

The City of Lethbridge acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Niitsitapi | Blackfoot peoples and respects the contributions of Blackfoot and all Indigenous peoples people past, present and future, while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship to the land. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

The City of Lethbridge, through Opportunity Lethbridge, the Indigenous Relations Office and the Public Art Program, have partnered with an amazing group of community organizations to seek Indigenous artists to design artwork for a series of OKI Signs. The five (5) selected designs will be installed as vinyl wraps on prefabricated OKI Signs. Each of the community partners will then be host to an OKI Sign. The community partners include: the YWCA Lethbridge and District, McCain Foods, Helen Schuler Nature Centre, Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone, and Lethbridge Regional Airport.

Interested Indigenous artists are asked to submit a written design concept, according to the submission process described below. The City will then work with selected artists to finalize the winning designs. All aspects of fabrication and installation of the artwork will be managed by the City.

Project Background

In 2019, the City of Lethbridge Heart of Our City Committee and the Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee partnered to develop an OKI Sign as part of the celebration of 2019 as the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages and the adoption of Oki as the official greeting of the City of Lethbridge. Since 2019, the City's two OKI Signs have been seen throughout the community at special events and celebrations.



Images of the City of Lethbridge's OKI Signs in the community.

Community partners came forward again in 2022, when we saw the successful installation of Oki signs at Primas (Park Place Mall), the Galt Museum and Archives, the Lethbridge Public Library, the University of Lethbridge, and the Lethbridge Agri-Food Hub and Trade Centre (Lethbridge and District Exhibition Society). The City of Lethbridge is managing the centralized fabrication of five (5) additional Signs as well as this Call for Expressions of Interest to ensure consistency and the respectful representation of Blackfoot culture.

The purpose of this initiative is to celebrate Blackfoot culture and language across the community and to celebrate the important role that “Oki” has come to play in our community as a symbol of respect, understanding and reconciliation – and the hallmark of *Sikóóhkotok* (Lethbridge).

Eligibility

This competition is open to Indigenous artists of all ages, at all levels of their artistic practice. Preference will be given to Indigenous artists with a distinct connection to Blackfoot Territory.

Project Timeline

Call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) Released: Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Deadline to Submit EOI: Tuesday, April 2 at 4:30pm MDT

