Request for Proposals
2027 Artist-in-Residence Program

Betty Brinn Children's Museum | Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Proposal deadline: **Thursday, November 12, 2026, at 5 p.m. CST**
Residency: January through December 2027

About the opportunity

The Betty Brinn Children's Museum (BBCM) invites Milwaukee-area artists working in visual arts, music, dance, theater, storytelling, textiles, sculpture, or other creative fields to submit proposals for its 2027 Artist-in-Residence program. The selected artist will collaborate with the Museum's Strategic Partnerships team to provide interactive artistic experiences, engage in conversations, and facilitate family art-making activities for children from birth to age 8 and their caregivers.

Through the power of play, the Museum promotes joy, confidence, and curiosity in children and families, inspiring a lifelong journey of learning. This residency enhances how families experience the Museum and creates opportunities to explore art, express themselves, and connect with one another. We are looking for an artist with a unique, creative perspective who can translate their artistic practice into welcoming and participatory experiences for young children.

Program Goals

- Enhance the Museum visit with artist-led, interactive experiences that encourage both new and returning visitors.
- Foster creativity, build confidence, promote positive self-expression, and support social-emotional learning through play.
- Assist caregivers in discovering simple ways to create together and facilitate learning at home.
- Connect children and families with artistic expression, culture, identity, and community.
- Contribute to Milwaukee's arts and early learning community through collaboration with local artists.

Artist responsibilities

The selected artist will develop a residency grounded in their own creative practice and the Museum's program goals. Proposals should describe a regular schedule of opportunities for

children and caregivers to explore, experiment, and create alongside the artist throughout 2027.

The proposed framework includes:

- **Regular onsite engagement:** Plan for approximately three public engagement opportunities per month. Formats may include open studio time, collaborative projects, workshops, demonstrations, storytelling, movement, or participatory performances. Propose durations and a schedule appropriate to your medium.
- **Family participation:** Build in meaningful opportunities for children and caregivers to create together, with simple ideas they can continue at home.
- **Creative exploration and self-expression:** Invite children to make choices, share ideas, try new approaches, and express themselves through the artist's medium.
- **Museum event participation:** Propose how your practice could contribute to broader museum events, like the annual Be a Kid Ball gala. Participation may take the form of a creative activity, demonstration, collaborative display, or performance, with scope and scheduling agreed in advance.
- **Planning and reflection:** Participate in orientation and planning meetings, coordinate materials and setup with staff, support agreed promotion, and contribute reflections or documentation to a Museum-produced, year-end residency recap.

As a planning benchmark, BBCM anticipates approximately **25 hours of direct public engagement across the year**, plus two event appearances of up to one hour each. Applicants should propose how to distribute that engagement and estimate the additional time needed for preparation, setup, cleanup, and collaboration. The final mix of activities and calendar will be developed with the selected artist.

Experiences should prioritize exploration and creative process, with multiple ways to participate. Activities must welcome caregivers and accommodate varied ages, abilities, languages, and sensory preferences. Proposals should explain how materials, tools, and facilitation will be appropriate for young children in a busy Museum setting.

Proposals may include a collaborative artwork, temporary display, or other project that supports family participation.

Museum support and compensation

The proposed artist fee is $10,000 for the complete residency, including preparation, program delivery, event appearances, setup and cleanup, meetings, and agreed promotional and documentation contributions. Applicants should provide an estimated total time commitment and explain how they would deliver the scope within this fee. Artist teams should identify their roles and how they will share compensation.

BBCM anticipates providing up to $1,000 for program expenses. This includes take-home activity supplies, program space, staff coordination and on-site support, marketing and

promotion, and production of the year-end recap. *The artist fee and supply allowance are subject to final approval of the 2027 budget and program funding.* Any additional equipment, travel, collaborator fees, or other expenses must be identified in the proposal and agreed in writing.

Before programming begins, Museum staff will provide orientation to BBCM's approach to play-based learning, developmentally appropriate facilitation, caregiver engagement, accessibility, and Museum procedures. Staff and the artist will finalize the calendar and agree on responsibilities, payment milestones, and permissions for recordings and promotional use. Artists retain ownership of their existing artwork and creative work.

Eligibility and proposal requirements

Individual artists and small artist teams available for regular onsite programming in Milwaukee throughout 2027 may apply. Relevant experience with children, families, or community audiences is encouraged; prior museum experience is not required. The selected artist must complete BBCM's applicable onboarding and screening requirements before beginning the residency.

Submit one PDF of **no more than five pages**, excluding work sample links, containing:

1. **Artist information:** Contact details, a brief biography, and a résumé or experience summary highlighting relevant work.
2. **Residency concept, approximately one page:** Your creative vision, connection to the program goals, and the perspective you would bring to BBCM.
3. **Sample experiences, approximately one page:** Examples of participatory experiences grounded in your artistic practice, including how children and caregivers would participate and how you would adapt for developmental and accessibility needs.
4. **Work plan and budget:** Availability, estimated hours for delivery and preparation, equipment and supply needs, any collaborators, and confirmation of feasibility within the proposed fee.
5. **Work samples:** Links to up to three images, recordings, or examples of artistic work or facilitation. Include work with children or families if available.

Only share identifiable images or recordings of children when you have permission to use them for proposal review. Applicants may request an alternate submission format.

Review and selection

A BBCM staff panel will review proposals using the following criteria:

Criterion	Weight
Artistic quality, originality, and connection to the program goals	25%
Engaging, developmentally appropriate experiences for children and caregivers	25%
Accessibility and inclusive facilitation	20%
Ability to deliver the calendar and collaborate with Museum staff	20%
Feasibility within the budget and Museum setting	10%

Finalists may be invited to a conversation with Museum staff. If a facilitation demonstration is requested, compensation and expectations will be shared in advance. All applicants will receive notification when the selection process is complete.

Timeline and submission

Milestone	Anticipated timing
Proposals due	**Thursday, November 12, 2026, at 5 p.m. CST**
Review and finalist conversations	November 2026

Applicant notification, agreement, and scheduling	December 2026
Orientation and residency begin	January 2027
Public programming	January through December 2027
Residency recap	December 2027

Email your proposal or an accessible file link to Sara Bruesewitz, Director of Development & Partnerships at **sbruesewitz@bbcmkids.org** with the subject **"2027 Artist-in-Residence Proposal: [Artist Name]"**. Questions and requests for an alternate submission format may be sent to the same address. BBCM will acknowledge receipt.