Lakes, the Finger Lakes and Lake Champlain. The Canal System includes the Erie Canalway Trail, a multi-use trail designed to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and cross-country skiers. Together, the Canals and Trail create a world-class recreationway that is a vibrant, scenic and unique New York resource.

The Erie Canal Bicentennial period (2017-2025) marked the beginning of the Erie Canal's third century of use. What is now known as the Original Erie Canal was completed in 1825. The Canal was enlarged and realigned to accommodate motorized commercial vessels, opening in 1918 as the Barge Canal. The Barge Canal was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2016; the Original Erie Canal still exists in fragmented sections. The New York State Canal Corporation maintains a century-old system, and is working to revitalize the Canal and its surrounding areas for another century of use.

**Application:** All Artists interested in applying are required to submit the following:

1. Statement of Interest and Proposal (up to 500 words): Explain why this Residency is of interest to you and what you plan to explore during the Residency. Describe your proposed project; including how it relates to the Residency goals to (1) Engage with the Canal and adjacent Erie Canalway Trail, Canal Corp. and Museum staff, Canal facilities, New York's Canal communities, and Canal visitors, 2) Reflect directly upon the Canal's physical, environmental, and social condition and history, and 3) Consider a fuller, more complete account of the Canal's past, present, and future); which geographic section of the Canal system your project will focus on (if applicable); how you might approach sharing your work during the Residency

with the public; and your proposed final product. State how your previous work relates to the Residency focus area and ways you have previously engaged with the public.

2. Artist's Statement (up to 300 words): Provide a statement describing your artistic practice.
3. Resume or CV (maximum three pages): Provide a resume or CV highlighting any experience relevant to this application.
4. References: Provide the names, phone numbers, and email addresses for (2) two professional references.
5. Work Samples: Provide (10) ten examples of recent work. If written work is included, please limit it to (3) three pages each. Provide a list of the submitted work including title, date, materials, size. Provide short descriptions of each work as needed.

**Selection Process:** The applications will be reviewed by a panel of representatives from the Erie Canal Museum and Canals, and the following invited arts professionals:

- Elizabeth Dubben, Executive Director, Collar Works
- Dennis RedMoon Darkeem, Artist, Educator, Director of RedMoon Arts Movement Inc.
- Garth Johnson, Paul Phillips and Sharon Sullivan Curator of Ceramics, Everson Museum of Art

The applications will be evaluated for the following:

- Clarity of the Statement of Interest and Proposal, and relevance to the Residency focus area and goals:
  - Engage with the Canal and adjacent Canalway Trails, Canal Corp. and Museum staff, Canal facilities, New York's Canal communities, and Canal visitors
  - Reflect directly upon the Canal's physical, environmental, and social condition and history
  - Consider a fuller, more complete account of the Canal's past, present, and future
- Scope of reach, feasibility and clarity of the plan to share the Artist's project with the Artist's intended audience(s)
- Clarity of the Artist's plan for engaging with the public--including one (1) public-facing event--during the course of the Residency
- Proposal of a final product that can be used in an exhibit and catalog
- Quality of prior work and relevance to the Residency focus area

Finalists will be asked to interview with the Selection Panel.

**Eligibility:** The selected Artist should be deeply interested in exploring the New York State Canal system and the physical landscape of upstate New York. Experience with social practice and working within government systems is preferred. Additionally:

- Preference may be given to artists who have lived or worked in Canal communities
- Only individual artists or artist collectives may apply; artists representing non-profit and for-profit organizations may not apply
- For artists applying as a collective, only one \$10,000 stipend will be awarded to the group
- Artists must obtain General Liability Insurance
- Artists must be (18) eighteen years of age or older
- Artists may not be currently enrolled in school on a full-time basis

**Schedule:** The Residency begins on Jan. 1, 2026.

- Application Deadline: Sunday, Sept. 7, 2025; applications packages should be submitted as PDFs via email to Natalie Stetson, Executive Director, at [employment@eriecanalmuseum.org](mailto:employment@eriecanalmuseum.org) with "Erie Canal Artist-in-Residence" in the subject line by 11:59 pm on Sunday, Sept. 7, 2025.
- Finalist Interviews: Between Sept. 29 – Oct. 17, 2025. Interviews will be conducted virtually.
- Artist Notification: By Nov.7, 2025
- Residency Start: Jan. 1, 2026
- Residency End: Dec. 31, 2026
- Exhibit at the Everson Museum of Art: Opening late-January 2027

*The Erie Canal Museum is an American Alliance of Museum accredited history museum housed within the National Register 1850 Syracuse Weighlock Building with the mission to engage the public in the story of the Erie Canal's transformative impacts on peoples and places in the past, present, and future.*