Shortlisted Artists Notified: by May 1, 2024

Deadline for Shortlisted Artists to Submit Final Designs: June 17, 2024

Project Budget

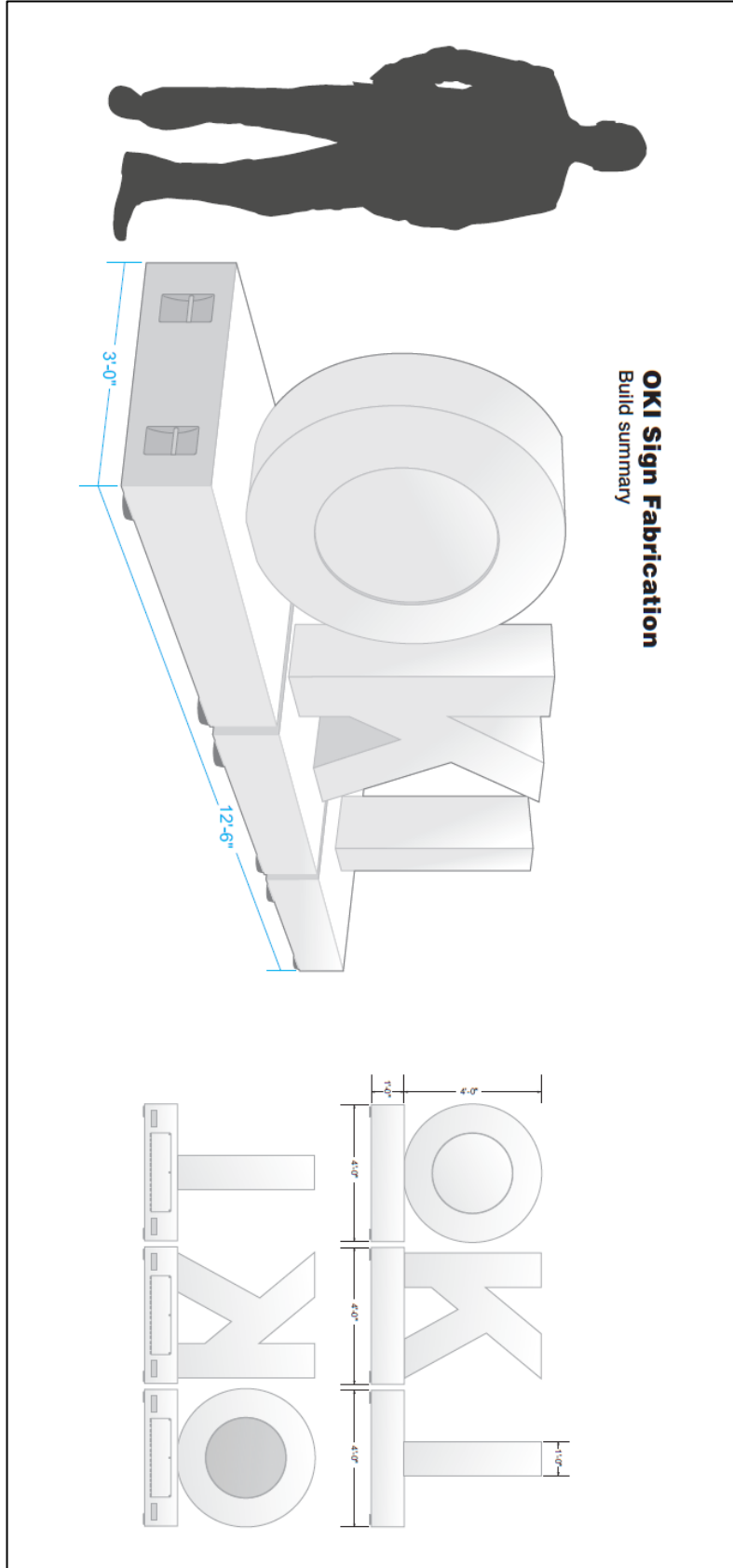
A design fee of \$100 plus GST will be paid for each shortlisted design concept.

An additional artist fee of \$1000 plus GST will be paid for each design installed on an OKI Sign.

Technical Description

Each OKI Sign will be fabricated of the same materials (aluminum) and will be the same size. When fully assembled each OKI Sign will be approximately 5' tall, 12'6" wide and 3' deep. Each letter is attached to a base and the “O” features a removable insert that can be placed within the middle of the “O”. The image below illustrates the design. The design **should not** consider the removable insert area as it will feature the logo of the host organization.

Artists should also consider the need for artwork to be viewed from all angles (i.e., not just from the front). Artists are responsible for design only. Selected final designs will be adapted to fit the OKI Sign by a contracted graphic designer and installed by a contracted fabricator/installer.



Submission Process

Artists may submit only one EOI, but can include up to three different written design concepts.

Interested artists are asked to submit:

1. An EOI that outlines your interest in this project. The EOI should include a high-level written description of your design concept. No artwork is required at this stage.
 - Design concepts should appeal to a broad audience.
 - Designs should reflect one or more of the following themes:
 - Blackfoot Territory
 - Sikóóhkotok | Lethbridge
 - Oki | Greetings (Oki was adopted by the City of Lethbridge as its Official Greeting in 2019)
 - Niitsitapiiyisinni | to be Blackfoot
 - Ohkanaomowoo | Gathering Together
2. A Current Artist CV or an outline of artistic interests and activities.
3. Contact information including an e-mail address, mailing address and phone number.
4. Five images of current or past works labelled with the following information: title, date, size/duration, and materials.
5. Artists may indicate in their EOI if they have a preference for which organization they would like to host their artwork. Note that this is only a preference and we cannot guarantee that it can be accommodated.

Partner organizations include: the YWCA Lethbridge and District, McCain Foods, Helen Schuler Nature Centre, Downtown Lethbridge Business Revitalization Zone, and Lethbridge Regional Airport.

All materials must be submitted as one PDF file.

Applications should be emailed to publicart@lethbridge.ca. Please include "OKI Artwork" in the subject heading. Only electronic submissions will be accepted.

Evaluation Process

The application process for this project is competitive. A community-based selection panel will review all compliant applications and will shortlist artists based on:

- Strength of letter of interest (40%)
- Strength of proposed design concept (40%)
- Previous artistic experience (20%)